

JPAC Action Report

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HIV/AIDS in Older Adults



I recently attended a conference sponsored by the NYC Department for the Aging regarding HIV/AIDS among people over 50. This conference highlighted the increasing problem among older adults. Much of the information in the following article comes from this conference. About ten years ago, the number of people aged 50 or older with HIV/AIDS (PWA-People With HIV AIDS) was 10% of the 53,955 cases in NYC. Today, 31% of the more than 95,000 PWA in NYC are over 50 and the proportion is expected to continue to grow as new diagnoses decline and survival increases. Ten years ago, 17% of citywide deaths in PWA occurred in persons 50 and older. That percentage grew to 35% by 2001 and 47% by 2005. Nationally, through 2004, 14% of all reported HIV/AIDS cases were among people over age 50. The number of AIDS cases among people over age 50 increased more than fivefold, from 16,288 to 90,513.

Why is this happening? Heterosexual transmission of HIV is the leading mode of transmission among people over age 50. This is caused in part by the availability of erectile dysfunction remedies. Older adults are sexually active and are less likely to use protection because pregnancy is not an issue post menopause. Also older adults with long drug histories continue to use them. PWA's are living longer. It is quite likely that because older adults are not tested nearly as frequently as younger people, the incidence of HIV/AIDS among older persons is even greater than indicated by the statistics. Also older adults are not diagnosed properly as having HIV/AIDS because many of the symptoms resemble symptoms of old age. Ageist attitudes on the part of health professionals compound the lack of diagnosis and treatment. *Older people are not supposed to be engaged in these kinds of activities!*

What should be done about this situation? Clearly education and honest, open discussion is required. HIV testing of older adults needs to be expanded. There is an organization, the New York Association on HIV over Fifty (NYAHOF), which is advocating for policies addressing issues related to aging and HIV. NYAHOF membership meetings are held approximately every six weeks and are open to all interested individuals and organizations. For the time and place of the next meeting, call (212) 481-7594 or e-mail info@nyahof.org

- Woody Goldberg
Brooklyn Coordinator

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Hi JPAC,

It is good to be back at JPAC after quite a hiatus. For those of you who did not hear the news, I had a beautiful little girl back in November, her name is **Sylvia Margalit**. Thank you for all the good wishes I received at the office. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the JPAC Staff and Advisory Committee for all their hard work while I was out of the office.

I am sorry to inform you that **Steve Swidler** will be leaving JPAC to take a new position with JASA in Long Island. Steve did a fabulous job with IFSA and really took the lead when it came to educating and training members and staff on Medicare Part D. It is my pleasure to announce that **Bola Aribidesi** is the new IFSA Project Director. Bola has been instrumental as JPAC's Bronx Coordinator and in her support role with the Membership Committee. I am sure she will continue to work hard and will produce another excellent group of IFSA graduates.

We always welcome your involvement. If you have any interest in writing an article for the JAR or joining a committee, please be sure to contact our office at 212-273-5262.

- Molly Krakowski

IFSA Update

Although this is my final IFSA Update, I am excited that Bola Aribidesi, JPAC's Bronx Borough Coordinator, is the new IFSA Project Director.

Bola is a wonderful, creative social worker who is committed to JPAC's members and advocacy efforts. It has truly been a pleasure to have worked with all of you. Specifically, the hard work performed by the IFSA Steering Committee has been gratifying and inspiring. I have interacted closely with many JPAC members and will always remember your warmth and caring. I am proud of everything that we have been able to accomplish.

Presently, I am working as a Case Manager in the JASA Nassau County Service Center office to provide services to meet the needs of the seniors who reside in that area. I will always cherish the memories we have shared, and appreciate the guidance offered by all of you, and particularly by the late, **Dorothy Epstein**.



- Steve Swidler
IFSA Director

NYC Harlem Center Serves Meals...



Did you know that there is a center in Harlem that serves meals between the hours of 3:30pm and 5:30pm. The Harriet Tubman Senior Center, sponsored by Food Change, provides recreational activities, social service, meals and lots more.

Harriet Tubman Senior Center (P.S. 154) 250 West 127th Street

For more information, please contact Antoinette Emers, Director of Senior & Intergenerational Program, or Denise T. Baker, Associate Director of Senior intergenerational Programs, at (212) 894-8068

- Bola Aribidesi
Bronx Coordinator





JPAC '07 Membership Recognition Page...

JPAC continues to thank and recognize all of our members and organizations that continue to support JPAC by paying their annual dues.



