

New York StateWide Senior Action Council, Inc.

MEMBER UPDATE

Summer 2011

StateWide is on the Move! We Need You!

A Message from the President of the Board



Jim Collins

I am honored to have been elected Board President of the New York StateWide Senior Action Council. For those of you living outside New York City who do not know me, a few words about my background: I worked for 25 years for the NYC Human Resources Administration, the last ten years as a manager in the Medicaid program; followed

by ten years working for a Brooklyn hospital.

Since retirement in December 2000, I have volunteered with a number of other organizations in addition to StateWide: New York Citizens' Committee on Aging, Medicaid Matters New York, JASA's JPAC for Older Adults, my local Community Board, NYC Alliance for Retired Americans, and the NGO Committee on Ageing at the UN where I currently serve as Vice-chair. I have represented StateWide at conferences of the Alliance for Retired Americans, the State Society on Aging of New York, and the American Society on Aging.

Believing in the power of grassroots activism, I want to see StateWide re-established as New York State's acknowledged premier grassroots advocacy organization fighting in Albany, Washington and communities throughout the state for the rights of older New Yorkers. To that end, your Board of

(Continued on next page.)

A Message from the Executive Director



Maria Alvarez

And we continue onward...the last three months have been highly productive for our organization and its members...

In April, the Board of Directors elected its **new Executive Board**. We were fortunate to have **Greg Olsen, Acting Director of NYSOFA**, to swear them in! This group, headed by

President Jim Collins, has been hard at work fine-tuning our mission statement, representing StateWide in the community, and ensuring efficient and effective governance.

We held a very productive **Strategic Planning Session** where 30 members representing each of our chapters came to Albany to discuss the future of StateWide and where the organization is headed. We are currently waiting for the initial draft report from the facilitator and will keep you posted.

Advocacy - While in Albany, the members had a chance to visit with their elected officials. Our advocacy work needs to continue throughout the summer. **We were successful in preventing the NYSOFA merger with the Department of Health for the time being, but now is the time to educate our elected officials in their local offices.**

(Continued on next page.)

Medicare/Patients Rights Helpline (800) 333-4374

Executive Director's Message (continued)

StateWide is also very involved in preserving and strengthening **Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid**. We will be conducting a number of actions over the summer as part of our coalition work. Stay tuned...

The state legislative session has ended. Now is a good time to visit your Assembly Members and State Senators in their district offices. Each Chapter has received a packet with our Federal and State Legislative Agendas. We encourage you to copy and distribute them widely.

Staff - During this time, we have had one more addition to our StateWide family. **Gail Myers**, formerly the Special Assistant to the Director of the New York State Office for the Aging, has joined us as our Special Projects Developer.

Gail has been instrumental in reaching out to the local chapters, helping with the re-design of our website, and helping us develop our materials and outreach strategies to the community.

Updates - We are very proud to announce that we re-launched our website. It is now a site that reflects who we are and what we do... Please check us out at www.nysenior.org. Available on the web page, is **StateWide's Bill Tracker**. Although we will be sending out a hard copy to the membership at a future date, it is readily available on the website now.

As part of our **Medicare Community Counseling Assistance Project**, we are providing **regional forums** on healthcare in New York State. These forums bring together some of the leaders in the fields of aging and healthcare services on the state and local levels. We held the kick off event in Ithaca on June 22nd and are in the middle of scheduling more forums around the state. If you would like to have a forum in your community, please contact our offices at **1-800-333-4374**.

Our counselors have been receiving a lot of calls from seniors and their families on the new changes to EPIC and those who are enrolling into Medicare for the

first time. If you need help or know of anyone who does, please make sure to call our helpline for assistance at **1-800-333-4374**.

We have included information on the changes to EPIC in this newsletter.

Finally, please remind your friends of the importance of joining StateWide. If you know of people who have not paid their dues, please remind them. If you know of others who may have been members in the past, let them know of the work we are doing. And, of course, if there are people who are new to us...have them join! The older population is growing in New York State. Our movement can only be as strong as our organization.

