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About Policy, Research, and International

Policy, Research, and International (PRI) serves AARP by leading the development and articulation of AARP’s public policies. PRI solicits policy input, convenes thought leaders both domestically and abroad, and informs and stimulates the public debate on the issues we face as we age. These policies serve as the foundation for AARP’s state and national advocacy efforts and for its engagement on global aging policy and trends. The policies also strengthen AARP’s reputation for world-class expertise and thought leadership.

PRI includes the Office of the Executive Vice President and Chief Public Policy Officer.
Office of the Chief
Public Policy Officer
Debra Whitman, PhD

Chief Public Policy Officer

Areas of Expertise

Aging, age-friendly banking, elder financial exploitation, employment policy, family caregiving, financial security, financial services, global aging, health care financing, health policy, livable communities, long-term care policy and long-term services and supports, Medicaid and Medicare, prescription drug pricing, prevention, policy analysis, public speaking, research methods and statistics, retirement security, Social Security, and translating research into practice

Profile

As AARP’s chief public policy officer, Debra Whitman leads policy development, analysis, and research, as well as global thought leadership that supports and advances the interests of individuals ages 50-plus and their families. She oversees AARP’s Public Policy Institute, Research Center, Office of Policy Integration, Thought Leadership, and AARP International. Debra is an authority on aging issues, with extensive experience in national policy making, domestic and international research, and the political process. An economist, she is a strategic thinker whose career has been dedicated to solving problems that affect economic and health security and other issues related to population aging.

As staff director for the US Senate Special Committee on Aging, Debra worked across the aisle to increase retirement security, lower the cost of health care, protect vulnerable seniors, and improve our nation’s long-term care system. From 2001 to 2003, she served as a Brookings LEGIS Fellow to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. Earlier in her career, she conducted research on savings and retirement for the Social Security Administration.

Debra has been quoted by or appeared in numerous media outlets, including Bloomberg, CBS News, Huffington Post, NBC Nightly News, New York Times, Politico, Washington Post, and USA Today.

Debra holds a master’s degree and a doctorate degree in economics from Syracuse University and a bachelor’s degree in economics, math, and Italian from Gonzaga University.
In Her Words

“Global aging is an achievement to be celebrated. The increase in healthier, longer lives can be a windfall that brings unimaginable benefits to families, communities, and national economies.”

Selected Publications


See all blog posts by Debra Whitman.

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Sarah Lenz Lock, JD
Senior Vice President for Policy

Areas of Expertise
Health and long-term care, with a current emphasis on brain health and dementia

Profile
Sarah Lock is senior vice president for policy. She helps position AARP as a thought leader, addressing the major issues facing older Americans. She integrates and coordinates policy within AARP to ensure policy consistency and to maintain AARP’s social mission. Previously, Sarah served as vice president in AARP’s Office of Policy Integration, where she was responsible for the development of AARP’s public policies, including economic, consumer, and health issues.

Sarah first joined AARP to conduct impact litigation on behalf of older people, working on health care issues related to Medicare, Medicaid, managed care, long-term care, and prescription drugs. She has written numerous amicus briefs in appellate courts all over the country on health care issues affecting older Americans.

Before joining AARP, Sarah served as a trial attorney for the US Department of Justice, where she handled complex litigation against such federal agencies as the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, the Air Force, the Army, and the Environmental Protection Agency. She provided legal advice and assisted in policy development for numerous federal agencies on issues that included information technology, transportation, security and terrorism, and tort reform.

Sarah began her career as a legislative assistant to Michael D. Barnes, representative from Maryland in the US House of Representatives. She worked with the Federal Government Service Task Force and subsequently at the law firm of Arent, Fox, Kintner, Plotkin & Kahn. She received a bachelor of arts in English from Franklin and Marshall College and a JD from the University of Maryland School of Law.
In Her Words

“We can do something now to make living well with dementia a real possibility.” (Presentation to NASUAD, http://www.nasuad.org/sites/nasuad/files/ACL%20-%20Living%20Well%20With%20Dementia.pdf)

Selected Publication


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Britta Berge, MPA
Director, Strategy and Integrated Operations

Areas of Expertise
Comparative health policy, global aging, and program management

Profile
Britta Berge is the Director of Strategy and Integrated Operations for Policy, Research and International Affairs. In this role she runs the office of the Chief Public Policy Officer and serves as the chief of staff for Debra Whitman, AARP’s Chief Public Policy Officer.

Britta previously worked as an advisor to the Center to Champion Nursing in America (CCNA), a joint initiative of AARP, the AARP Foundation, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. In that role, she served as a strategic and operational advisor on the Future of Nursing: Campaign for Action, assisting in grass-roots outreach and providing technical assistance to state action coalitions as part of the national campaign. In addition, she was the National Program Officer for the State Implementation Program, a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant aimed at supporting the state action coalitions.

Before joining CCNA, Britta worked in AARP’s Office of International Affairs as a policy analyst and program manager. While there, she managed the health and long-term care policy portfolios for AARP’s International Affairs office. She identified and analyzed best international policy practices related to aging to better inform AARP’s domestic policy agenda. Additionally, Britta represented AARP internationally, helping to build AARP’s reputation as a global leader. She organized and helped organize many international programs and conferences aimed at addressing the challenges and opportunities of aging in a global context. Britta has written numerous international policy briefs and published an article in the AARP Rx Watchdog about the European Union experience with a regulatory framework for follow-on biologic drugs.
Before joining AARP in late 2006, Britta worked for the City of Seattle as a communications specialist. She has worked in the nonprofit sector internationally and domestically and the public sector at the state and local levels. She has spent time volunteering both abroad and in her local community.

Britta graduated from Utah State University with degrees in international studies and political science and a minor in Spanish. She completed her master of public administration at George Mason University with emphases in public policy and nonprofit management. She currently serves on the board of Ibasho, an international nonprofit organization focused on creating socially integrated and sustainable communities that value their elders.

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Meredith Rucker Hunter, MS
Senior Advisor, Engagement and Integration

Areas of Expertise
Communications, strategic planning, and stakeholder outreach

Profile
Meredith Rucker Hunter manages financial and strategic planning and communications for AARP's chief public policy officer, who is responsible for overseeing AARP’s Public Policy Institute, Research Center, Office of Policy Integration, and AARP International. Previously, Meredith led communications and outreach for the CCNA team and contributed to the Future of Nursing: Campaign for Action, a nationwide campaign to transform health care through nursing.

Before joining AARP, Meredith spent nearly a decade in public relations, where she led multifaceted communications and outreach projects for large foundations, nonprofits, associations, and advocacy organizations in their outreach to consumers, providers, funders, and policy makers.

Meredith has contributed to programs and campaigns on a range of health care issues, including high-quality long-term care, end-of-life care, chronic care, mental health, the nursing workforce, and reproductive health. She is particularly proud of her contributions to Last Acts, a national public education campaign to improve the care Americans receive at the end of their lives. That work laid the foundation for Meredith’s understanding of the difficult issues facing people and families, and it helped her build partnerships with consumer, quality, and provider stakeholders.

Meredith received a master of science in justice, law, and society from American University and a bachelor of arts in government and politics from George Mason University.

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About the Public Policy Institute

The Public Policy Institute (PPI) develops creative policy solutions to address our common need for financial security, health care, and quality of life. Founded in 1985, PPI publishes policy analyses and provides updates on a range of topics, including current AARP priorities and emerging issues that will affect older adults in the future.

