November 2005 marked the launch of the Journal of Gerontological Nursing’s new quarterly feature, Foundation News. This feature highlights current and forthcoming activities and initiatives from foundations with an interest relevant to older adults and their care. Reports include such information as new funding opportunities, awards, new programmatic initiatives, sponsored conferences, names and contact information for staff members responsible for aging-related concerns, and links to foundation home pages for more detailed information on relevant activities. The Editor welcomes reader feedback related to this new feature and would like to invite other foundations interested in participating in Foundation News to contact the Executive Editor for more information: mdaddona@slackinc.com. This is the third installment of Foundation News.

THE AARP FOUNDATION
Medicare D and Extra Help Program Outreach

Medicare now offers insurance plans through its Part D program to help individuals pay for prescription drugs. There is a small monthly premium and a copayment for each prescription, but there is no deductible, and most drugs and pharmacies are covered. Subsidies will be available to help low-income beneficiaries with the cost-sharing obligations. These subsidies are known as Extra Help.

One primary goal of AARP is to be a resource to low-income beneficiaries and help them apply for the low-income subsidy. To reach this goal, the AARP Foundation is directly supporting AARP’s outreach efforts and is launching projects through existing Foundation programs that provide education and access to information on Medicare D and the Extra Help program.

In November and December of 2005, AARP Senior Community Service Employment Program (SC-SEP) Project Directors at 100 sites across the country hosted special meetings for program enrollees about the Extra Help benefit and provided applications in English and Spanish. They also provided pre-stamped envelopes and time to apply.

The AARP National Legal Training Project hosted web-trainings on Medicare D and the Extra Help Program for legal service staff and volunteers throughout the country. Trainings provided a basic overview, latest updates on the new health benefit, and frequently asked questions for advocates. The trainings focused on how to help callers complete the Extra Help application.

The AARP Senior Hotline Technical Assistance Project worked with the National Association of Legal Hotlines to assist callers with completing the Extra Help application.

During its operating season from February to April, the AARP Tax-Aide program made AARP materials on Medicare D and the Extra Help Program available to Tax-Aide volunteers across the country for distribution at their sites. In addition, a few sites placed Senior Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) volunteers at AARP Tax-Aide sites to help identify individuals who might be eligible for Extra Help and provide assistance with the applications.

Reaching Limited Income Communities

Another AARP effort supported by the AARP Foundation is identification of external organizations that can reach limited-income communities and encourage and assist them in applying for the Part D subsidy. There are challenges associated with reaching limited income audiences, and the organizations targeted by AARP offer unique, focused approaches to doing so. It is well known that these communities place a high value on “trusted sources” who will engage them individually. Therefore, AARP is working via organizations that will provide understandable educational information to those who can benefit from it, delivered by individuals and organizations they trust. AARP seeks to increase the number of completed subsidy applications to increase enrollment in the program.

“We can help increase awareness of Medicare Part D and Extra Help through our project sites and the national networks of volunteers that are part of the AARP Foundation’s programs. Our commitment is to help those who qualify yet often do not apply or find it difficult to get access to the benefits provided through these new Medicare features,” says Jennie Chin Hansen, MS, RN, FAAN, who is the Chair of the AARP Foundation’s Board of Directors.

For more information on AARP Foundation visit www.aarp.org.
The Atlantic Philanthropies believes care of older adults is the core business of the 6,000+ hospitals in this country, it is supporting a program to enhance the quality of their care. Atlantic Philanthropies has given a grant to the New York University College of Nursing’s Hartford Institute for Geriatric Nursing to create a business plan to expand and roll out its very successful NICHE™ program across the country.

NICHE (Nurses Improving Care to Healthsystems Elders) is an innovative, system-wide, nurse-driven care delivery program with practice models, training, evaluation, and staff-development components aimed at U.S. hospitals, preparing them to provide high-quality nursing care for the steadily higher proportion of geriatric patients that can be expected over the next decades. Now adopted by 197 hospitals nationwide, NICHE has demonstrated positive results in both improved nursing practices and improved patient outcomes.

NYU Nursing believes that NICHE has the potential to reach a high proportion of the nation’s 6,000+ hospitals where it could be useful and effective, and to become self-sustaining as an ongoing resource for hospitals. To prepare NICHE for launch as a substantial and sustainable service, Atlantic Philanthropies is supporting NYU Nursing with a planning grant of $309,000 to prepare a comprehensive business and marketing plan for NICHE.

To create a comprehensive business and marketing plan, NYU Nursing is tapping various experts and partners across the country. One of its best sources is the 197 hospitals already committed to NICHE. At the annual NICHE Leadership and Users Conferences, which took place the last week in February, 2006, more than 400 nursing and other health care professionals representing teams from 59 hospitals gathered for 4 days. Focus groups tapped the expertise of the participants in three areas:

- How to create, brand, and administer an “Elder-Friendly Hospital” designation which would be in partnership with the American Organization of Nurse Executives.
- The content and format of “Geriatric Resources,” that would include the role of evidence-based support of information for validation, the use of the Internet and other electronic formats, the role of content in electronic medical records, and much more.
- Exploring and creating “outcome measures” of implementing enhanced care for older adults to track such data areas as quality care, finance, and satisfaction components.

