

# AGEOPTIONS NOW

April 2012

## Spotlight: Anthony J. Perry, M.D., Vice Chair, AgeOptions Board of Directors



Anthony J. Perry, M.D., spends a lot of time looking ahead – at new ways of delivering health care at Rush University Medical Center, and at future trends and needs in aging as a member of the AgeOptions Board of Directors.

A specialist in geriatric medicine at Rush, Tony is director of the Johnston R. Bowman Health Center and is also the clinical transformation officer, working on developing the medical center's new facilities and implementing electronic medical records.

He has been at Rush 21 years and notes that our health care system has been in evolution the entire time. "But it's still about working with a population of patients whose issues associated with aging haven't changed much," he said. "This is a patient population I really enjoy working with. I enjoy the patients and the complexity of topics and the richness of the relationships."

He joined the AgeOptions Board of Directors in 2007 and says volunteering here complements his interest in aging. "AgeOptions has connections with a whole set of aging-related programs in suburban Cook County that matter to the patients I care for." He lauds the leadership of Jonathan Lavin and Diane Slezak, as well as the board, in developing programs to meet both the present and future needs of older adults. "The programs AgeOptions oversees are vital to the patients I work with," he said.

Tony, who is vice chair of the AgeOptions Board of Directors, is also a member of two board committees that focus on the future, the Visioning Committee and the Program Committee, which he chairs. The latter, he said, provides an opportunity to learn about the many different AgeOptions programs. "It's definitely a two-way street. I hope I'm giving to the agency and I'm also learning about the intricacies of programs, services and providers. I hope I'm giving to AgeOptions by helping with the organizational processes and board oversight."

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The Visioning Committee, he said, is thinking down the road for AgeOptions. “We’re trying to see where to put our efforts to set the big picture direction of the organization: What are the trends we need to be aware of? What do we need to plan for? What’s changing with the older adult population as that population grows older and a new generation grows into that age group? How will that generation differ from the population AgeOptions has dealt with in the past?”

He notes that concurrent with changes in the older adult population are systems changes, including developments in health care, health care reform and state and federal funding issues. “We have to think about all that and apply forethought to our programs in suburban Cook County,” he said. “There’s also the issue of technology and how it’s exploding, and how to apply it to the senior population of suburban Cook County.”

He believes it’s too soon to draw conclusions about the future of aging, although “some things are very clear: The baby boomer generation moving into the 65-plus age group has a different history, different perspectives and different expectations, both in health care and living. We have to be sure to deal thoughtfully with our partner agencies and help them be successful in as many ways as possible.”

Tony received his undergraduate degree from the University of Scranton and his medical degree from Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia. Born on the East Coast and raised on the West Coast, he came to Chicago never having been here before. “I picked a spot in the middle,” he laughs. He and his family live in Riverside.

In addition to his volunteer work with AgeOptions, Tony serves on the board of the Community Memorial Foundation, which works to improve the health of people in the western suburbs. His volunteer activities also extend to sports. With three children ages 9, 8 and 6, he coaches Little League baseball, basketball and softball.

“It’s important for people to engage in their communities,” he said, “and I can truly say that by doing so I get more back than I ever expected.”