



Pat Quinn, Governor
Charles D. Johnson, Director

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Illinois Department on Aging Stresses Health Promotion as an Asset for Aging

SPRINGFIELD — Illinois Department on Aging director Charles Johnson is urging people to reflect on their health and adopt new strategies to promote a healthier lifestyle. At a recent meeting of health experts, gerontology students, university faculty, and community health trainers, Director Johnson told about the year-long campaign to improve the health and lives of adults, ages 55 years and older. As proclaimed by Governor Pat Quinn, the campaign **2010: Year of the Engaged Older Adult** offers a monthly theme with the purpose of creating stronger connections among the generations. For more information, log on to www.law.siu.edu/GenServeGen.

The theme for March is "Aging is an Asset for Health." To kickoff the month and generate ideas, a meeting was held last week in Springfield to discuss health promotion for older adults, and prepare strategies to disseminate throughout the state. Some of the areas of focus included: How to assess our readiness to take charge of our health, how to take charge of our health, and how to connect with healthy aging programs in Illinois. The goal for this month is to anticipate the impact of aging on Illinois and develop a mindset that views older adults as resources rather than as problems to be dealt with.

"Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health. It moves beyond a focus on individual behavior towards a wide range of social and environmental interventions," said Director Johnson. "This month we encourage everyone, especially older adults, to join in efforts in your community to improve education and promote healthy lifestyles through service."

Director Johnson is leading this statewide initiative that started when Illinois was selected to participate in the National Governors Association (NGA) *Policy Academy on Civic Engagement of Older Adults*. The project is designed to improve the health and lives of older Americans and increase their involvement in service, learning, and work.

Also part of the initiative is a team of dedicated professionals in Illinois who have been working to map out the best strategies to get older adults involved in community and to encourage more interaction between the generations. The core team includes representatives from the Illinois Department on Aging, Intergenerational Initiative-SIU School of Law, AARP, Serve Illinois Commission, Retirement Research Foundation, Corporation for National and Community Service, Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, Senate Higher Education Committee, Illinois Community College Council of Presidents, Chinese American Service League, Illinois Association of Area Agencies on Aging, and McCormick Foundation.

For more information about program services to assist older adults in Illinois and their caregivers, call the IDoA Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 or for TTY (hearing impaired use only) call 1-888-206-1327.

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