



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
SENIOR & DISABLED SERVICES DIVISION
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AUTHORIZED BY: _____

**SDSD Administrator/Deputy/
Assistant Administrator**

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

SDSD-IM-00-44

Date: April 13, 2000

TO: Area Agency on Aging Directors

SUBJECT: AARP Independent Living Week

INFORMATION: May 1-7, 2000 is **Independent Living Week**, an event sponsored by AARP and endorsed by the Governor. The theme of **Independent Living Week** is "*Simple Changes to Remain in Charge*" and focuses on prevention of falls in the home by simple home modifications. During this week, AARP will be holding a press conference with SDSD, the Oregon Occupational Therapists Association, and the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department.

SDSD is very supportive of making homes safer as a way of helping prevent injuries due to falls. Fall prevention is important in promoting client independence and saving medical and long term care resources.

The SDSD is sending to each AAA Office five new AARP brochures (20 each) which provide information on how seniors can remain independent and make their homes safer. These brochures are:

1. "How Well Does Your Home Meet Your Needs?", which includes a home safety survey;
2. "100 Simple Ways to Make a Difference", a list of activities for friends, family and volunteers to do to help seniors remain in their home;
3. "Home Safe Home: How to Prevent Falls in the Home", with a fall-prevention inventory;
4. "Universal Design and Home Modification", which provides a comprehensive overview of universal design, home modifications, contracting and financing; and
5. "Tools and Gadgets for Independent Living", which describes assistive devices which promote independence.

Attached is an order form to fax to the AARP Oregon State Office to secure more copies (expect shipment to take 2-4 weeks). AARP is making these materials available free of charge.

As partners with AAAs, we encourage your organization to partake in the following possible actions:

1. Send a press release to local media calling attention to:
 - a. **Independent Living Week** (see attached talking points),
 - b. local event(s) that may be occurring that week,
 - c. the availability of community development block grant (CDBG) funds to non-metro service areas, from Oregon Housing and Community Services for home rehabilitation and accessibility modifications, beginning in July 2000, and
 - d. the availability of brochures for individuals interested in home safety and modifications.
2. Distribute the brochures at meal sites, through home delivered meals volunteers, and to local churches.
3. Develop a home assessment project with local partners, such as AARP, RSVP, Seniors And Law Enforcement Together (SALT), occupational therapists, hospitals, clinics, and local Oregon Remodelers Association Members, etc.

Any activity you can do, either during the **Independent Living Week** or later, will help keep our clients and others in the community safer and independent. Thank you.

CONTACT PERSON: Lee Girard (for home modification questions)

CONTACT NUMBER: (503) 947-1199

FAX NUMBER: (503) 373-7902

CONTACT PERSON: Pam Ruona (for fall prevention questions)

CONTACT NUMBER: (503) 945-6412

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attachments

AARP Independent Living Week Talking Points

- K** More than 80% of older people want to stay in their own homes. Yet things once taken for granted can become problems as people age. Changing light bulbs or smoke alarm batteries, getting around the house, and using appliances can become difficult or even dangerous. Yet simple home changes help people stay independent by adapting their homes to meet their current needs.

- K** Simple home changes that help older people stay in charge of their lives are the focus of this year's AARP Independent Living Week, which takes place May 1-7, 2000. During this week, volunteers conduct projects that improve home safety, comfort, and convenience - and raise awareness of home change ideas and products that help older people remain independent.

- K** Simple home changes that make a difference include: adding night lights, porch lights, and lights on stairways and halls; replacing knobs with lever faucets; and installing hand rails and grab bars; removing or taping down throw rugs and clearing regular pathways and stairways of clutter; installing products such as wheelchair ramps, adjustable cabinets and closet rods, easier-to-enter bathtubs; easier-to-use shower heads, and easier-to-grip hardware; and removing barriers to getting around the home, such as doorways too narrow for wheelchairs.

- K** AARP local groups will work with other community organizations, government agencies, and individual volunteers to conduct Independent Living Week.

- K** Injuries requiring hospitalization in Oregon due to falls by individuals over 65 account for sixty four percent of all falls and cost over \$35,000,000.