Maria Alvarez

President's Message (continued)

Directors, Maria Alvarez, your Executive Director, and her staff have begun a process to rebuild StateWide's capacity for timely and effective local, state and national advocacy and for public educational and service programs. On June 6, we initiated a strategic planning process that over the next few months will re-examine all facets of StateWide and its mission. The goal is to present to the membership at the October 11-13 convention a multi-year plan for restoring StateWide's leadership position within New York State's community of older persons. Representatives from your Chapter who attended the June 6 meeting will be keeping you informed and involved as this work proceeds.

Current programs, committee work and other activities are continuing while this planning process goes on. Right now I am looking to expand the membership of our committees, so StateWide can better utilize the many talents of its membership. See next page for the volunteer call.

Finally, I believe the leadership of any organization should be accessible to its membership. You can reach me by e-mail at jcoll152@gmail.com or writing me at StateWide Headquarters, 275 State Street, Albany, NY 12210.

Jim Collins



Your StateWide Leadership

(From l. to r.): Executive Director Maria Alvarez, Assistant Treasurer Priscilla Bassett (Lower Hudson Valley-Sullivan), Secretary Elvira Hoffman (At-Large - Suffolk), 1st Vice President Helen Sanders (Western New York - Erie), and President James Collins (New York City - Queens). (Not Pictured): 2nd Vice President Robert Miller (North Country - St. Lawrence), Treasurer Harold Greene (Capital District - Schenectady).

Calling All StateWide Members...Our Committees Need Your Talent & Energy!

Your board provides direction and oversight for StateWide, but members throughout the state are encouraged to get involved by joining committees. It is particularly important to have representation from each Chapter on committees to bring the unique perspective of seniors throughout New York to our plans.

You are invited to join one of the following committees, just call our StateWide headquarters at 518-436-1006, or email us at info@nysenior.org and let us know how you would like to get involved.

Legislative/Public Policy Committee develops an alert system to communicate the organization's public policy agenda. It also helps develop the draft agenda that is brought to the membership at Convention for adoption.

Convention Planning Committee helps to create a fun and fact-filled Convention for members. It will identify guest speakers, draft an agenda and encourage participation in the 2011 Convention, scheduled for October 11 -13. Next year, the Committee will be part of the planning for our exciting 40th Anniversary celebration.

Education and Outreach Committee assists Chapters with membership recruitment and develops organization building activities.

Fundraising Committee makes recommendations to strengthen and expand fundraising activities to ensure that StateWide is a strong organization for years to come.

40th Anniversary Fund Committee will make plans for a fundraising drive in celebration of StateWide's past and seeking the resources to continue to be a strong voice for seniors.

Medicare/Patients Rights Helpline (800) 333-4374

StateWide Looks Forward to Working with New Assembly Aging Committee Chair

Recently, NYS Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver announced Committee leadership changes. Included in that announcement was news that Aging Committee Chair Jeffrey Dinowitz (D-Bronx) was appointed to Chair the Consumer Affairs and Protection Committee and Assembly Member Joan Millman (D-Brooklyn) would now chair the Aging Committee. Assembly Member Millman represents the 52nd Assembly District in New York City, which is comprised of the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Brooklyn Heights, Boerum Hill, Carroll Gardens, Cobble Hill, Columbia Waterfront, DUMBO, Fulton Ferry Landing, Gowanus, Park Slope, Prospect Heights, and Vinegar Hill. StateWide congratulates Assembly Member Millman on her appointment and looks forward to working with her to improve the lives of New York State seniors.



*Assembly Member
Joan Millman, Chair
Assembly Committee on Aging*

YOUR VOICE IS HEARD!

Successful Advocacy Halts S.A.G.E.

(Spending and Government Efficiency) Commission Proposal

Governor Cuomo appointed the SAGE Commission to “comprehensively review and assess New York State government, including, but not limited to, its structures, operations and processes for governing, with the goal of saving taxpayer money, increasing accountability and improving the delivery of government services.” StateWide learned that under consideration was a plan to move the New York State Office of the Aging into the Department of Health. StateWide joined with a group of other advocacy organizations that were concerned about the proposal and urged the SAGE Commission to postpone making a change that might weaken the Office for Aging’s influence and position as a government agency. The group of organizations subsequently submitted its own proposal to strengthen the Office and add more responsibilities related to long term care and community based care. (Available at www.nysenior.org) In addition, StateWide Chapter members contacted their local elected officials and made them aware of the possible changes to senior services under this proposal through meetings, calls, and petitions. At press time, the SAGE Commission had not submitted any changes for the Office for Aging. Our advocacy is not over, stay tuned for more information on advocacy efforts to come.