As the planning grant moves forward, work will also focus on understanding the benefits of NICHE in addressing nursing workforce issues and examining marketing outreach strategies to the many professional health care disciplines involved in the care of older adults, the larger health care community, and consumers.

For More Information
For more information about nursing-related efforts, contact Christopher A. Langston, PhD, Program Executive, U.S. Program on Aging, The Atlantic Philanthropies (USA) Inc., 125 Park Avenue, 21st Floor, New York, NY 10017-5581; call (212) 916-7300, fax (212) 368-9207, or e-mail c.langston@atlanticphilanthropies.org or visit the website at www.atlanticphilanthropies.org/.

Mather LifeWays
Evanston, Illinois-based Mather LifeWays is a 50+-year-old not-for-profit organization that creates “Ways to Age Well” for older adults through its senior living residences, Institute on Aging, and community initiatives and neighborhood programs, including its Mather’s—More Than A Café concept.

Moving Forward with Proposed State-of-the-Art CCRC
After 2½ years, Mather LifeWays announced it has received approval to move forward with its plans to build a $200 million state-of-the-art senior living residence in Evanston, IL. Located within walking distance from Lake Michigan, Northwestern University, and downtown Evanston, the unique two-building continuing care retirement community (CCRC) will include independent, assisted living, and long-term care units, including the latest amenities sought by today’s older adults.

This project is a continued effort to provide quality housing for older adults and will provide housing to meet the needs of the rising aging population and will replace two of Mather LifeWays’ current senior living communities, Mather Gardens and Mather Place at The Georgian, on the existing sites.

Although nearly $25 million has been invested in the two existing buildings during the past 15 years, Mather LifeWays’ Board of Directors determined that these buildings are not in line with current market standards and need to be replaced. The community will provide a unique opportunity for older adults to live in a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly environment with easy access to public transportation.

“We are thrilled to be moving forward with this exciting new community,” said Mary Leary, president...
and CEO of Mather LifeWays, “There is great demand for this type of community and this location, as demonstrated by the 100+ priority deposits we’ve received by word-of-mouth alone.”

**PREPARE for Bioterrorism and Natural Disasters**

In November, Mather LifeWays unveiled PREPARE, a national continuing education program for long-term care (LTC) health providers to address the consequences of bioterrorism, natural disasters, and other public health emergency preparedness challenges. PREPARE will reach more than 25,000 LTC workers during the next 3 years (including physicians, nurses, administrators, social workers, home health care workers, managers, and staff). Participants gain knowledge, skills, and abilities in bioterrorism and emergency preparedness surveillance, response, and recovery through a variety of learning activities and tools including classroom experiences, exercises, and Web courses.

**Responsing to a Need.** Administrators from nearly 200 LTC communities in 30 states participated in a web-based needs-assessment survey on emergency preparedness, conducted by Linda Hollinger-Smith, RN, PhD, FAAN, PREPARE Project Director and Director of Research for Mather LifeWays Institute on Aging. It was found that 91% of LTC health care professionals, direct care workers, and other staff are ill-prepared to deal with bioterrorism threats or other public health emergencies. In addition, few organizations (less than 10% of respondents) provide education to their staff in the areas of performing disaster drills, helping older adults cope with disasters, and managing biological and chemical exposure risk for older adults.

**How You Can PREPARE.** Equip your staff with the skills needed to handle bioterrorism threats and other public health emergencies with PREPARE training. Monthly PREPARE Train-the-Trainer Workshops are scheduled beginning in March 2006. Workshops are now being offered at two locations in the Chicagoland area. Additional national workshops are being scheduled during the next 2 years. LTC organizations across the nation may benefit from a federal grant provided by the Health Resources and Services Administration that supports the cost of the train-the-trainer workshop and materials for two persons from each organization. Course participants become PREPARE Specialists after attending the 2-day workshop where they gain necessary skills and tools to teach the Learning Modules to the entire staff.

LTC organizations also receive guidance to incorporate this education into quality improvement programs, build community and volunteer resource linkages, and involve emergency management at local, state, and national levels.

Additionally, continuing education in emergency preparedness targeting geriatric care issues is offered to nursing faculty via online continuing education. Many academic programs have limited success in designing emergency preparedness courses due to lack of faculty expertise in bioterrorism or disaster planning.

**Key Partners in the Program.** Mather LifeWays acknowledges federal support for the program through a 3-year cooperative agreement grant awarded by the Health Research and Services Administration. The first year of federal funding is $644,466 with subsequent funding authorized by Congress annually. The Institute for the Future of Aging Services, the applied research institute of the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, is collaborating on an impact evaluation of the program.

