

## REP. SCHWARTZ INTRODUCES PLAN TO ADDRESS PRESSING CHALLENGES FACING SENIORS TODAY

Washington, D.C. – Today, Congresswoman Allyson Y. Schwartz introduced the *Care Coordination for Older Americans Act of 2014* to better coordinate vital services for our nation’s seniors.

For nearly 50 years, the *Older Americans Act* has improved the lives of millions of seniors, caregivers, and persons with disabilities through services such as home-delivered meal programs, transportation, adult day care, legal assistance and health promotion programs. This law, however, is in urgent need of strengthening because many of today’s seniors suffer from one or more chronic conditions. The *Older Americans Act* must address the need for coordination between providers of health care services and organizations providing social support. The current lack of coordination leads to preventable medical problems, harm to senior’s health and unnecessary expenses to the health care system.

To strengthen and to expand coordination between organizations serving seniors and health care providers, the *Care Coordination for Older Americans Act* establishes a link between the medical care, long-term services and other supports that seniors depend on every day.

Specifically, the *Care Coordination for Older Americans Act of 2014*:

- Instructs the State agency and Area Agencies on Aging (AAA’s) to promote the development and implementation of care coordination plans that address the needs of older individuals with multiple chronic illnesses;
- Includes care coordination in the Declaration of Objectives of the *Older Americans Act*;
- Provides a definition of care coordination that includes the coordination of medical and social services;
- Directs the Assistant Secretary for Aging to encourage collaboration and sharing of information between the states, AAA’s, Aging and Disability Resource Center, service providers, health care providers and medical entities in order to improve care coordination.

“Preventable and highly manageable chronic diseases consume more than 75 percent of health care costs making it vital that we implement common-sense solutions enable seniors to access the services they need and better manage their chronic diseases,” said [Rep. Schwartz \(PA-13\)](#). “Improved coordination of care between health and social services is essential to ensuring that seniors can live healthier lives.”

According to [Ron Barth, President and CEO of LeadingAge PA](#) says “our members and the consumers they serve face a fragmented maze of service offerings and funding streams when evaluating the services and supports that will meet their unique needs. This bill ensures that consumers, assessment agencies, resource centers, and providers work together to coordinate care with the consumer at the center of the discussion.”

According to [Emily Saltz, President of the National Association of Geriatric Care Managers \(NAPGCM\)](#), “in today’s often complex and confusing health care system, expanded access to quality care management is a common sense step that will pay dividends for older Americans and their families. Professional geriatric care managers see the benefits of and need for these services every day in communities across the nation.”

In addition, Patricia Volland, MSW, Director of the Social Work Leadership Institute at Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College NY, and Co-Chair of the National Coalition on Care Coordination (N3C), states “care coordination that links health/medicine with long-term and social supports will go a long way to ensuring that older adults and their caregivers will receive the supports and services needed to stay in charge of their lives!”

“The Alliance for Aging Research is committed to the ideal that older Americans should have care that’s focused on their own unique health needs. Congresswoman Schwartz’s bill highlights the importance of OAA services and defines how they could be better integrated into coordinated care of older adults,” according to Cynthia Bens, Vice President of Public Policy for the Alliance for Aging Research.

*The Care Coordination for Older Americans Act is endorsed by major advocacy groups including the: Alliance for Aging Research, American Association of Service Coordinators, American Society on Aging, Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging, Center for Medicare Advocacy, Consumer Coalition for Quality Health Care, Easter Seals of Western and Central Pennsylvania, Easter Seals National, LeadingAge California, LeadingAge Pennsylvania, LeadingAge National, National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs, National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers, National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, National Coalition on Care Coordination, and the Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute.*