Additionally, PPI informs and inspires public debate on the issues we face as we age, frequently convening leading policy experts and other “think tanks” for discussion of key national and state policy matters. In addition, PPI provides critical analytical support for AARP advocacy efforts and campaigns.

PPI is also home to the Center to Champion Nursing in America, an initiative of AARP, the AARP Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The Center, a consumer-driven, national force for change, works to increase the nation’s capacity to educate and retain nurses who are prepared and empowered to positively impact health care access, quality, and costs.

PPI includes the following groups:

- Office of the Senior Vice President
- Strategic Initiatives
- Financial Security
- Health Security
- Independent Living/Long-Term Services and Supports
- Center to Champion Nursing in America
Office of the Senior Vice President
Susan C. Reinhard, RN, PhD, FAAN
Senior Vice President and Director, AARP Public Policy Institute
Chief Strategist, Center to Champion Nursing in America

Areas of Expertise
Aging; family caregiving research, policy, program development, practice, research and policy analysis, Medicare, Medicaid, Health care policy, quality, delivery system reform, system regulation, payment, managed care, culture of health/well-being, nursing research, education, regulation, workforce development, long term services and supports research, financing, technical assistance, measurement/scorecard, age friendly communities, livable communities, grantsmanship, strategic planning, public speaking, translating research into policy and practice.

Profile
Susan C. Reinhard is a senior vice president at AARP, directing its Public Policy Institute, the focal point for public policy research and analysis at the state, federal, and international levels. She also serves as the chief strategist for the Center to Champion Nursing in America, a national resource center created to ensure that America has the highly skilled nurses it needs to provide care in the future.

Susan is a nationally recognized expert in health and long-term care policy, with extensive experience in conducting, directing, and translating research into action to promote policy change. Previously, she served as professor and codirector of Rutgers Center for State Health Policy, where she directed several national initiatives with states to help people of all ages with disabilities live in their communities.

As deputy commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, Susan led the development of policies and nationally recognized programs for family caregiving, consumer choice, and community-based care options. She is a former faculty member at the Rutgers College of Nursing, an American Academy of Nursing fellow, and a National Academy of Social Insurance member. She holds many governance positions, including on the boards of the Leapfrog Group, National Alliance for Caregiving, National Academy for State Health Policy, and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital. Susan has received many honors, including the Family Caregiver Alliance 2013 Leadership Award, the Dick Ladd Award for Improving Long-Term and Community Research Care from the Jessie F. Richardson Founda-
tion, the Health Policy and Legislation Award from New York University, and the Public Policy Pioneer Award from the Assisted Living Federation of America. She holds a master’s degree in nursing from the University of Cincinnati and a PhD in sociology from Rutgers University.

**In Her Words**

“We know that family caregivers provide help with activities such as bathing and dressing, shopping, [and] cooking and preparing meals. We also ask caregivers to do things that would make even nursing students tremble; it’s important that we understand the scope of this new normal.” (S. Reinhard, “New Report Finds Almost Half of Family Caregivers Perform Medical and Nursing Tasks,” AARP press release, October 1, 2012, http://www.aarp.org/about-aarp/press-center/info-10-2012/New-Report-Finds-Almost-Half-of-Family-Caregivers-Perform-Medical-and-Nursing-Tasks.html)

**Selected Publications**


See all blog posts by Susan Reinhard.

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Strategic Initiatives

Strategic Initiatives develops and manages grant-funded programs and overall PPI strategy. This includes outreach and development, quality assurance on deliverables, engagements and collaborations with PPI partners, and operations and budgeting.
**Public Policy Institute**

**Julia Alexis**

Vice President, Strategic Initiatives

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**Areas of Expertise**

Business development, strategic planning, management, and marketing

**Profile**

Julia Alexis oversees the development and management of the AARP Public Policy Institute’s (PPI) strategic programs and operations as vice president of strategic initiatives. In her current role, she develops programs that support AARP’s strategic efforts while working closely with major foundations, external entities, and coalitions. Julia integrates and manages projects that cut across all key focus areas of PPI as she collaborates with her colleagues and their teams.

Before joining PPI, Julia served as vice president of health initiatives for AARP Services Inc., where she created and developed the AARP Health Care Options product portfolio, managed major service providers and multimillion dollar budgets, and launched new products and initiatives.

With a diverse background in business development, marketing, and management, Julia has experience that spans a variety of industries—most notably in health care. In addition to her work as a senior executive in the health care delivery system, where she built physician practice groups, managed major Medicare demonstration projects, and developed new clinical services, she has worked with large insurers, pharmaceutical companies, and health care advocates focused on consumer health programs.

Julia graduated with honors from Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service, and she attended the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School of Business.

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Carl Levesque
Senior Writer and Editor

Area of Expertise
Writing and editing, communications, content, content marketing

Profile
Carl Levesque is Senior Writer and Editor with AARP’s Policy, Research & International Affairs team. Carl develops content and publications for PRI, supporting and coaching team members on their writing projects for various targeted audiences. A professional writer of more than 20 years, he previously worked as a consultant, assisting clients in a range of industries and fields by providing support on content, messaging, publications, content marketing and other communications needs. Much of his work involved positioning executives and other professionals as subject matter experts and thought leaders.

While working as the lead editor and head of publications at the American Wind Energy Association, Carl refined his specialty in making technical and specialized content accessible for any audience. He built his communications foundation as a trade journalist (energy, home building, associations/nonprofits) and freelance writer, producing articles for numerous publications (both consumer and trade) on a range of topics, from the arts to sports. A long-time writing coach, Carl is also a former English teacher.

Carl received his B.A. from James Madison University.

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Carlos Figueiredo, MA, PhD
Senior Methods Advisor

Areas of Expertise

Methods, data analysis, public-use data sets, and computer programming

Profile

Carlos Figueiredo is a senior methods advisor with the AARP Public Policy Institute, where he provides data analyses for public policy research projects that use large public-use data sets. He conducts policy analyses that require complex programming, data manipulation, data analysis, and computer simulations.

Carlos holds a PhD in public administration and information and decision systems from the George Washington University, a master’s degree in policy analysis and planning from the University of Minnesota, and a civil engineering degree from the Federal University of Pernambuco, Recife, Brazil.

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Barbara Goodwin
Business Operations Analyst

Areas of Expertise
Procurement, contracting, and resource allocation

Profile
Barbara Goodwin is the business operations analyst in AARP’s Public Policy Institute, where she manages administrative processes related to budgets, procurement of goods and services, and contractor and vendor payments.

Barbara began working with AARP in 1985, and she has held various administrative oversight positions in the Division of Legislation, Research, and Public Policy. She has also served as senior executive secretary in the office of the executive director. Before arriving in the United States, Barbara worked with law firms both in the United Kingdom and in Germany. She was educated in England and received GCSE (general certificate of secondary education) and Royal Society of Arts qualifications in office practice.

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Jordan N. Green, MS
Project Manager

Areas of Expertise
Gerontology, caregiving, and project management

Profile

Jordan Green is a project manager supporting the Office of Strategic Initiatives with AARP’s Public Policy Institute. She manages a variety of projects, engages with internal and external audiences, and assists in the development of new funding streams. Jordan was an expert reviewer for the 2014 “Lifespan Respite Care Program Grants to New States,” an initiative of the Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services. Most recently, she was the primary author of the ReACT (Respect a Caregiver’s Time) employer toolkit, an interactive employer resource guide to support working caregivers.

Before joining AARP, Jordan was manager of operations and programs at the National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC), a nonprofit coalition dedicated to conducting research and developing national programs for family caregivers and the professionals who serve them. At NAC, she assisted with project research, wrote reports, provided technical assistance to state and local caregiving coalitions, oversaw office operations, and managed various programs.

