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SENIOR ADVOCATES OF WASHTENAW TO CONVENE FIRST MEETING

Washtenaw County, Michigan – Older adults in Washtenaw County will have an opportunity to make their voices effectively heard about issues that are important to them by joining a new collaborative group. The Senior Advocates of Washtenaw will convene its first meeting on November 14th at American House, 3470 Carpenter Road, from 10:00 a.m. to Noon. The meeting will include a formal address from State Representative Alma Wheeler Smith, who will provide remarks on why it is important to be an advocate and an update on long-term care reform in Michigan. Washtenaw County Commissioner Barbara Levin Bergman will also address the group. Refreshments will be provided. Registration is free, and those interested are asked to RSVP to Dana Bright, Project Manager.

The Senior Advocates of Washtenaw is a nonpartisan coalition of older adults, advocacy groups, and other interested parties initiated by the Blueprint for Aging to provide education and advocacy on public policy issues affecting older adults in Washtenaw County. Proposed activities of the group include identifying policy proposals that affect seniors, pinpointing important senior issues, and making recommendations to elected officials and other key community leaders.

“The Senior Advocates of Washtenaw (SAW) meets an identified priority of older adults in this community,” says Dana Bright, the Blueprint for Aging’s Project Manager. “Older adults do not want others to speak for them. They want their own voices to be heard. Participation in SAW offers the opportunity to learn effective advocacy skills, discuss important issues for seniors, and meet with key community leaders in person.”

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Participants can take this a step further by putting this knowledge into action in order to bring about positive changes for seniors.”

The Blueprint for Aging is a diverse partnership of community members and representatives from over 40 public, private and nonprofit organizations. It is leading the county in a strategic planning process that will carry through the next several years. This process includes countywide discussion and priority setting of issues important to seniors, such as long term care, housing, transportation, and much more.

The Blueprint for Aging is an integral part of Community Partnerships for Older Adults (CPFOA) - a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, one of 11 projects nationwide selected from a field of 486 applicants to receive a planning grant in 2004. The Blueprint for Aging is also endorsed by the Washtenaw County Human Services Community and has received major support from the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation.

To RSVP for the Senior Advocates of Washtenaw meeting and for more information about the Blueprint for Aging, contact Dana Bright, Project Manager at 734/712-3625 or dbright@csswashtenaw.org.

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