

AoA NEWS

U.S. Administration on Aging

Department of Health and Human Services



For Immediate Release
April 30, 2004

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AoA Announces *You Can! Steps to Healthier Aging* Campaign

The Administration on Aging (AoA) announced its national outreach campaign geared to promoting better nutrition and physical activity for seniors. The campaign reflects Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson's commitment to addressing the serious health consequences for Americans caused by obesity and chronic disease.

Josefina G. Carbonell, Assistant Secretary for Aging, today announced three new components of the *YouCan! Steps to Healthier Aging* campaign. They include, three national partners, the launch of a Web site, and the funding of 10 mini-grants to implement a nutrition and physical activity program for older adults at the local level.

The announcement came during Secretary Thompson's 2nd National *Steps to a Healthier U.S.* Summit in Baltimore.

YouCan! Steps to Healthier Aging (YouCan!) campaign is designed to increase the number of older adults who are active and healthy. *YouCan!* is the aging component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's *Steps to a HealthierUS* initiative, which encourages Americans of every age to make healthier choices. The Campaign takes direct aim at the rising epidemic of obesity and chronic disease among Americans of all ages, including older adults. Improved food choices and increased physical activity are two healthier lifestyle choices that help prevent, delay, or manage serious health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, and some types of cancer. *YouCan!* uses a partnership approach to mobilize communities to create public awareness strategies and make programs available to help older Americans make healthier lifestyle choices that can keep them healthy, active, and independent as they age.

"AoA is pleased to announce its initial *YouCan!* Federal partners are: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Institute on Aging (NIA), a component of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports (PCPFS)—all organizations that share our commitment to the health and well being of older Americans," Josefina Carbonell said. "It is our goal to enlist over 2,000 organizations as *YouCan!* Partners by the fall of 2005 to join us in getting the Secretary's message out to 2 million or more older Americans that encourage healthier lifestyle choices that can save and improve the quality of many lives," she added.

YouCan! unveiled its new Web site today, which provides an array of information, including a campaign overview, products and services, information about the benefits of becoming a *YouCan!* Partner, and resources for further information. The site can be accessed at www.aoa.gov/youcan. Additional topics and information will be added to the site over time.

With funding from AoA, the National Policy & Resource Center on Nutrition & Aging (Center) at Florida International University awarded 10 mini-grants of approximately \$10,000 each, to implement a nutrition and walking program entitled *Eat Better & Move More* at the local level. These mini-grants are designed to support AoA's new *YouCan!* Campaign. The grants were awarded to 10 geographically and ethnically diverse Nutrition Programs, representing small to large organizations in urban, suburban, and rural communities. Awards begin June 1, 2004 and end February 28, 2005.

Mini-grants awardees are:

- Active Aging, Inc., Meadville, PA
- Alameda County AAA, Oakland, CA
- Citizen Potawatomi Nation Shawnee, OK
- Detroit AAA, Detroit, MI
- East St. Louis Township Senior Citizens Activity Center, East St. Louis, IL
- Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioner, Tampa, FL
- Kit Clark Senior Services, Federated Dorchester Neighborhood Houses, Inc., Dorchester, MA
- Senior Services of Snohomish County, Mukilteo, WA
- Southeastern Wisconsin AAA, Brookfield, WI
- Valley Program for Aging Services, Inc., Waynesboro, VA

“The announcement of these three important aspects of *YouCan!* represents a coordinated approach to this important national outreach campaign. AoA recognizes the significant role organizations like these play in helping mobilize communities to help older Americans improve their nutrition and increase their physical activity--both of which promote independence as they age.” said Carbonell.

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The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging, works with a nationwide network of organizations and service providers to make support services and resources available to older persons and their caregivers. For more information, please visit <http://www.aoa.gov>.