Jordan has a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Eastern Mennonite University and a master’s degree in applied gerontology from Towson University.
Selected Publications


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Financial Security

Financial Security staff members address policy related to Social Security, pensions, retirement savings, age friendly banking, reverse mortgages, financial assets, consumer debt, employment, and tax-budget issues. Staff members also analyze marketplace practices and regulation affecting financial services, consumer protection and privacy.
Areas of Expertise
Social Security, pensions and retirement savings, and tax and budget policy

Profile
Gary Koenig leads a team of economists, attorneys, and policy experts who work on economic and consumer security issues at AARP’s Public Policy Institute (PPI). The group analyzes and develops policies related to the financial security of the population ages 50-plus. Gary and his team are particularly concerned with policies that address the challenges people face as they age, including the adequacy of Social Security benefits and retirement savings, older workforce issues, and consumer financial protections.

Gary has been working on issues related to retirement security for almost 20 years. He began working at PPI in September 2008 as a senior strategic advisor. In that capacity, Gary served as PPI’s expert on policy reform for Social Security and retirement savings. While at PPI, he has written several papers about Social Security reform, tax policies for retirement savings, and the economic well-being of older Americans.

Before joining AARP, Gary was an economist for the Joint Committee on Taxation in the US Congress, where he specialized in employer-provided pensions and retirement plans. While at the Joint Committee, he coauthored the first paper that evaluated the retirement Saver’s Credit and contributed to numerous reports related to tax reform and retirement savings. Gary is a member of the National Academy of Social Insurance and serves as a board member for the Employee Benefit Research Institute.
In His Words

“Whether we call it a crisis or not, here’s the situation: unless households take steps to shore up their retirement security, and policy makers make it easier for people to take these steps, too many people will have to cut back significantly in retirement.” (G. Koenig, “Retirement Crisis,” Thinking Policy [AARP blog], May 23, 2013, http://blog.aarp.org/2013/05/23/retirement-crisis-are-we-there-yet)

Selected Publications


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Areas of Expertise

Mortgage lending, reverse mortgages, foreclosures, consumer debt, financial services, securities, and banking

Profile

Lori Trawinski joined the AARP Public Policy Institute (PPI) in 2010 and is responsible for research and analysis of policy issues related to mortgage lending, foreclosures, reverse mortgages, housing finance reform, consumer debt, financial services, and banking. Lori helps lead and manage PPI’s Financial Security Team. She is also the project director of the Future of Work@50+, a multiyear PPI initiative that examines issues related to employment and that will develop innovative policy solutions to the challenges faced by older Americans. Lori frequently speaks to the press about financial management, foreclosures, reverse mortgages, and consumer debt issues.

Lori began her career as an economist at the US Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis, where she worked on estimation and analyses of international securities transactions in the balance of payments accounts. A bond market expert, she was vice president and director of research at The Bond Market Association. Lori was also director of debt market research at Freddie Mac. In addition, she has worked as a consultant for securities-related issues and taught macroeconomics at Northern Virginia Community College. In her spare time, she performs as a professional stand-up comedian.

Lori holds a PhD in economics and finance, an MA in international economics, and a BA in financial management from The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. In addition, she holds an executive certificate in financial planning from Georgetown University and Lori is a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ professional. Lori currently serves on the board of directors of the Department of Commerce Federal Credit Union.
In Her Words

“The biggest takeaway,’ says co-author Lori Trawinski, ‘is that the reemployed were more likely to have searched more aggressively and more immediately after losing a previous job. Networking was key. Among the most effective action people had taken to get a job was to contact employers directly and use personal contacts.”’ (L. Trawinski, quoted in R. Harris, “For Older Workers, Good Jobs Still Elusive,” Boston Globe, March 30, 2015)

Selected Publications


See all blog posts by Lori Trawinski.

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Jilienne Gunther, MSW, JD

Senior Strategic Policy Advisor

Areas of Expertise

Age-friendly banking and elder financial exploitation

Profile

With a passion for social work and training as an attorney, Jilienne Gunther is on a mission to solve policy problems and implement solutions for people ages 50-plus. As a senior strategic policy advisor in AARP’s Public Policy Institute (PPI), she works on policy solutions to curb financial exploitation and to implement age-friendly banking practices across the country.

Before joining PPI, Jilienne served with Utah’s Division of Aging and Adult Services, where she worked with banks to institute age-friendly practices and to create one of the first banking products to help family caregivers prevent exploitation. She wrote a pioneering analysis of the economic cost of elder financial exploitation, as well as two books for seniors about legal and financial issues.

Jilienne is a well-recognized policy expert on age-friendly banking, financial exploitation, and elder rights. Her groundbreaking policy and research have been replicated in more than 30 states and have been cited in Senate hearings, US Government Accountability Office reports, and Consumer Reports. She has received numerous awards for her work, including Utah’s Woman of the Year Achievement Award.

In Her Words

“Financial exploitation is an ugly reality. Some are being exploited to such a degree they are now eligible for Medicaid. We’re not talking about pennies here. These are people’s life savings. At the end of your life to have this happen is the ultimate crime of betrayal.”
Selected Publications


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David C. John, MA, MBA
Senior Strategic Policy Advisor

Areas of Expertise

Retirement savings, pensions, annuities, international pension and retirement savings systems, and Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation

Profile

David C. John is a senior strategic policy advisor at the AARP Public Policy Institute, where he works on pension and retirement savings issues. He also serves as a deputy director of the Retirement Security Project (RSP) at the Brookings Institution. RSP focuses on improving retirement savings in the United States, especially among moderate- and low-income workers.

Before joining AARP, David was a senior research fellow at the Heritage Foundation. He also has extensive public policy experience working for a money center bank, a law firm, a credit union trade association, and four members of the House of Representatives.

David has written and spoken extensively about the importance of reforming the nation’s retirement programs. He is coauthor with J. Mark Iwry of the Automatic IRA, a small business retirement savings program for firms that do not sponsor any other form of retirement savings or pension plan. In addition, David is one of four coeditors of the 2009 book *Automatic: Changing the Way America Saves* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press). He has been published and quoted extensively in the press and has appeared on a number of major television channels and national and syndicated radio shows.

David is a member of the National Academy of Social Insurance. He holds an ABJ in journalism, an MA in economics, and an MBA in finance—all from the University of Georgia.
In His Words

“Many American households do not save for retirement. Those that do save often contribute too little, invest poorly, or withdraw funds early. These patterns leave households, particularly low- and middle-income households, vulnerable to insufficient savings to finance adequate living standards during old age and retirement.” (W. Gale, D. John, and S. Smith, “New Ways to Promote Retirement Saving”)

Selected Publications


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Maxim Shvedov, MA
Senior Strategic Policy Advisor

Areas of Expertise
Tax and budget policy

Profile
Maxim Shvedov works on tax and budget issues at the state and federal levels. He focuses on such areas as tax burden, fiscal sustainability, tax provisions for retirement and caregiving, and other issues of relevance for Americans ages 50-plus.

Before joining the AARP Public Policy Institute in 2010, Maxim analyzed federal tax policy at the Congressional Research Service, specializing in SAS (Statistical Analysis System) microeconomic simulations. He also worked as a senior economist at the Virginia Department of Taxation.

Maxim holds a master’s degree in economics and finance from the State University of New York at Binghamton and a bachelor’s degree from Florida International University in Miami.

