



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 2, 2007**

## **Senior Advocates of Washtenaw Educate Public on Paying for Long-Term Care**

Program Sponsored by Blueprint for Aging Helps Older Adults Understand Options and Plan for Future

Ann Arbor, MI – The Senior Advocates of Washtenaw (SAW) will host the presentation “How Will I Pay for Long-Term Care?” on April 23, 2007, from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. at Towne Centre Place, 401 West Michigan Avenue, in Ypsilanti. A nonpartisan group led by older adults, SAW works to organize and educate seniors, giving them the tools they need to make informed decisions and to advocate on public policy issues that impact their lives.

SAW is sponsored by the Blueprint for Aging, a diverse coalition of community members and representatives from over 40 public, private, and nonprofit organizations working to enhance quality of life for all of Washtenaw County’s older residents through innovative programs and initiatives. The Blueprint for Aging is supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation through its Community Partnerships for Older Adults national initiative (CPFOA). CPFOA seeks to foster community partnerships that improve long-term care and supportive services systems to meet the current and future needs of older adults.

As part of the April presentation, Justine Bykowski of the Housing Bureau for Seniors will lead an interactive discussion highlighting long-term care options for people with varying incomes and levels of insurance coverage. The program will help older adults and their families understand this important, often confusing issue and will cover payment options for in-home services, assisted living, and nursing home care.

“It’s extremely important for people to understand funding sources for long-term care and where they can turn for financial assistance,” says Bykowski, who also serves on SAW’s Planning and Legislation Committee. “Often, when people need some form of long-term care or assisted living, they aren’t prepared and are surprised to learn about how it can be paid for.”

The presentation will also cover the idea of “money follows the person,” an innovative plan to enable Medicaid funds to be used for in-home and assisted living services as well as nursing home care.

**MORE**

SAW plans to bring this long-term care educational program to locations throughout Washtenaw County in the coming months. The second of five presentations will be held on May 14 at the Senior Health Building, 5361 McAuley Drive, on the St. Joseph Mercy Hospital campus in Ann Arbor as part of Senior Housing Awareness Week.

SAW is part of Blueprint for Aging efforts to promote senior leadership and publicize issues of importance to older adults. According to SAW leader Roger Spooner, the group aims to address a key problem. "When policy issues are being discussed there are often many interested parties expressing opinions," he says, "but seldom do seniors have a voice at the table. SAW hopes to change that."

SAW actively seeks members who are interested in education and advocacy training for older adults. To learn more about SAW, contact Jean Borger, Communications and Advocacy Resource Manager at the Blueprint for Aging, at (734) 712-0548.

As one of only 16 projects nationwide chosen to receive a CPFOA grant, the Blueprint for Aging partnership places Washtenaw County at the forefront of efforts across the nation to meet the challenge of the coming upsurge in the senior population. The Blueprint for Aging is also endorsed by the Washtenaw County Community Collaborative and has received major support from the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation.

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