Abelson, Burton (Lifetime)
 Allman, Elaine
 Armstrong, Marion
 Balderacchi, Mary
 Blumenthal, Helen
 Bonilla, Raquel
 Boyle, Nancy
 Brown, Gerald
 Carter, Gloria
 Cedar, Rita
 Chagnon, Dorothy
 Chong, Helen
 Colbert, Mabel
 Cole, Fannie
 Connor, Majorie
 De Angelis, Barbara
 Doswell, Viola
 Dugan, Patricia
 Fairtile, Doug
 Falcon, Nelly
 Feder, Rosalyn
 Fidel, Shirley

Fleming, Gertrude
 Freilich, Ruth
 Goldfarb, Victoria
 Goldstein, Morton
 Goodhart, George & Flora
 Gorelick, Mildred
 Innamorato, Mary
 Johnson, Lula
 Judd, Barbara
 Kaplan, Frances
 Keegan, Shirley
 Konyha, Stephen
 Korman, Miriam
 Korn, Pearl
 Lovell, Louise
 Mackie, Mattie
 Melnick, William
 Muravchik, Miriam
 Oltarsh, Martin
 Palumbo, Philip
 Perkins, Lillian (Lifetime)
 Pomponio, Faith

Reich, Ilana
 Roberts, Elyce
 Rodgers, Shirley
 Rosenblatt, Judith
 Ross, Tova
 Schwartz, Frances
 Seiler, Roslyn
 Seymour, Martha
 Simon, Dorothy
 Stanley, Gwendolyn
 Swidler, Steve & Donna
 Tasman, Myrna
 Washington, Anna
 Wasserman, Germaine
 Weaver-Smith, Caroline
 Weltman, Marilyn
 Wexler, Miriam
 Wigglesworth, Anne
 Williams, Jack
 Williams, Mamie
 Young, Laurie

We would also like to thank, 2 longtime affiliate of ours, **OWL/GNY** and **Local 237 Teamsters**, for continuously supporting JPAC by paying their annual membership dues.

Announcing.....

A Dance for Universal Health Care

The **Intergenerational Committee** with **students from Hunter's WRI Program**

will be hosting an event involving dancing, costumes, prizes and fun!

Wednesday April 18th or Wednesday April 25th

At Hunter College, 695 Park Ave, Manhattan

More details and final date to follow. Please call Julie Green, JPAC Intern, at 212-273-5263 for more details.



Are Your Doctors Opting Out of Medicare? Stop this trend, repeal the Kyl Amendment!



The Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 gave us the Part D prescription drug program. Additionally, it included reductions in the Medicare reimbursement structure that will limit the participation of doctors and other health care providers in the “original” Medicare program. Additional reductions in reimbursement are included in President Bush’s proposed Federal budget. These limitations and reductions have effectively influenced seniors to reluctantly choose a Medicare HMO or other Medicare Advantage option. This is clearly leading towards the privatization of Medicare, since these Medicare Advantage options are available only through private insurance companies. Many seniors have already been advised by their physicians that they will no longer accept new “original” Medicare patients. Some doctors are even beginning to exclude existing “original” Medicare patients.

This trend can be traced back a few years to an amendment sponsored by Senator Jon Kyl of Arizona that “allowed” Medicare beneficiaries to enter into private contracts for services. In fact, it was actually proposed to enable doctors to opt out of Medicare. As described in a February 1998 article in “Healthcare Management,” author Jeanne Scott stated, “Last year, Senator Jon Kyl (R-AZ) pushed through a little-noted amendment to the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 that would allow physicians to contract privately with senior citizens and effectively charge whatever they want to for services, as long as Medicare is not involved and these senior citizens agree to pay the full physicians’ fees without seeking Medicare payment. In return for this private right of contract, the physicians involved effectively would be excluded from receiving any Medicare payments at all for two years.”

Healthcare for seniors is heading in the wrong direction! Consumers Union has noted that before Medicare, millions of our nations’ elderly had no health insurance at all. Today, because of Medicare, almost all of individuals who are 65 years or older, have health coverage. Consumers’ added that today, seniors are protected from unpredictable increases in out-of-pocket costs, and that allowing doctors to contract privately threatens seniors by encouraging doctors to negotiate the price with patients, and not abide by Medicare’s limitations for privately provided services. Medicare’s existing financial protections are vital for the millions of seniors who live at or near the poverty line.

Physician’s organizations, such as the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons (AAPS), are encouraging doctors to opt out. The AAPS advises that Medicare “is the worst payor...has the oldest, sickest patients..has the most demanding patients...overrules all medical decisions...can confiscate (the doctors’) life savings...can put (the doctor) in jail,” and that “It will be impossible to overestimate the lift you (the doctor) and your staff will get when you finally dump the biggest albatross (Medicare) of all time.”