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Neal Walters, MA  
Policy Research Senior Analyst

Areas of Expertise
Information privacy and security, identity theft, affordable home utilities, credit reporting, and prepaid cards

Profile
Neal Walters is a policy research senior analyst with AARP’s Public Policy Institute. He conducts policy research and analysis on issues affecting the financial security of the population ages 50-plus, particularly those issues related to consumer protections and information privacy. Neal has written a variety of reports on information privacy, identity theft, affordable home utilities, prepaid cards, and credit reporting. He has a master’s degree in anthropology from the University of Florida.

In His Words
“Of course, privacy policies won’t matter if the device is hacked or a data breach occurs. Consumers are all too familiar with having their financial information compromised and are justly wary of having data collected by a wearable device exposed.

“Developers need to design strong security protections into wearable devices to prevent hacking. In addition, robust data security measures need to be in place to prevent unauthorized access to databases where the information collected is stored.” (N. Walters, “The Promise and Pitfalls of Wearable Technology”)
Selected Publications


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Health Security

PPI’s Health Security division works on policy and health services research related to Medicare and Medicaid, private health insurance coverage, cost and use of prescription drugs, healthy behaviors, and racial and ethnic disparities in care. In addition, the division analyzes approaches to improving care delivery and health care value.
Lina Walker, PhD
Vice President, Health Security

Areas of Expertise
Medicare and health care financing

Profile
Lina Walker serves as the vice president of health security in AARP’s Public Policy Institute, where she leads a team of senior health policy and health services researchers. She has spent nearly 20 years conducting research and publishing on health care and retirement issues. Lina’s recent work includes analyzing Medicare reform proposals and their effect on beneficiaries and Medicare’s long-term financial status. In addition, she has worked on issues related to the financing of Social Security and Medicaid, private pension reform, long-term care financing, and health and long-term care insurance.

Before joining AARP, Lina was the research director at the Retirement Security Project, a joint project between the Brookings Institution and Georgetown University, and she was a research assistant professor at Georgetown Public Policy Institute. Previously, she worked at the Congressional Budget Office, where she modeled the effects of rising disability rates on the Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid programs. Lina’s work also included projecting the long-term financial status of the Medicare and Social Security trust fund. Early in her career, she worked at the Office of Policy Analysis of the Maryland General Assembly, where she provided staff support to Maryland’s state legislators and analyzed the effects of health and long-term care proposals on the state’s budget and consumers.

Lina serves on several expert panels at the National Quality Forum and is a fellow at the National Academy of Social Insurance. She has written and presented on a broad range of health and retirement issues.

Lina has a PhD in economics from the University of Michigan.
Selected Publications


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Leigh Purvis, MPA
Director, Health Services Research

Areas of Expertise
Prescription drug pricing, biologic drugs, and Medicare prescription drug coverage

Profile
Leigh Purvis is the director of health services research in AARP’s Public Policy Institute (PPI). She leads a team of policy analysts and researchers who work on health care issues that are relevant to the 50-plus population. In addition, Leigh heads the institute’s work on prescription drug and mental health issues. Her primary areas of expertise are prescription drug pricing, biologic drugs, and prescription drug coverage. Leigh is a coauthor of PPI’s Rx Price Watch reports, which track price trends for prescription drugs widely used by older Americans.

Leigh joined AARP in 2005 as a policy research senior analyst. Before joining AARP, she worked for the American Psychological Association. She is a recognized expert on prescription drug issues and frequently speaks with the press.

Leigh has a master’s degree in public administration with a concentration in health administration and policy from George Mason University and a bachelor’s degree in psychology from the University of Mary Washington. She also holds a certificate in gerontology from the University of Washington.

In Her Words
Selected Publications


See all blog posts by Leigh Purvis.

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Elizabeth A. Carter, MPH, PhD

Senior Health Services Research Advisor

Areas of Expertise
Epidemiology, public health, chronic diseases, and evidence-based medicine

Profile
Elizabeth Carter conducts health services research as part of the Health Team in AARP’s Public Policy Institute (PPI). Her research focuses on the prevention and treatment of chronic diseases and their complications, as well as health care quality and cost. Elizabeth has extensive experience designing clinical and epidemiological studies and conducting statistical analyses on large-scale data sets.

Before joining PPI in 2014, Elizabeth was a principal investigator on a National Institutes of Health–funded grant at Children’s National Health System and an assistant professor of biostatistics and epidemiology at the Milken Institute School of Public Health at the George Washington University.

Elizabeth received a bachelor’s degree in human biology from Stanford University and master’s and PhD degrees in epidemiology from the Milken Institute School of Public Health.
Selected Publications


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Olivia Dean
Policy Analyst

Areas of Expertise
Public health, nutrition, and health disparities

Profile
Olivia Dean is a policy analyst with AARP’s Public Policy Institute (PPI). Her work focuses on a wide variety of health-related issues, with an emphasis on public health, health disparities, mental health, and healthy behavior.

Before joining PPI, Olivia served in AmeriCorps VISTA with the AARP Foundation, where she played a key role in expanding the organization’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program outreach efforts.

Olivia received her bachelor’s degree in public health with a minor in public policy from the University of California, Berkeley.

Selected Publication

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Lynda Flowers, RN, MSN, JD
Senior Strategic Policy Advisor

Areas of Expertise
Medicaid, dual eligibility, dual-eligible demonstrations, public health, prevention, health disparities, and health care quality

Profile
Lynda Flowers is a senior policy advisor at the AARP Public Policy Institute (PPI). Her work at PPI focuses on Medicaid, dual eligibility, dual-eligible demonstration projects, public health, prevention, health disparities, and health care quality. Before joining AARP, Lynda held senior policy positions with the National Academy for State Health Policy and the Medical Assistance Administration of the Government of the District of Columbia (DC Medicaid). While at DC Medicaid, she developed the city’s first home- and community-based waiver for older adults and was the lead policy person on the Children’s Health Insurance Program.

Previously, Lynda advised state legislators and state legislative staff members on Medicaid and immigration issues at the National Conference of State Legislatures. She has also worked for the League of Women Voters, where she was responsible for implementing a 50-state program—funded by the Kaiser Family Foundation—designed to engage consumers in the health reform debate.

Lynda is a member of the National Academy for Social Insurance. She represents AARP on the US Preventive Services Task Force, the Medicaid Waiver Task Force, the Medicaid Task Force, the National Committee on Quality Assurance’s Overuse Measurement Advisory Panel, the Measure Application Coordinating Committee of the National Quality Forum, and the Consumer Advisory Council of the National Committee for Quality Assurance. She is also cochair of the Policy Committee of the National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable.
In Her Words

“The option to expand Medicaid gives states a cost-effective way to improve the health status of uninsured low-income people at a time in their lives when they are most likely to be developing chronic health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and stroke—conditions that, left untreated, can result in costly deterioration in health status and premature death, and millions of dollars in uncompensated care costs for states.” (L. Flowers, “Health Reform Provides New Federal Money to Help States Expand Medicaid,” AARP PPI, 2008)

Selected Publications


See all blog posts by Lynda Flowers.

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Catherine Wetmore Gillespie, MPH, PhD

Senior Health Services Research Advisor

Areas of Expertise

Epidemiology, public health, health disparities, immunization, and obesity

Profile

Catherine Wetmore Gillespie plays a key role on the Health Team in AARP’s Public Policy Institute, conducting health services research as part of the Optum Labs collaborative. She has extensive experience in the design, implementation, and analysis of observational and experimental investigations, and she has published widely in the peer-reviewed literature on a diverse range of topics, including chronic disease and risk-factor surveillance, barriers to immunization, delivery, and the epidemiology of sexually transmitted infections.

