

Forum on Financial Experiences of Older Adults

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BRIAN DUKE: I think if you look at state units on aging across the nation, assistant secretary Kathy Greenlee has summarized it best from the Administration on Aging's perspective and the Administration for the Community Living, and what she stated is that we're born of the Older Americans Act, and that Act was not passed by chance. It was passed probably by good planning around the same time as Medicare and Medicaid were passed. As we look at that piece of legislation it called upon state units on aging to do two things. To protect people, our vulnerable citizens, and today we've heard issues of financial exploitation and its impact on the overall income of an individual, but we also have to help prevent, and that talks about health and wellness. It talks about provision of service, but I think we have to look at fiscal surety of the individual as a key component of health. And so when we think about today's dialogue and the report that's being released today for a state unit on aging's perspective, it's what policies can we help inspire at the federal or state level that will help our citizens have greater fiscal health. Our office is home to 43 social services that are offered through 52 area agencies on aging serving 67 of our counties, and so that's our primary area of focus. So offering those services under the umbrella of prevention and protection for our citizens, but I believe we also have a strong call, and it's evidenced in our four-year plan that was just implemented to carry out our role as a catalyst to bring together the public, private partners in the local community. No one sector of our society is going to be successful, including state government, in meeting the needs and/or desires of our aging population. And so we encourage at the local level partnerships that have an impact. You know, partnerships that perhaps reduce hospital readmissions rates is one example,

but seeking partnerships that address areas such as housing, transportation, employment. But we're still seeking those.