



ELDER LAW OF MICHIGAN, INC.

www.elderlawofmi.org

PRESS RELEASE

DATE March 5, 2009

Contact: Kate White, Executive Director

o. 517.853.2375

c. 517.896.0347

Elder Law of Michigan Receives Grant from National Council on Aging To Help Seniors, People with Disabilities Access Benefits Statewide

Washington, DC –The National Council on Aging (NCOA) is pleased to announce that Elder Law of Michigan has been awarded a grant for the purpose of finding and enrolling older people and younger adults with disabilities who have limited incomes into public benefits programs. Elder Law of Michigan is among 10 organizations nationwide to receive this grant. The project will be statewide and implemented by Elder Law’s flagship program, the Legal Hotline for Michigan Seniors.

Awarded through NCOA’s National Center for Benefits Outreach and Enrollment (<http://www.CenterforBenefits.org>), the grant supports the development of person-centered community-based system for outreach and enrollment into public benefits through the creation of local and state Benefits Enrollment Centers (BECs). The Legal Hotline for Michigan Seniors will create a virtual Benefits Enrollment Center to reach and assist older people and younger adults with disabilities throughout the Michigan, who may qualify for but are not yet enrolled in programs that help pay for prescription drugs, medical care, food or utilities. Two brick and mortar partners in Detroit and Pontiac include: Covenant Community Care, a faith-based health center in southwestern Detroit and Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency in Pontiac, one of the largest Community Action Agencies in Michigan.

“We are excited about **the Legal Hotline for Michigan Seniors** being part of this program to help people in need get the benefits they are entitled to” said Wendy Zenker, NCOA vice

president, Benefits Access Group. “There was a rigorous application process to find the best organizations to fulfill the mission of the Center, and **Elder Law of Michigan** was a clear winner to help older people and younger adults with disabilities get access to critical benefits.”

To fulfill the grant, the Legal Hotline for Michigan Seniors and its partners at Covenant Community Care and Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency will identify and enroll older people and adults with disabilities into the following need-based programs: Medicare Part D Extra Help (Low-Income Subsidy); Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs); Medicaid; the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly the federal Food Stamp program; State Pharmacy Assistance Programs (where available); and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP). “Need-based” benefits programs are those for which eligibility is based on financial need. The Legal Hotline will help people throughout Michigan via its toll free number 1-800-347-5297.

Benefits Enrollment Centers have an ultimate goal of creating community- or state-based, person-centered benefits enrollment systems that are as seamless as possible for consumers and their families and are sustainable beyond the period funded by these grants. They will help people who need one-on-one assistance with filling out benefits application forms, and use “person-centered” approaches, which encourage individuals to be screened and apply for multiple benefits at one time, rather than pursuing individual benefit programs one by one.

The other recipients of the NCOA grants are (listed alphabetically by state):

South Alabama Regional Planning Commission, Mobile, AL
AgeOptions, Oak Park, IL
Green River Area Development District, Owensboro, KY
Maine SHIP, Office of Elderly Services, Augusta, ME
Washington County Commission on Aging, Inc., Hagerstown, MD
Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services, Billings, MT
Center for the Independence of the Disabled in New York, New York, NY
Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging, Cleveland, OH
Benefits Data Trust, Philadelphia, PA

Under a cooperative funding agreement between the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Administration on Aging, the National Center for the Benefits Outreach and Enrollment was established in September 2008 to help older Americans and younger adults

with disabilities of limited means remain healthy and improve the quality of their lives. The expected duration of the projects funded under this initiative is 12 months (March 1, 2009 to February 28, 2010).

#

About NCOA

The National Council on Aging is a non-profit service and advocacy organization headquartered in Washington, DC. NCOA is a national voice for older Americans – especially those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged – and the community organizations that serve them. It brings together non-profit organizations, businesses and government to develop creative solutions that improve the lives of all older adults. NCOA works with thousands of organizations across the country to help seniors find jobs and benefits, improve their health, live independently and remain active in their communities. For more information, visit www.ncoa.org.