Kate held joint appointments as an assistant professor in both the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics and the Department of Pediatrics at the George Washington University. As a faculty epidemiologist and biostatistician at the Children’s National Health System, she codirected the design, epidemiology, and biostatistics component of the Clinical and Translational Science Institute at Children’s National, where she made significant contributions to an array of translational science studies. From 2010 to 2012, Kate was a senior fellow at the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation in Seattle, where she played a major role in the design and implementation of a number of large-scale efforts to measure variations in health care delivery, constraints, and associated health outcomes at national, subnational, and local levels in the United States and abroad.

Kate received a BA in anthropology from Yale University and MPH and PhD degrees in epidemiology from the University of Washington.
Selected Publications


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Harriet Komisar, PhD
Senior Strategic Policy Advisor

Areas of Expertise
Medicare, delivery and payment reform, long-term services and supports, and financing

Profile
Harriet Komisar is a senior strategic policy advisor on the Health Team in AARP’s Public Policy Institute, where she focuses on Medicare and other health care policy topics. She has extensive research experience on issues in health care and long-term care financing and policy.

Before joining AARP in April 2013, Harriet was a research professor at the Health Policy Institute and the Georgetown Public Policy Institute (now the McCourt School of Public Policy) at Georgetown University. She had recently completed a year as a visiting policy analyst in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Policy and Evaluation at the US Department of Health and Human Services. From 2009 to 2010, Harriet was a senior research analyst at the Hilltop Institute at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Before joining Georgetown University in 1996, she was a principal analyst at the Congressional Budget Office, where she worked on topics related to Medicare and other areas of federal health care policy. Harriet received a PhD in economics from Cornell University and a bachelor of arts from Yale University.

In Her Words
“Expenses for long-term services and supports are a major risk to economic security in retirement…. The need for long-term services and supports is uncertain and varies widely among individuals. Some people will not need any long-term care services during their lives; others will need extensive assistance for an extended period of time.” (H. Komisar, “The Effects of Rising Health Care Costs on Middle-Class Economic Security”)
Selected Publications


H. Komisar and J. Feder, “Transforming Care for Medicare Beneficiaries with Chronic Conditions and Long-Term Care Needs: Coordinating Care across All Services,” SCAN Foundation, Long Beach, CA, October 2011.


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Keith D. Lind, MS, JD
Senior Strategic Policy Advisor

Areas of Expertise
Medicare reform, Medicare coverage, Medicare payment, post-acute care, skilled nursing facilities, home health, hospice, rehabilitation therapy, durable medical equipment, hospital readmission, observation status, appeals, fraud and abuse, quality of care, comparative and cost effectiveness, cost containment, medical devices, malpractice reform, health information technology, and telemedicine

Profile
Before joining AARP, Keith Lind practiced law in the public and private sectors for nearly 20 years. In government, he served as a professional staff member on the Senate Finance Committee under US Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan; legislative assistant to a member of the House Commerce Health Subcommittee; member of the Clinton Health Reform Task Force; and special assistant to the chief of staff of the US Department of Health and Human Services for issues relating to long-term care, managed care, and nursing shortage. Throughout his career, Keith has continued his clinical practice as a nurse in both acute care hospitals and nursing homes.
Selected Publications


K. Lind and the AARP Health Team, “Chronic Care: A Call to Action for Health Reform,” Beyond 50.09, AARP Public Policy Institute, Washington, DC, March 2009.


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Claire Noel-Miller, MPA, PhD
Senior Strategic Policy Advisor

Areas of Expertise

Quantitative research applied to health policy issues affecting older adults, Medicare, and health care quality

Profile

Claire Noel-Miller is a social demographer with expertise in the demography of aging populations. In her current position, she provides expertise in quantitative research methods that are applied to a variety of health policy issues related to older adults. Claire has written on the issue of Medicare beneficiaries’ out-of-pocket costs, among other topics.

Before joining AARP, Claire worked as a postdoctoral researcher and as a research associate at the Center for the Demography of Health and Aging, University of Wisconsin–Madison. She has extensive experience in quantitative data analysis. Claire has manipulated and analyzed numerous large data sets to answer research questions and is an experienced coder, working primarily in Stata and SAS. She holds a master’s degree in public affairs from Princeton University and a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania.

In Her Words

“Medicare is a vital program that helps older and disabled adults pay for needed health care services. However, the traditional fee-for-service (FFS) program does not cover all health care–related costs.... Many Medicare beneficiaries [face] high [out-of-pocket] spending burdens....” (C. Noel-Miller, “Medicare Beneficiaries’ Out-of-Pocket Spending for Health Care”)
Selected Publications


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Jane Sung, JD
Senior Strategic Policy Advisor

Areas of Expertise
Private health insurance, health insurance market reforms, Medicare supplement insurance, and Medicare Advantage

Profile
Jane Sung is a senior strategic policy advisor with AARP’s Public Policy Institute (PPI), where she focuses on private health insurance issues, health insurance coverage among adults ages 50-plus, health insurance market reforms, Medicare supplement insurance, and Medicare Advantage.

Before joining PPI in 2014, Jane served as health policy counsel at the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, where she worked with state insurance regulators to develop standards related to Medicare supplement insurance, private long-term care insurance, Medicare private plans, and consumer information issues under the Affordable Care Act. Previously, she served as legislative assistant and policy advisor to US House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer for health care, long-term care, and disability issues. Jane also worked with the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee. She began her career with the Maryland Governor’s Office, and she handled health care issues in the state’s federal relations office.

Jane received her law degree from American University’s Washington College of Law and her bachelor’s degree from Boston University. She is a member of the Maryland Bar.
Selected Publication


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Independent Living/
Long-Term Services and Supports

The Independent Living and Long-Term Services and Supports division focuses on expanding consumer access to those services and supports, on improving home and community-based services, on supporting family caregivers, and on making communities more livable for older Americans.
Jean Accius, PhD
Vice President, Independent Living/Long-Term Services and Supports

Areas of Expertise
Health and long-term care policy and translating research into policy and practice

Profile
Jean Accius is Vice President for Independent Living/Long-Term Services and Supports. Previously, he was the policy integration director for health and long-term services and supports (LTSS) issues in AARP’s Office of Policy Integration.

Jean helps coordinate AARP’s deliberative policy development process, focusing on (a) developing federal, state, and local policy related to health and LTSS care delivery, quality, and safety; (b) overseeing financing and coverage; (c) assisting with workforce and education issues; and (d) paying special attention to specific needs, such as prescription drugs, medical devices, and end-of-life care. He also ensures that AARP health initiatives and practices are consistent with AARP’s policies.

Jean previously served as a senior policy advisor within the Disabled and Elderly Health Programs Group at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. He is a member of the National Academy of Social Insurance and was recently selected for the Leadership Maryland (class of 2014) program. Jean also serves on the American Society on Aging’s Generations editorial advisory board, and he is a member of the board of directors for the Center for Excellence in Assisted Living.

Jean holds a master’s degree in aging studies from the Claude Pepper Institute at Florida State University and a PhD in public administration from American University.
Selected Publications


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Rodney Harrell, PhD
Director, Livable Communities

Areas of Expertise
Livable communities, housing, residential patterns, and community development

Profile
Rodney Harrell leads a group that works on innovative livable communities research, policy analysis, and solutions. He also works with the vice president of the Livable Communities and Long-Term Services and Supports Team to develop, implement, and manage the team’s research agenda. Once in place, those resources enhance personal independence; allow residents to age in place; and foster residents’ engagement in their community’s civic, economic, and social life. Rodney’s research on housing preferences, neighborhood choice, and community livability are integral to the groundbreaking Livability Index, which measures the livability of every neighborhood and community in the United States. He is also a speaker, researcher, and blogger on livable communities issues and leads @AARPpolicy social media efforts.