StateWide Out in Force!

With economic security for older New Yorkers a prime goal of StateWide’s advocacy, we have joined with many organizations to preserve, protect, and when possible, enhance Social Security and Medicare. In Washington, Congressmembers are tackling the federal budget and the debt ceiling, and some, including the House Republican leadership, are advancing proposals that would reduce important benefit programs. Pictured here: Mike Burgess, StateWide’s Public Policy Consultant and seniors join the NYS Alliance for Retired Americans, NYSUT, AFL-CIO and other advocates in a protest outside the office of Congressman Chris Gibson (R- District 20) in Saratoga Springs. Additional events are being planned throughout the summer, including a “Restoring the American Promise Campaign” caravan culminating in an event on July 21 in Hyde Park.

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EPIC Program Changes - 2011

Governor Cuomo proposed approximately \$58 million cuts to the EPIC Plan in the Executive Budget proposal for State Fiscal Year 2011-2012. The cuts would have resulted in only providing coverage for costs of drugs in the Medicare “donut hole,” eliminating payments for Part D premiums & deductibles and ending wraparound coverage.

ADVOCACY WORKS!!!

After testimony, press conferences and lobbying efforts, budget negotiations resulted in partial restoration (\$22 Million) of EPIC funding.

EPIC Program	EPIC Final Enacted Budget April 1, 2011	
Current (Through June 30, 2011)	Phase 1 Implementation (July 1 – December 31, 2011)	Phase 2 Implementation (January 1, 2012)
EPIC has two tiers of coverage.	No change in tier income eligibility.	EPIC will be a single tier.
FEE PLAN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Single seniors income \$20,000 or less ▪ Married couples income \$26,000 or less <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Payment of \$38.69/mo. directly to members Part D plan 	No change in Fee Plan	EPIC will be free, with no fees or deductibles. EPIC will pay Part D premiums, UP TO the average benchmark plan premium for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Single seniors income \$23,000 or less ▪ Married couples income \$29,000 or less
DEDUCTIBLE PLAN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Single seniors incomes \$20,001 – \$35,000 ▪ Married couples incomes \$26,001 - \$50,000 ▪ Up to \$464 deductible credit 	DEDUCTIBLE PLAN No change in tier income eligibility. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Eliminates deductible credit; thereby increasing out-of-pocket costs by up to \$464. ▪ New – Payment of up to \$38.69/mo. directly to member’s Part D plan for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Single seniors income \$20,001 - \$23,000 ○ Married couple income \$26,001 - \$29,000 	Eliminates DEDUCTIBLE PLAN
Most enrollees must join a Medicare Part D plan, with EPIC paying Part D plan premiums and deductibles.	No Change	Every enrollee must join a Medicare Part D plan, NO exceptions.
EPIC subsidies prevent prescription co-pays greater than \$20 in the Fee Plan OR after having met deductible.	No Change	EPIC will ONLY provide secondary coverage in the “donut hole.”

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STATE WIDE

New York StateWide Senior Action Council, Inc.

Healthcare & Patients Rights Helpline

(800) 333-4374

- ❖ Experienced Counselors
- ❖ Healthcare Forums
- ❖ Presentations in Your Community
- ❖ Telephone Teach-Ins
- ❖ E-Newsletter
- ❖ Trainings for Providers & Seniors
- ❖ Website – www.nysenior.org

For more information:

(800) 334-4374

or

info@nysenior.org

New York StateWide Senior Action Council is a grassroots senior advocacy organization, founded in 1972, to improve the quality of life for New York seniors and their families.