For more information, please e-mail prepare@matherlifeways.com or call 847-492-6803.

**Medicare Assistance for Older Adults**

Mather’s—More Than a Café has partnered with My Medicare Matters™ to help older adults understand the options available and to help them make informed decisions about their Medicare enrollment. In response to the abundance of problems associated with the new Medicare enrollment system, trained educators are on-hand to provide private, personalized guidance to older adults as they learn about the new coverage and their options.

Mather’s—More Than a Café has been providing older adults with one-on-one Medicare guidance since the new system was unveiled last December, and has been overwhelmed by the number of individuals seeking help. In addition to this service, Mather’s—More Than a Café offers many ways to help older adults remain connected to the community while living at home. With four locations in the Chicagoland area, Mather’s offers a unique combination of a restaurant, gathering place, educational center, source for interesting programs, and helpful services for adults 55 and older.

Chicago is one of the first cities in the nation to host the My Medicare Matters program, which will have a presence across the nation until the Medicare Part D Enrollment period ends on May 15th of this year. The program is sponsored by the National Council on Aging and the Access to Benefits Coalition with support from AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals, LP.

**For More Information**

Mather LifeWays provides access to vital information and training regarding critical issues facing older adults, from quality state-of-the-art senior living residences to emergency preparedness to Medicare-related matters. Please visit www.matherlifeways.com for details regarding Mather LifeWays’ wide range of resources and programs.
THE JOHN A. HARTFORD FOUNDATION

The John A. Hartford Foundation is at the forefront of pioneering advances in medicine and health care, funding research and programs that have revolutionized medicine and shaped the delivery of health care during the past 75 years. The Foundation’s overall goal is to increase the nation’s capacity to provide affordable care to its rapidly increasing older population.

New Curriculum Publications

In 2001, the John A. Hartford Foundation awarded The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) a $3.99 million grant to implement the Geriatric Nursing Education Project (GNEP). This effort funded and supported 20 baccalaureate and 10 graduate nursing programs to enrich their gerontology curricula and expand students’ clinical experiences in geriatric settings. AACN ultimately expects nursing schools nationwide to replicate and improve upon these innovative approaches. The goal is to create a robust educational framework for preparing the nation’s nursing work force to provide only the finest care to its aging citizens.

Towards this broader aim, AACN has recently produced two publications. The first is a monograph, **Caring for an Aging America: A Guide for Nursing Faculty.** It is intended to disseminate the findings of the geriatric curriculum development project to faculty in schools of nursing across the country. Structured as a “How-to,” the monograph outlines tried-and-tested strategies employed by GNEP-funded schools on a variety of topics, including developing faculty expertise, “gerontologizing” curricula, enhancing curricula with technology, cultivating community partnerships, and promoting student interest in gerontology.

Complementing this publication, the latest issue of the official journal of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, the **Journal of Professional Nursing,** focuses exclusively on gerontological nursing. Articles from GNEP grant site directors share wisdom relative to the integration of gerontological content into curricula. The issue also highlights a range of themes and strategies developed by the GNEP-funded schools, and offers recommendations for the successful creation of similar initiatives at nursing schools across the country.

These two publications are now available from AACN. For details, visit: www.aacn.nche.edu.

**2006-2007 Scholars and Fellows Announced**

The Hartford-supported Building Academic Geriatric Nursing Capacity (BAGNC) Scholar Awards Program recently selected a new cohort of pre-doctoral Scholars and post-doctoral Fellows. Scholars each receive up to $100,000 over 2 years to subsidize their studies. Fellows are awarded up to $120,000 over 2 years to support research in the field of geriatric nursing. The winners were chosen through a rigorous national competition.

Beginning this year, BAGNC post-doctoral Fellows will be known as the Claire M. Fagin Fellows, in honor of this outstanding nurse leader, original director of the BAGNC, and Dean and Professor Emerita of the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing.

The BAGNC is part of the Hartford Geriatric Nursing Initiative (HGNI), a multi-faceted investment aimed at enhancing the care of older adults through innovations in nursing practice, education, research, leadership, and policy. In 2005, the Atlantic Philanthropies joined with Hartford to provide generous support to the BAGNC program and increase funding for post-doctoral fellowships. A third partner, The Mayday Fund, contributes additional monies for those Scholars and Fellows whose research focuses on the study of pain in older adults.

The 2006 Scholars and Fagin Fellows join 106 BAGNC colleagues selected since the program began in 2000. To date, the Hartford Foundation has invested more than $15 million in scholarships for nurses through this program.

To learn more about the BAGNC, please see: www.geriatric-nursing.org

For More Information

For additional information about The John A. Hartford Foundation, including grant announcements, program information, quarterly newsletters, annual reports, staff contact information, and grant guidelines, access the Foundation’s website at www.jhartfound.org.