



PRESS RELEASE

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May is Older Americans Month in Illinois

Observance highlights state's leadership in providing quality programs that offer independence and protections to seniors

SPRINGFIELD - May 8, 2014. Governor Pat Quinn has proclaimed May as *Older Americans Month* in Illinois and joins the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) to honor more than two million adults, aged 60 years or older, who live in the state. (A copy of the full proclamation follows this release). Each May, a campaign theme is chosen to recognize older adults for the contributions they make. This year's theme *Safe Today, Healthy Tomorrow* focuses on injury prevention that emphasizes helping older adults stay active, which is timely as we are witnessing an increase in the number of adults reaching retirement age who are remaining strong and active for longer than ever before.

IDoA serves as an advocate for older adults and their caregivers by administering programs that help older adults live independently in their homes and communities. Without services to assist, many of our most vulnerable would have few choices to remain independent and would find themselves forced to live in nursing home facilities.

The state serves as a model that other governments study in order to develop program services to care for seniors. A Chinese delegation visited Illinois in December to learn about the state's senior care policy. China faces challenges enforcing laws requiring adult children to visit, care for and financially support their elderly parents. Officials invited representatives of the state's aging network to come to China to consult on solutions under consideration.

"May is deemed *Older Americans Month* in Illinois, but caring for our vulnerable elders is a global concern," said Director Holton. "I was pleased to welcome the delegation from the People's Republic of China during our conference on aging to share information about how Illinois structures its delivery of quality services in light of an ever-increasing demand. And I am honored to have been able to accept their invitation to visit China to address global aging."

Director Holton, who traveled to China this month and just returned, spoke there about challenges facing its elderly population which is estimated to be more than 200 million adults age 60 and older.

In observance of *Older Americans Month*, IDoA will participate in events this month honoring older adults including the 16th annual Central IL Senior Celebration, May 21, in the Orr Building on the state fairgrounds, in Springfield. The event features exhibitors, free health screenings, and entertainment.

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

The text of the Governor's proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, numbers are increasing of adults reaching retirement age and remaining strong and active for longer than ever before; and,

WHEREAS, the State of Illinois is home to more than two million residents aged 60 years or older; and,

WHEREAS, the older adults of the State of Illinois are a vital part of our nation's demographic makeup; and,

WHEREAS, older adults are members of our community entitled to dignified, independent lives free from fears, myths, and misconceptions about aging; and,

WHEREAS, each community in the United States must strive to recognize, understand and address the evolving needs of older adults, and support their caregivers; and,

WHEREAS, our society is dependent upon intergenerational cooperation and support, and benefits from our collective efforts to serve older adults and the people who love and care for them; and,

WHEREAS, the State of Illinois has worked to develop strategies to get older adults engaged in civic activity in their communities and to encourage interaction between the generations; and,

WHEREAS, older adults in our state deserve to be recognized for the contributions they have made and will continue to make to the culture, economy, and character of our community and our nation; and,

WHEREAS, this year's Older Americans Month theme *Safe Today, Healthy Tomorrow* focuses on injury prevention that emphasizes helping older adults stay active:

THEREFORE, I, Pat Quinn, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby proclaim May 2014 as **OLDER AMERICANS MONTH** in Illinois, and encourage all older adults to stay engaged, active and involved in their own lives and in their communities.

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