



Michigan Senior Advocates Council

Collective voice and action to promote healthy aging, dignity and Independence.

The Michigan Senior Advocates Council (MSAC) is a group of senior leaders (“delegates”) who travel to Lansing monthly from across the state. Delegates study senior issues and inform elected officials devoting a significant portion of each meeting to visiting legislators’ offices and talking with them and their staff.

MSAC consists of a group of 30 or more older adults appointed by Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs). They have three things in common:

- Age—delegates are 55 and over
- Ties to Aging Network—many delegates are on AAA’s Advisory Council or are AAA Board Members
- Leadership—delegates are active in local and state senior groups, understand the aging network and its services, and are recognized as knowledgeable leaders in their communities

Beyond these similarities, MSAC is a diverse group which cuts across racial, ethnic and economic categories. Delegates hail from big cities and rural communities. In this way, MSAC represents Michigan’s diverse senior population. MSAC is nonpartisan and does not endorse political candidates.

MSAC was created in 1977 by the Area Agencies on Aging Association of Michigan (4AM) to fulfill the mandate of the Older Americans Act to advocate on behalf of older adults. The delegates quickly established themselves as advocates in the fullest sense, speaking up on senior issues, and giving advice to Area Agencies on Aging, the legislature and state government. Since its creation, MSAC has generated thousands of letters and petitions, numerous phone calls and countless face-to-face contacts with legislators and state officials. And all of that activity has paid rich dividends! MSAC deserves much credit for our aging services system, including:

- The first prescription drug program
- Statewide expansion of the MI Choice Waiver
- Funding increases for meals-on-wheels and other in home and community-based services
- Creation of home heating assistance
- State funding for dial-a-ride programs
- Long term care reform legislation

MSAC has also left its mark on many pieces of legislation benefiting older adults such as elder abuse prevention, nursing home quality regulations, Medicare supplemental insurance standards, patient rights legislation, Blue Cross Blue Shield reform, and guardianship reform. These are but a small sample of MSAC’s accomplishments.

Affiliation with AAAs

MSAC works together with Michigan’s 16 AAAs who appoint its members and provide financial and staff support through their statewide association (4AM). AAAs are a nationwide network of over 600 agencies created by the federal Older Americans Act in 1973. That year, President Nixon and Congress decided that a separate network of agencies was needed to create a service system that would be a viable alternative to nursing homes. **AAAs are experts on aging.** They create new programs with public private partnerships, find funds to expand services, and advocate on behalf of older adults, especially those unable to advocate for themselves.