Presently, a decreasing number of providers who treat patients with Medicare “accept assignment,” which means they agree to accept the Medicare-approved amount as payment in full. “Nonparticipating providers” in New York State can bill their Medicare patients only up to 5 percent more than the Medicare-approved amount and can demand payment up front for services. Providers who wish to charge their Medicare patients whatever they want must officially “opt out” of Medicare.

(continued on page 5)

Are Your Doctors Opting Out of Medicare?



Stop this trend, repeal
the Kyl Amendment!
(Continued)...

The only time a doctor who has opted out can receive payment from Medicare is when the doctor has provided a patient with emergency or urgent care services, and there is no private contract between the doctor and the patient; or the doctor did not give the patient a private contract to sign before providing medical services. [NOTE: You cannot be asked to sign a private contract when you are facing this situation].

We must address this issue now! Regarding the President's current proposed budget, the Alliance for Retired Americans has noted "In the past, Mr. Bush proposed trimming Medicare payments to health care providers for a few years, but he now proposes to make the cutbacks permanent, so that hospitals and nursing homes would never receive a full update for inflation. Medicare advocates say these cutbacks in payments to healthcare providers almost certainly will affect Medicare beneficiaries' access to quality healthcare services."

Take Action: The first step to stop the trend of doctors opting out of Medicare is to repeal the Kyl Amendment! Please use the attached sample letter to contact your representative and Senators Clinton and Schumer to advocate for its repeal. Inform them about the increasing problem of finding doctors and other health care providers who participate in Medicare and urge them to strengthen the program. *Don't forget, you can call Congress via the new toll-free number at 1-800-828-0498.*

- Steve Swidler
IFSA Director

Close the Loopholes in Political Contribution Limits!



The Federal Election Campaign Act places monetary limits on contributions to candidates for federal office, however, a loophole exists that permits supporters to collect and provide many times that amount to candidates. The loophole known as "bundling," allows lobbyists to funnel money to federal officeholders, candidates, leadership PACs and party committees. Members of the House of Representatives have drafted a bill, **H.R.633**, on lobbying. It is sponsored by Rep. Christopher Van Hollen of Maryland. Co-sponsors from the New York Congressional delegation include Rep. Timothy Bishop, Michael McNulty and Nydia Velazquez.

Included in this bill is a requirement to disclose "bundling" of political contributions. This is an important step to provide the public with knowledge regarding the role that lobbyists play in formulating policy in Congress, and the White House. The bill amends the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, requiring lobbyists to disclose the candidates, leadership PACs and political party committees for whom they collect or arrange contributions. **H.R.633** is in the first stage of the legislative process where the bill is considered in committee and may undergo significant changes in markup sessions. The bill has been referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary, which is chaired by Rep. John Conyers, Jr. One of our local elected officials, Rep. Jerrold Nadler is a committee member.

H.R.633 should be incorporated into the comprehensive lobbying reform efforts underway in the House and Senate. Passage of the reform bill will provide needed transparency in contributions made to candidates and party committees. Passage would represent a true democracy at work!

Take Action: Use the sample action letter on page 10 to contact Chairman Conyers, Rep. Nadler, other Judiciary Committee members, and your elected Rep. to urge them to support **H.R. 633**. The House Judiciary Committee may be contacted at (202) 225-3951.

- Adele Bender
Queens Coordinator

NYCHA is Now Accepting Applications for Section 8 Vouchers (from Feb.12, 2007 to May 14, 2007)



The Housing Choice Voucher Program, often referred to as Section 8 Assistance, provides rent subsidies to enable eligible low-income families (or individuals) to live in safe, affordable housing. Eligible individuals are able to select housing in any neighborhood with landlords willing to participate in the Section 8 Assistance program. If a family or individual, already living in a rent stabilized apartment, later receives Section 8, the family's or individual's current landlord is not obligated to accept the voucher. According to current laws, landlords cannot refuse to accept Section 8 from tenants who have always had section 8 while living in their residences.

There will be 12,000 vouchers available this year and 10,000 more next year. 3,000 vouchers have been set aside for families in danger of becoming homeless.

Family Size and Income Requirement:

1 Person ≤ \$24,800 2 Persons ≤ \$28,350 3 Persons ≤ \$31,900 4 Persons ≤ \$35,450

How to Obtain an Application: Applications for Section 8 Housing Assistance may be picked up from any of the five Borough Applications Offices or you may call the Applications Offices to have an application mailed to you.