www.nysenior.org

StateWide Welcomes Our Newest Members & Supporters

New Individual Members

Patricia Binzer, Glenmont
Nathaniel Brody, Manhattan
Stephanie Brown, Nyack
Barbara Burton, Monticello
Monnie Callan, Manhattan
Jean Eaton, Auburn
Pat Long, Ithaca
Richard Lee, Buffalo
Beverly Leonti, Skaneateles
Alphonsus Meehan, Spring Valley
W. Gordon Morris, Potsdam
Suzanne Motheral, Ithaca
Florence B. Smith, Ithaca
Pham Bach-Tuyet, West Nyack
Candis Reed, Elmira
Sherry & Richard Watson, Hammond
Kathleen and Andrew Yen, Ithaca

New Organizational Members

Moravia Senior Center
Millenium Development Corporation, Brooklyn
R.E. Diethrick, Jr., Jamestown
Town of Summer Hill, Cayuga County

New Lifetime Members

Irene Eans, Bronx
Landell Fields, South Fallsberg
Lani Sanjek, Manhattan
Roger Sanjek, Manhattan

StateWide membership includes a free subscription to our e-news. Just send your name and email address to us at info@nysenior.org and include "e-news subscription" in the email subject line. Also, frequently check our website at www.nysenior.org for news updates.

StateWide Tapping Strategic Planning to Prepare for Future

With the rigors and standards of 21st century association management, strategic planning and leadership development are now more important than ever—organizations cannot afford to rest on their laurels. StateWide's leadership recognized this and decided to use the strategic planning process to plan for the association's future.

The process began in the spring with the issuance of the Strategic Planning Survey, which asked members and supporters to identify the top challenges facing StateWide and seniors across New York State, as well as what are the needs of members. We thank all who took the time to complete the survey and send in their responses. This information has proven most helpful.

In early June, StateWide's leaders, representatives and members had a chance to come together in a moderated setting to brainstorm, assess, and prioritize hopes and goals for the present and future. Capitol Hill Management Services/Center for Non-Profit Development facilitated the day-long session. All who participated in the session felt it was very productive.

The strategic planning facilitator is now compiling the results of the session and crafting a draft report based on the experience and background material. After the draft report is reviewed by StateWide leadership, a timeline, benchmarks and assigned responsible parties will be incorporated into the plan. The plan will project a path to success for StateWide over the next three years.

In the weeks ahead, we will be sharing updates from the strategic planning process. A formal presentation of the plan will be presented to the membership in October at the StateWide Annual Convention in Albany.

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StateWide Board Member Honored

The State Legislature has recognized the volunteer efforts of StateWide Board Member Diane Adele Pomeroy who is active in our Lower Hudson Valley Chapter. Diane Adele, who lives in Spring Valley, New York and attends StateWide meetings in Rockland County, was honored at a recent ceremony marking Senior Citizens Month at the State Capitol with a resolution honoring her "Outstanding Contribution by a Senior Citizen." Diane Adele was the sole recipient of this award, recognized by the State Assembly and the State Senate for her many hours of volunteer activities, including her efforts with StateWide. Diane Adele is a certified Long Term Care Ombudsman. She also has been trained as a Shalvah volunteer to visit terminally ill residents. Nominated for the award by the Rockland County Office for the Aging, Director June Molof noted that Diane's "always positive attitude has made it possible for nursing home residents to feel confident that she will help to resolve problems that they face. She has gone above and beyond the minimal requirements of her position to better the lives of many present residents and pave the way for a better life for future residents." **Well done Diane Adele!**



Diane Adele Pomeroy receives the Legislative Resolution from Assemblymember Jeffrey Dinowitz, who at the time served as Chair of the Assembly Aging Committee. Also pictured from Left to right, NYS Office for the Aging Acting Director Greg Olsen, Dinowitz, Pomeroy, Assembly Member Ellen Jaffee (Rockland) and Senate Aging Committee Chair David Valesky.

Important Upcoming Dates

September 14, 2011 - *Healthcare Forum: Changes to Medicare and How They Affect Older New Yorkers*; Brooklyn Borough Hall; Registration required (718) 686-1333 or info@nysenior.org

October 11-13, 2011 - *StateWide Annual Convention: Leave No Senior Behind - Preserving & Strengthening New York's Senior Services Infrastructure*; Albany; Registration required. (800) 333-4374 or info@nysenior.org. Check out our web page www.nysenior.org for more information shortly!



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