

2009 Contemporary Social Issues Seminar Series
Sponsored by the Universities at Shady Grove and the Rockville Institute

Getting Ready for an Aging America: Where Are We, Where Do We Need to Go?

February 12, 2009

General Overview

Over the next decade, the rapidly changing demographic profile of local communities will require advance planning and program development to prepare for an emerging aging population with a diversity of circumstances. Most will be healthy and independent, while others will need a range of services. Current research and practice can help guide policies and plans for ensuring vibrant communities that address a full spectrum of needs. The Rockville Institute and the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services have initiated a collaborative effort to meld research and practice that can enhance health care, housing, transportation, and social services for a range of constituencies, including an expanding older population.

Presentation Goals

This presentation has four major goals:

1. Summarizing several myths and realities associated with the aging of the *Baby Boom* generation, showing the diversity of the 65+ population in terms of status and needs;
2. Identifying some of the public policy ramifications and initiatives of these demographic changes, including promoting *Livable Communities*, providing opportunities for *Civic Engagement*, and the development of *Community-Based Long-Term Care* as alternatives to nursing home placement;
3. Sharing the findings from several Westat studies of service delivery systems that support older persons, which may help inform and support policy analysis, planning, and the development of programs on aging; and
4. Providing an overview of the extensive local response to the needs of an emerging older consistency in Montgomery County, Maryland.

Presenters

Robert C. Ficke, a Senior Study Director at Westat, has more than 25 years of experience in survey research, evaluation, planning, and the administration of health and social services programs for the aging. Mr. Ficke has assisted Federal, state, and local agencies to develop and use outcome measures for programs for the aging and persons with disabilities, including transportation, home care, nutrition, and other community-based services.

John J. Kenney, PhD, is Chief of Aging and Disability Services in the Montgomery County, Maryland, Department of Health & Human Services. He has over 25 years experience in providing and administering services to older adults and people with disabilities. A major thrust of his work has been developing and coordinating a wide range of services to create vibrant communities for all persons.