Rodney joined the Public Policy Institute in March 2008 as a senior strategic policy advisor. Before joining AARP, he worked as a research and evaluation consultant, a researcher and instructor for the University of Maryland, and a Governor’s Fellow in the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development/Maryland Heritage Areas Authority.

Rodney graduated summa cum laude from the honors program at Howard University; earned dual master’s degrees in public affairs and urban and regional planning from the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University; and received a PhD in urban planning and design from the University of Maryland, College Park, where he was a Wylie Fellow. He is a member of the Phi Beta Kappa and Phi Kappa Phi honor societies.
In His Words

“‘The numbers are telling us that no community is perfect—and most are far from perfect,’ says Rodney Harrell, director of livable communities at the AARP Public Policy Institute. ‘The goal [of the Livability Index] is to provide a tool that helps people make their communities better.’” (R. Harrell, quoted in M. Miller, “See How Your Neighborhood Ranks as a Place to Age,” Fiscal Times, April 30, 2015)

Selected Publications


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Rita B. Choula
Senior Advisor

Areas of Expertise
Family caregiving

Profile
Rita Choula is a Senior Advisor with the AARP Public Policy Institute. She manages and provides content expertise on internal and external family caregiving initiatives with a specific focus on identifying and supporting the needs of multicultural family caregivers. Rita also works with external partners to provide health and social service professionals with tools to support family caregivers across settings.

Before joining AARP, Rita worked as a corporate researcher in the health and information technology sectors. She was also the assistant principal of a school for children in grades prekindergarten through eighth grade. She holds a bachelor’s degree in information systems management from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

In Her Words
“Meeting the needs of diverse family caregivers … requires organizational support and changes in public policy.” (S. Reinhard and R. Choula, “Meeting the Needs of Diverse Family Caregivers”)
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Public Policy Institute

Lynn Friss Feinberg, MSW
Senior Strategic Policy Advisor

Areas of Expertise
Family caregiving, long-term care, dementia care, home quality, consumer direction, workforce, and care coordination

Profile
Lynn Friss Feinberg is a senior strategic policy advisor with AARP’s Public Policy Institute. Her work focuses on family caregiving and long-term care issues.

Before coming to AARP in February 2011, Lynn was the first director of the Campaign for Better Care, an initiative of the National Partnership for Women and Families. From 1985 to 2009, she held leadership positions at the San Francisco–based Family Caregiver Alliance (FCA), first serving as manager of research and information programs and then as deputy director of FCA’s National Center on Caregiving, an information and technical assistance resource on caregiving and long-term care for policy makers, service providers, media, and families. At FCA, Lynn led the first 50-state study on publicly funded caregiving programs in the United States. Previously, she was an Area Agency on Aging planner and conducted aging policy research at the University of California, San Francisco.

In 2007 and 2008, Lynn was selected as the John Heinz Senate Fellow in Aging, and she served in the office of US Senator Barbara Boxer.

Lynn has published and lectured widely on family care issues and has served on numerous national advisory committees and expert panels to address caregiving and long-term care. She is a past commissioner of the American Bar Association’s Commission on Law and Aging and a past member of the editorial board of Generations, the journal of the American Society on Aging. Lynn has a master’s degree in social welfare from the University of California, Berkeley.

Currently, Lynn is chair of the American Society on Aging and serves on the Institute of Medicine’s Committee on Family Caregiving for Older Adults. In 2006, she received the American Society on Aging’s Leadership Award.
In Her Words

“It’s a wake-up call for aging boomers. We’re really moving toward an uncertain future as … relying on our family and friends to provide long-term care isn’t going to be realistic anymore.” (L. Feinberg, quoted in T. Bahrampour, “Huge Shortage of Caregivers Looms for Baby Boomers, Report Says,” Washington Post, August 26, 2013)

Selected Publications


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Wendy Fox-Grage, MS, MPA
Senior Strategic Policy Advisor

Areas of Expertise
State long-term services and supports, home- and community-based services, and Medicaid-managed long-term services and supports

Profile
Wendy Fox-Grage has provided policy research, analysis, and guidance for the AARP Public Policy Institute since 2004. Her areas of focus are state long-term services and supports reforms, Medicaid-managed long-term services and supports, and home- and community-based services. Before coming to AARP, Wendy worked for the National Conference of State Legislatures for nearly 10 years, where she advised state legislators and legislative staff on issues related to long-term services and supports.

Wendy started her career in public policy as a congressional intern with the US Senate Special Committee on Aging. She holds a master of science in gerontology and a master of public administration from the University of Southern California’s Andrus Gerontology Center. She has a bachelor of science from Northwestern University.

In Her Words
“I have been studying long-term services and supports across the nation for nearly 20 years, so it is hard to surprise me. However, whenever 34 states take on major new initiatives aimed at cutting costs and improving care, I take notice, especially given that most of these efforts will occur within the next two years!” (W. Fox-Grage, “States Move to Coordinate Care”)
Selected Publications


See all blog posts by Wendy Fox-Grage.

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Shannon Guzman, MA, MCP
Policy Research Senior Analyst

Areas of Expertise
Livable communities; smart growth policy; community planning; and land use, housing, and transportation policy

Profile
Shannon Guzman is a policy research senior analyst with the AARP Public Policy Institute, where she works primarily on livable communities issues. She conducts research and analysis to inform community members and to assist local decision makers in their efforts to support residents who want to age in place. Shannon has coauthored publications about community livability, housing, and transportation; analyzed national crash statistics; and assisted in the development of community assessments.

Before joining AARP, Shannon was a senior planner for the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission in the Prince George’s County Planning Department. In that role, she worked on long-range, comprehensive planning projects focused on the implementation of smart growth initiatives, neighborhood revitalization, and transit-oriented development policies and strategies for several communities.

For two years, Shannon served as a Peace Corps volunteer in El Salvador, where she worked on community development projects with an emphasis on citizen participation, girls’ education, and municipal workforce development and training. She also has worked in the television and film production and 401(k) industries. Shannon is certified as a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Associate through the US Green Building Council. She received a master’s degree in community planning from the University of Maryland; a master’s degree in communications, culture, and technology from Georgetown University; and a bachelor’s degree in Spanish from the University of Virginia.
In Her Words

“In addition to the direct impact of housing costs and assets on well-being, housing choices play an important indirect role in middle-class security. Housing location can provide—or deny—access to services that enhance economic opportunity. Segregation of housing by income has increased in recent decades, a trend that can affect families’ ability to achieve middle-class security.” (R. Harrell and S. Guzman, “Loss of Housing Affordability”)

Selected Publications


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Ari Houser, MA
Senior Methods Advisor

Areas of Expertise

Research methods and statistics, demographics, disability, family caregiving, and use of formal long-term services and supports (LTSS)

Profile

Ari Houser has been part of the AARP Public Policy Institute (PPI) since 2004. His work focuses on trends in demographics, disability, family caregiving, and the use of formal LTSS services. He has been the lead data analyst for the Across the States and Valuing the Invaluable series of publications on LTSS and family caregiving. Ari was also the primary data analyst for the 2011 and 2014 State LTSS Scorecards. In addition, he provides methodological and statistical assistance throughout PPI.

