

THE HARTFORD COURANT 10/21/11

New Milford Resident Joins State Commission On Aging Board People

Submitted by Robert J. Norton, Connecticut Commission on Aging on 2011-10-21.

Local resident Nancy L. Heaton, executive director of the Foundation for Community Health (FCH) in Sharon, has been appointed to serve on the volunteer board of the state Capitol-based Connecticut Commission on Aging (CoA) by State Rep. Lawrence F. Cafero, Jr. (R-142nd), minority leader of the State House of Representatives.

Created in 1993, the CoA is an independent, nonpartisan research and public policy office of the Connecticut General Assembly.

The agency fills a unique role within state government by providing objective information and counsel on complex issues affecting older adults and persons with disabilities to the Legislative and Executive branches of state government, local government, the business community, organizations serving older citizens and numerous statewide public/private sector coalitions.

Heaton is the founding executive director of FCH, whose mission is to improve the health of the residents of 18 rural towns located in northwestern Connecticut and the greater Harlem Valley of New York. Her previous work was primarily in the field of community-based HIV/AIDS prevention and services.

As executive director of the Northwestern Connecticut AIDS Project, she developed successful partnerships and networks to maximize access and promote efficiency in the delivery of services in a rural community. She also coordinated the development of the first HIV/AIDS services for the Latino community of Santa Clara County, Calif., and worked in substance abuse prevention with the Vietnamese and Cambodian refugee populations of greater Boston.

Heaton began her career managing an orphanage in Manila, Philippines. She received her Masters in Public Health from San Jose State University and her undergraduate degree in Government and Law from Lafayette College.

CoA Executive Director Julia Evans Starr said Heaton's extensive and diverse experiences will assist the agency in advising legislators, the governor and other policymakers on ways the state can make informed decisions affecting older adults and persons of all ages with disabilities.

"Nancy's broad range of hands-on and managerial experience will be invaluable in helping the CoA guide policymakers through the complex issues affecting older adults," she said. "These are challenging times, requiring input from the best talent our state has to offer, and we're very grateful that Rep. Cafero appointed her to our board."

Already the nation's seventh oldest state, Connecticut's population of residents 65 and older will soar 64 percent by 2030. The state is also home to one million baby boomers, the oldest of whom are turning 65 themselves, accounting for nearly one-third of its entire population. The state spends more than \$2 billion annually on long-term care services and supports through Medicaid, consuming 13 percent of the state budget.

"The CoA's long and distinguished record of results-based achievement based on solid research and objective analysis serves as a model for all in state government. I very much appreciate this opportunity to help the commission in its work to make a real difference in Connecticut," Heaton said.