Bronx

1 Fordham Plaza, 5th Fl.
Bronx, NY 10458
(718) 329-7859
TDD/TTY (718) 329-7735

Brooklyn

350 Livingston Street, 2nd Fl.
Brooklyn, NY 11217
(718) 250-5900
TDD/TTY (718) 222-4113

Manhattan

55 West 125th Street, 7th Fl.
New York, NY 10027
(212) 828-7100
TDD/TTY (212) 828-7118

Queens

59-17 Junction Blvd. 2nd Fl.
Corona, NY 11368
(212) 828-7100
TDD/TTY (212) 828-7118

Staten Island

120 Stuyvesant Pl., 2nd Fl.
Staten Island, NY 10301
(718) 448-7326
TDD/TTY (718) 222-4113

Completed Applications Must Be Mailed To: New York City Housing Authority, Post Office Box 445, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10008-0445. **(Postmarked no later than May 14th)** After NYCHA receives the applications, applicants who qualify are placed on a preliminary waiting list and later interviewed.

Information for this article was taken from Saul, Michael. "100M Boost Opens Doors to Section 8." *New York Daily News*, January 30, 2007. NYCHA's Guide to Section 8 Housing Assistance Program, revised January 2007. Sue Susman e-mail alerts, February 3, 2007.

- Bola Aribidesi
Bronx Coordinator



OWL Newsletter March 2007

The Voice of Midlife and Older Women

Greater NY Chapter Older Women's League
Box 1242, Ansonia Station
New York, NY 10023
Tel . 212-663-2932

Dear Owls of NERO,

Just attended my first National Board meeting in Washington, DC. (February 3-4, 2007).



The twenty board members present were a forceful, dynamic group with everyone having at least one if not two other areas of involvement that added to their strengths. Ms. Ellen Bruce of Boston is the new Board President of OWL.

A few points of interests:

1. The Mother's Day report for 2007 which will be about health care for all is almost finished. I have a copy of the executive summary. Let me know if you would like a copy.
2. The outstanding debt that National has is being paid off in a timely manner. All chapters are hopefully paying their dues to the National.
3. Please check out the OWL website. The website is www.owl-national.org. The site has information on the OWL organization as well as copies of all OWL publications that anyone can download.

Please feel free to contact me as needed.

Lowell Green,
NERO rep. to the National Board

Sen. Kennedy Proposes Health Families Act *(From the OWL Powerline)*



Sen. Edward Kennedy, chairman of the Senate Health, Education and Labor Committee, held a hearing on his new bill which would allow paid sick leave. The Health Families Act would require employers with 15 or more employees to provide seven paid sick days to care for their needs and the needs of their family. Currently, almost half of private sector workers are denied paid sick days and of the lowest quarter of wage earners, 79% have no paid sick days at all.

This bill is important to women! Balancing work with personal and family health-care concerns is a big stress to many working women. Women are continuously overrepresented in low-wage and part-time positions, which are the least likely to offer employee benefits such as paid sick days. That said, working women remain the primary caregiver in most families – thus making them chose between caring for themselves or family and possibly losing their job, or going to work when they shouldn't.



First Woman President of Harvard

Dr. Drew Gilpin Faust was named the first woman president of Harvard. OWL is very excited that Harvard has chosen a woman who is exceptionally qualified and is a proven leader.

She has dedicated her career to academia and is a role model for women and girls everywhere. She takes the place of Mr. Larry Summers who stepped down a year ago after his derogatory remarks about the "intrinsic aptitude" of women in math and science.

The new president was a leading force in efforts to increase the number of female scientists at Harvard. Congratulations Dr. Faust!!



Are You Ready Legally?

Join OWL/GNY for a Membership Meeting on Elder Law, with Guest Speaker, Lisa Dekenipp, Attorney at Law, Freedman, Fish and Grimaldi

When: Monday, March 26th at 1pm

Where: JASA Cooper Square, (Green Residence), 200 East 5th Street (Corner of 3rd Avenue). Second Floor, Library.

A light lunch will be served. Please RSVP to **Juanita Doares** at (212) 666-5737.



We welcome Roz Seiler, a longtime member of the Brooklyn OWL chapter to OWL/GNY. She has compiled the quotes we are using in this issue...