Before coming to AARP, Ari worked at the RAND Corporation and taught courses in statistics and public policy. He has undergraduate degrees from Swarthmore College and a master’s degree from the University of Maryland. He is a PhD candidate (ABD) in measurement, statistics, and evaluation at the University of Maryland.

In His Words

“Even after standardizing definitions, estimates of the economic value of caregiving can vary widely. The original Valuing the Invaluable report estimated an economic value of $354 billion in 2006, but we also showed that reasonable assumptions could place that value anywhere between $167 billion and $780 billion, with most of the variation due to decisions regarding the value per hour.” (A. Houser, “Just How Valuable Is Family Caregiving?,” Thinking Policy [AARP blog], July 19, 2013, http://blog.aarp.org/2013/07/19/just-how-valuable-is-family-caregiving)
Selected Publications


D. Redfoot, A. Houser, and M. Gibson, “Trends in Disability, Community Living, and Caregiving: Analysis of Data from the National Long-Term Care Survey,” AARP Public Policy Institute, Washington, DC, September 2010.


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Jana Lynott, AICP, MP
Senior Strategic Policy Advisor

Areas of Expertise
Livable communities, transportation, and land use

Profile
Jana Lynott manages AARP’s transportation research agenda and is responsible for the development of policy related to transportation and other livable communities issues adopted by the AARP Policy Council and Board of Directors and presented in the AARP Policy Book. Her research focuses on human services transportation coordination, accessible street design, the travel patterns of older adults, transit service needs, and older driver safety.

Jana was responsible for the development of AARP’s Livability Index, which was released in April 2015. This first-of-its-kind online tool is designed to help communities better serve an aging population. The index blends mapping technology, preference survey results, quantitative measures, and public policies to measure how well a location—down to the neighborhood level—is meeting residents’ current and future needs. It uses a scoring system of 60 indicators spread across seven categories of livability: housing, neighborhood, transportation, environment, health, engagement, and opportunity.

Before her employment with AARP, Jana was director of transportation planning for the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, where she designed and managed a groundbreaking study on the link between land use and the mobility of older adults. She also initiated and managed a travel instruction program to teach seniors how to use transit services.

As a land use and transportation planner, Jana brings practical expertise to the research field. She serves on her county transportation commission and on the Transportation Research Board’s Committee for Safe Mobility of Older Persons. She holds a master’s degree in urban and environmental planning from the University of Virginia and a bachelor of arts in global studies from the University of Iowa.
In Her Words

“The [AARP Livability] Index is designed to show strengths and weaknesses in a community and, hopefully, leverage the resources to make change.” (J. Lynott, quoted in R. Eisenberg, “The Most Livable Cities in America,” Forbes, April 20, 2015)

Selected Publications


J. Lynott and C. Figueiredo, “How the Travel Patterns of Older Adults Are Changing: Highlights from the 2009 National Household Travel Survey,” AARP Public Policy Institute, Washington, DC, April 2011.


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Kathleen Ujvari, MBA, MHSM
Policy Research Senior Analyst

Areas of Expertise

Research and analysis of state-level and national data on long-term services and supports (LTSS)

Profile

Kathleen Ujvari is a policy research senior analyst with the AARP Public Policy Institute. Her work includes research and analysis of state-level and national data on LTSS to identify issues, trends, and opportunities to improve access, delivery, quality, and program funding. Kathleen is coauthor of a number of publications that address LTSS, long-term care insurance, the role of states in supporting family caregivers, and economic studies that report on LTSS programs and financing.

Kathleen has extensive experience in root-cause analysis, project management, and project implementation from her previous career as a financial services industry consultant and financial regulatory auditor. She holds an MBA from Northeastern University and a master’s degree in health systems management from George Mason University.

In Her Words

“States have a role in limiting inappropriate use of antipsychotic medications in nursing homes.”
Selected Publications


See all blog posts by Kathleen Ujvari.

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Center to Champion Nursing in America

The Center to Champion Nursing in America leads stakeholders in a national campaign to improve health care quality and access by maximizing the use of nurses. The Center works to implement Institute of Medicine recommendations that nurses play a leading role in transforming health care. This nationwide effort is an initiative of AARP, the AARP Foundation, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.
Public Policy Institute

Mary Boyle, MS
Director of Communications

Areas of Expertise
Message strategy and development, public and media relations, crisis communications, issue advocacy, social media, fundraising, and journalism

Profile
Mary Boyle oversees communications for the Center to Champion Nursing in America, which coordinates the Future of Nursing: Campaign for Action, a nationwide effort to transform health care through nursing.

Before arriving at AARP, Mary was the vice president of communications for Common Cause, a national nonpartisan advocacy organization that works to strengthen democracy at the national and state levels. She developed messaging and communications strategies, positioned the organization and its experts in the media, served as chief spokesperson, and oversaw the organization’s digital presence and online fund-raising.

Before joining Common Cause in 2002, Mary covered politics and public policy for the Denver, Colorado, and Washington, DC, bureaus of the Gazette of Colorado Springs, Colorado, and she was a general assignment reporter for the Associated Press in Baltimore, Maryland, and Denver. Mary started her journalism career as a staff writer for the Sun of Lowell, Massachusetts.

Mary has a bachelor’s degree in English from the College of the Holy Cross and a master’s degree in journalism from Columbia University.

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Jennifer A. Peed, MSW

Director, Office of Center Integration
Deputy Director, RWJF, State Implementation Program

Areas of Expertise

Health care program analysis and administration

Profile

Jennifer Peed serves as director of the Office of Center Integration and as deputy director of the State Implementation Program at the Center to Champion Nursing in America, an initiative of AARP, the AARP Foundation, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Jennifer began working for AARP’s Public Policy Institute in September 2013.

Before her position at AARP, Jennifer was an independent consultant who provided management, strategic guidance, research, and policy analysis services to organizations and principal investigators who were working to better understand and promote health, wellness, and social welfare.

Jennifer also served as program administrator for two Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grants that provided technical assistance and education about Medicare and the Medicare Savings Programs to professionals and consumers. In addition, she was program director for the Tuberous Sclerosis Alliance.

During her academic preparation, Jennifer was a legislative intern and monitored state and federal legislation that had a potential effect on health care professionals and health care delivery systems. She also served as a crisis counselor specializing in suicide prevention. Jennifer has a master’s degree in social work with a concentration in management and community organization and a specialty in health from the University of Maryland.

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Patricia Polansky, RN, MS

Director, Program Development and Implementation

Areas of Expertise

Health care administration, executive leadership, interprofessional collaboration (health), primary care, home and community health care, aging issues and long-term care, and nursing education

Profile

Pat Polansky is codirector of the Center to Champion Nursing in America, an initiative of AARP, the AARP Foundation, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Pat directs education, leadership, and communications and outreach strategies for the Future of Nursing: Campaign for Action, an effort to transform health care through nursing.

Pat served as assistant commissioner for the Division of Aging and Community Services (DACS) in the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, where she oversaw programs that increase access to services for the state’s 1.5 million older adults, improve their well-being, and allow them to live independently in their communities. She oversaw 12 federal grants and led New Jersey’s efforts toward long-term care reform.

Before joining DACS, Pat was executive director of the New Jersey Board of Nursing, was cofounder of a health care consulting firm, and worked in hospital executive management roles for more than 20 years. She also held nursing positions at both the staff and supervisory levels and is a registered nurse in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Pat is the recipient of the Governor’s Nursing Merit Award and the outstanding alumna designation from the University of Pennsylvania’s College of Nursing, among other honors.

