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Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Missouri Association Of Area Agencies On Aging (MA4) Tapped To Help Consumers Access Health Insurance Exchanges**

*“Navigators” Will Serve As An In-Person Resource For Americans Who Want Additional Assistance In Enrolling In Plans In The Health Insurance Marketplace This Fall*

**Jefferson City, Mo.** -- The Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging (MA4) was named today by the Department of Health and Human Services as one of two Missouri organizations that will help individuals understand and access health insurance exchanges established under the new Affordable Healthcare Act. MA4 will incorporate its network of Area Agencies on Aging and senior centers throughout the state to help people make informed decisions when choosing among health insurance coverage options. MA4, designated as an official “Navigator” organization by HHS, will begin its work immediately, with a special orientation program scheduled to take place during its annual Summit on Aging and Health August 21 – 23 in Jefferson City. The network will be prepared to assist individuals interested in new health care insurance options available through the new “exchanges” by October 1, 2013 when enrollment officially opens.

“For years, the Area Agencies on Aging have helped people understand and access programs like Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security and other resources,” said Catherine Edwards, Executive Director of MA4. “We don’t sell anything. We provide a service that helps people understand what their options are. We believe that our network of professionals will be a great, unimimidating and accessible resource for people seeking realistic options and answers regarding health care coverage going forward. It is also important for people to understand that, even though our organization has traditionally focused on Missouri’s senior population, we will be available to all citizens, regardless of age, income, race or any other factor,” added Edwards. “We are here to serve and we will build on the network, community connections and outreach infrastructure that have been built with a great degree of credibility throughout the years.”

MA4 was founded in 1973 and incorporated as a not-for-profit in 1985. MA4 is comprised of the state’s 10 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), each responsible for providing services in a specific geographic area with an established and trusted presence in every county of Missouri. MA4 has extensive experience in outreach and public information throughout the state. MA4 will work directly through nine of the ten MA4 member agencies. The Mid-America Regional Council in Kansas City is participating in another Navigator application.

Additional details regarding the program and its implementation will be made available on an ongoing basis throughout the month of September and will available on the MA4 statewide website ([www.ma4web.org](http://www.ma4web.org)) and through the local Area Agency on Aging offices. Missourians are also encouraged to follow MA4 on Twitter (@ma4voice) for additional updates and news.

### **About The Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging (MA4)**

The Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging (MA4) was founded in 1973 to serve as a statewide advocate and resource for older Missourians. MA4 is comprised of the state’s 10 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), which were created under the 1973 amendments to the Older American’s Act of 1965. For 40 years, these local agencies have been providing vital services, programs and information to millions of Missourians and their caregivers, including legal services, home-delivered meals, disease prevention and health promotion, transportation, public benefits counseling, senior center services and activities and in-home services. The 10 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) provide a coordinated network of care in implementing statewide initiatives, which are designed to help older Missourians maintain their independence and give them a voice in articulating their concerns and changing needs.

As the official statewide association of these agencies, MA4 is dedicated to carrying out its mission of service, information and advocacy to improve the lives of older Missourians and to plan for the changes that will take place as the aging population grows in number and importance in the next decade.

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