- "Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage."
- Anais Nin, *The Diary of Anais Nin*, volume 3, 1939-1944
- "You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face ... You must do the thing you think you cannot do."
- Eleanor Roosevelt
- "It is better to be a lion for a day than all your life a sheep."
- Sister Elizabeth Kenny
- "You can't be brave if you've only had wonderful things happen to you."
- Mary Tyler Moore

April 2007

Sample Letter

Honorable Charles Schumer
United States Senator
757 Third Avenue, Room 1702
New York, NY 10017

Honorable _____
United States Congress member

Subject: The Kyl Amendment

Dear Senator/Congress member _____:

As a leader in the fight for adequate health care for all Americans, I urge you introduce legislation to repeal the Kyl amendment and encourage our medical providers to continue to protect our nation's older population by strengthening the Medicare program.

The Kyl Amendment, (**S.Amdt.468**) to the 1997 Balanced Budget Act established the process for doctors to opt out of providing services to Medicare patients.

The trend of doctors and other health care providers leaving the Medicare program is a frightening situation for seniors! Some physician groups are encouraging their members not to provide services to Medicare patients, thereby avoiding the "sickest and most demanding patients." Before Medicare, our nation's elderly had no guaranteed health insurance. Today, although most of those 65 and older have Medicare or other health coverage, many health care providers are not accepting "original" Medicare." When doctors opt out of Medicare, seniors become exposed to unpredictable increases in out-of-pocket medical costs. They are no longer protected by Medicare's limitations on health care fees. These financial protections are especially important for the millions of seniors who live at or near the poverty level.

Access to health care is critical for older Americans! Privatization of Medicare, through Medicare HMOs and other Medicare Advantage Insurance Plans, is not the answer. I value the choices and predictable costs of Original Medicare. Medicare HMOs prioritize profits over delivering good health care.

Sincerely,

Name _____

Address _____

April 2007

The Honorable _____
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Congress Member _____:

At a time when our government is being overrun by lobbyists, I urge you to support **H.R. 633**.

This bill amends the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995, requiring lobbyists to disclose the candidates, leadership PACs and political party committees for whom they collect or arrange contributions.

H.R.633, sponsored by Representative Van Hollen, would provide a detailed accounting of how monies are distributed and to whom contributions are made. The bill was referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary in late January. This legislation goes to the heart of the matter by providing the citizens of a democratically elected government with the "right to know" of any undue influence being brought to bear upon elected officials.

I urge you to support **H.R.633**.

I look forward to your response. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Name _____

Address _____



Please keep this handy



April JPAC Calendar of Events
2007

<p>5 Thursday</p>	<p>1 p.m. - Membership and Outreach Committee (MOC) Meeting - @ JPAC for Older Adults, 132 West 31st Street, 10th Floor, (between 6th & 7th Avenues). Please RSVP to Bola at (718) 365-4044.</p>
<p>6 Friday</p>	<p>1 p.m. - Mental Health Committee Meeting - @ JPAC for Older Adults, 132 West 31st Street, 10th Floor, (between 6th & 7th Avenues). Please RSVP to Woody at (718) 934-7718.</p>
<p>9 Monday</p>	<p>2 p.m. - Brooklyn Borough Meeting - @ St. Francis College, 180-182 Remsen Street, (Downtown Brooklyn). Please RSVP to Woody at (718) 934-7718.</p>
<p>17 Tuesday</p>	<p>1 p.m. - Housing Committee Meeting - @ JPAC for Older Adults, 132 West 31st Street, 10th Floor, (between 6th & 7th Avenues). Please RSVP to Adele at (718) 286-1528.</p>
<p>19 Thursday</p>	<p>1 p.m. - Queens Borough Meeting - @ Flushing Library, 41-17 Main Street, Flushing. Please RSVP to Adele at (718) 286-1528.</p>
<p>24 Tuesday</p>	<p>10 a.m. - Bronx Borough Meeting - @ Bronx House Senior Center, 990 Pelham Parkway South, Bronx NY. Please RSVP to Bola at (718) 365-4044.</p>
<p>30 Monday</p>	<p>10 a.m. - Manhattan Borough Meeting - @ Community Church of NY, 40 East 35th Street, (between Park & Madison). Please RSVP to Tasha at (212) 273-5262.</p>

Jewish Association for Services for the Aged
JPAC for Older Adults
132 W. 31st St. - 10th Floor
New York, NY 10001

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JPAC Action Report

Molly Krakowski, *JPAC Director*

Steve Swidler, *IFSA Director*

Tasha Forsythe, Administrative Assistant

☎ (212) 273-5262 ☎

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JPAC is sponsored by the
Jewish Association for Services for the Aged (JASA).

JPAC is strictly non-partisan