

News Release

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For more information, contact:

Jennifer Trotter (505) 998-9898

AARP President Discusses Health Care Reform at NMMRA's Consumer Advisory Council Meeting

Albuquerque, NM—On August 6, 2009, AARP President Jennie Chin Hansen, RN, MS, FAAN, spoke in Albuquerque before a group of health care professionals and consumer representatives at the quarterly Consumer Advisory Council meeting of the New Mexico Medical Review Association (NMMRA).

Ms. Hansen provided the group with insight into current health reform efforts from AARP's perspective. Touching upon hospital care, coordination of care, and end of life issues, she said that the goal should be for patients to have an opportunity to live as well as possible.

"Patients want to manage their conditions well," Ms. Hansen said. "Health care professionals need information that will allow them to perform the best they can. There is a need to address how provider care is designed."

AARP cites six priorities that should be addressed under health care reform:

- Guaranteeing access to affordable coverage for Americans age 50 to 64
- Closing the Medicare Part D coverage gap or "doughnut hole"
- Creating access to generic versions of biologic drugs used to treat cancer and other serious diseases to reduce the price of these costly treatments
- Preventing costly hospital readmissions by creating a follow-up care benefit in Medicare to help people safely transition home after a hospital stay



Dan Jaco, NMMRA, CEO; Jennie Chin Hansen, RN, MS, FAAN, AARP President; and Ophelia Rinaldi, MSW, NMMRA Board Member and CAC Chairperson

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New Mexico Medical Review Association



- Increasing federal funding and eligibility for home and community-based services through Medicaid so older Americans can remain in their homes and avoid more costly institutions as they age
- Improving programs that help low income Americans in Medicare afford the health care and prescription drugs they need

According to Dan Jaco, NMMRA chief executive officer, the AARP presentation was a combined effort among NMMRA, the local chapter of AARP and the Aligning Forces for Quality (AF4Q) initiative in Albuquerque – the goal of which is to lift the overall quality of health care in targeted communities, reduce racial and ethnic disparities, and provide models for national health care reform. Also joining the CAC members were representatives of the Albuquerque Department of Senior Affairs Advisory Council as well as from the New Mexico Medical Society and local press.

“Serving as an independent convener for open discussion about improving health care is a role that NMMRA performs in this community,” said Jaco. “These kinds of events serve to promote NMMRA’s mission of facilitating demonstrable and continuous improvement in the quality of health care.”

NMMRA is an Albuquerque-based, non-profit, physician-sponsored organization. Serving as a resource to the state's health care community and to Medicare beneficiaries, NMMRA seeks to fulfill its mission to facilitate demonstrable and continuous improvement in the quality of health care and achieve its vision to be a premier and innovative leader in improving health care. NMMRA has served continuously as the state's only federally contracted Medicare Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) since 1984. NMMRA also serves as the state's Medicaid External Quality Review Organization. NMMRA’s Consumer Advisory Council is charged with providing input to staff regarding educational materials and programs for Medicare beneficiaries in the state, identifying opportunities for disseminating information about programs designed to improve the overall health of Medicare beneficiaries in the state, assisting in coordinating educational and informational activities and identifying opportunities to target educational efforts.