

AGEOPTIONS NOW

December 2011

AgeOptions Receives National Award for MMW Coalition

The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) presented AgeOptions with one of three top awards in recognition of our innovative spirit and leadership in the Make Medicare Work coalition (MMW).

The Innovation in Aging Award was presented to AgeOptions CEO Jonathan Lavin at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. in July. AgeOptions was honored as one of three top-ranking programs among 13 receiving Aging Innovation Awards.



MMW is a statewide partnership started in 2005 to provide older adults and people with disabilities with education and decision-making support on health care plans, the Medicare Part D prescription drug program, state prescription plans and managed care.

MMW provides services to consumers, trains and supports professionals and volunteers, and advocates on behalf of older adults and people with disabilities throughout Illinois, bringing members' experience and interests to health care policy-makers and elected officials.

AgeOptions, Progress Center for Independent Living and Health & Disability Advocates are co-leaders of the coalition. Members include Illinois' 13 Area Agencies on Aging and more than 700 people from 260 organizations, including local, state and federal agencies, social service and health care providers, advocates and a variety of community-based organizations.

"The strong partnership among the three agencies in the MMW leadership team and the participation and support of the coalition members are key to the program's success," Lavin said. "Through this collaborative effort, MMW bolsters the ability of local agencies to provide services to groups that are often underserved, including those in low-income communities, people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing and residents whose first language is not English."

He expressed appreciation to Terri Gendel, AgeOptions director of benefits and advocacy, for her leadership of the program, and to n4a for recognizing the value of the MMW coalition to the community.

(continued on page 2)



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AgeOptions Receives National Award for MMW Coalition (page 2)

Last year, MMW coalition partners in suburban Cook County alone provided 69,348 counseling sessions, public education events for 26,393 consumers and assisted with 21,024 applications for federal and state health benefit programs. These programs saved consumers an estimated \$35 million. Coalition members also provided MMW-created informational materials to an additional 21,700 service providers and consumers.

The n4a awards are sponsored by CST *your* Link to Life (CST-LTL), a provider of personal emergency response systems, medication management systems and TeleHealth solutions. The \$1,500 award will be doubled, thanks to a matching grant to AgeOptions for MMW.