Pat served as president of the National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities and was an adjunct professor at Fairleigh Dickinson University, University of Pennsylvania, New York University, and Rutgers University. She holds a master’s degree in community health from Rutgers University and an undergraduate degree from the University of Pennsylvania.
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Winifred V. Quinn, PhD
Director, Advocacy and Consumer Affairs

Areas of Expertise

Stakeholder engagement and networking, coalition organizing, advocacy, state scope of practice policies, nursing workforce funding, and nursing workforce and diversity

Profile

Winifred Quinn co-leads a national campaign dedicated to improving health care through nursing, the Future of Nursing: Campaign for Action. She oversees a team that supports action coalitions in each state and the District of Columbia and that works to implement the Institute of Medicine’s recommendations from its landmark 2011 report, The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health. Winifred also assists with the Campaign for Action’s diversity work to help ensure a more diverse nursing workforce, faculty, and leadership.

Winifred works across AARP to help address public policies that intersect with consumer and nursing issues. She focuses on policy issues related to improving funding for nursing education and legal barriers that prevent all levels of registered nurses from practicing to the full extent of their education and expertise. Winifred’s federal policy work includes working on nursing education provisions within the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. She helped to initiate a national-level coalition that successfully moved Medicare to begin supporting graduate-level nursing education. Winifred’s state-level policy work entails organizing technical assistance to action coalitions and AARP state offices that are improving funding for nursing education or modernizing the scope-of-practice laws. Within that role, she places a strong emphasis on building coalitions and engaging stakeholders.

Winifred is a member of the Engagement Core Team of Family Medicine for America’s Health. She is an alumna of Union College in Cranford, New Jersey, and of Douglass College, Rutgers University. She received her master’s degree in counseling from Montclair State University and her PhD in health communication from Rutgers University School of Communication and Information.
**Selected Publications**


[See all blog posts by Winifred Quinn.](#)

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Andrea Brassard, PhD, FNP-BC, FAANP

Senior Strategic Policy Advisor

Areas of Expertise

Primary care, retail health, home health care, nursing research, education, regulation, workforce, policy analysis, advanced practice registered nurses, scope of practice

Profile

Andrea Brassard recently returned from the American Nurses Association to the Center to Champion Nursing in America, an initiative of the AARP Foundation, AARP, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to improve America’s health through nursing. Andrea is a senior adviser on strategic policy for the Future of Nursing: Campaign for Action, a national initiative of those same organizations to transform health care through nursing and build healthier communities for everyone in America. At the American Nurses Association, Andrea was director of health policy. She was formerly full-time faculty at the School of Nursing at the George Washington University and continues as an adjunct professor. A nationally certified family nurse practitioner, she is past president of the Nurse Practitioner Association of the District of Columbia and occasionally practices at a retail health clinic system on weekends. Andrea received PhD and MPH degrees from Columbia University, where she was a funded public policy fellow.

Selected Publications

A. Brassard and M. Smolenski, “Removing Barriers to Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Care: Hospital Privileges,” AARP Public Policy Institute, Insight on the Issues (October 2011).

A. Brassard, “Removing Barriers to Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Care: Home Health and Hospice Services,” AARP Public Policy Institute, Insight on the Issues (July 2012).


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Meredith Courville, MPS
Communications Advisor

Areas of Expertise
Communications, public relations, strategic communications planning, writing, editing, and social media

Profile
Meredith Courville is the communications advisor for the Center to Champion Nursing in America (CCNA) at the AARP Public Policy Institute. She is responsible for strategic communications and outreach for CCNA and the Future of Nursing: Campaign for Action. Meredith’s responsibilities include strategic communications planning, managing and implementing communications campaigns, speechwriting, and leading content development and creation, which help the Campaign reach a wide range of influential audiences. She also leads the Campaign’s social media strategy and day-to-day implementation.

Before joining AARP, Meredith spent nearly six years at the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), where she held several communications and editorial roles. At NAEYC, she developed and implemented marketing and communications campaigns, managed the organization’s social media presence and strategy, and handled media relations. Meredith also wrote for the organization’s award-winning publications. Her previous experience includes teaching at an independent school and serving as an AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps volunteer, where she provided disaster relief and recovery services along the Gulf Coast following hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Meredith holds a master’s degree in public relations and corporate communications from Georgetown University and a bachelor’s degree in journalism from Ohio University.
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Jamie A. Gold
Senior Writer and Editor

Areas of Expertise
Writing, editing, and media

Profile
Jamie Gold brings to AARP 30 years of experience writing and editing in newsrooms, including those of the Washington Post and Los Angeles Times, where, as ombudsman for almost 12 years, she was the liaison between the newsroom and readers on questions about accuracy and fairness. At AARP, she writes and edits for the Future of Nursing: Campaign for Action at the Center to Champion Nursing in America.

Before joining AARP, Jamie was a director at Reingold, a communications firm whose clients include nonprofit associations and government agencies that work on a range of issues, including health, the environment, and better care for US veterans. Jamie also provides organizational and communications skills gained from her years as executive director of a nonprofit volunteer corps she founded and as cofounder and director of a literacy program. Jamie has a bachelor’s degree in English literature from Arizona State University.

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Aidan McCallion, MS
Digital Communications Project Analyst

Areas of Expertise
Message strategy and development, public and media relations, social media, and web design

Profile
Aidan McCallion is the digital communications project analyst for the Center to Champion Nursing in America (CCNA). In this role, she is responsible for the Campaign for Action website. Aidan contributes to the social media strategy, oversees special online projects, and provides overall communications support throughout CCNA.

Before joining AARP, Aidan worked for the US Food and Drug Administration and the National Electrical Contractors Association. She also interned at the Habitat for Humanity Metro Maryland affiliate, where she was the social media and public relations intern to the executive director.

Aidan earned a master’s degree in management and public relations from the University of Maryland and has an undergraduate degree in political science from Clemson University.

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Lynn Mertz, PhD
Senior Strategic Policy Advisor

Areas of Expertise
Higher education program design and management, strategic planning, and fund development

Profile
Lynn Mertz is the senior strategic policy advisor for the Center to Champion Nursing in America. In this role, Lynn focuses on nursing education, leadership, and interprofessional collaboration. For more than two decades Lynn has worked in higher education, including at Bloomfield College, a private university in New Jersey, as well as for the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, a statewide public policy association serving the private universities in New Jersey. Most recently, she served as deputy director for the New Jersey Nursing Initiative, a program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focused on addressing the nurse faculty shortage. In recent years, Lynn lived in Istanbul, Turkey, where she worked at Özyeğin University. She obtained her bachelor’s degree from Drew University, a master of urban planning from New York University’s Wagner School, and a PhD in higher education policy from Seton Hall University.

Selected Publication

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Profile

Tara Murphy is a project specialist for the State Implementation Program (SIP) at the Center to Champion Nursing in America (CCNA), an initiative of AARP, the AARP Foundation, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. In her role, Tara coordinates the technical assistance, reporting, and administration of the 33 SIP grantees.

Before joining CCNA, Tara worked for a software company in St. Petersburg, Florida, where she designed and conducted extensive customer and market research and used it to build the company’s first strategic marketing plan.

Tara also was an intern for a political polling firm in Washington, DC; was an AARP New York state office intern; and worked on several political campaigns, both local and national. Tara has a bachelor’s degree in political science with a minor in business administration and a certificate in political campaigning from the University of Florida.

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About the Office of Policy Development & Integration

The Office of Policy Development & Integration (OPI) coordinates the development of public policy through the National Policy Council with approval by the AARP Board of Directors and ensures policy integration and consistency across AARP.
Dorothy Siemon, Esq.

Vice President, Office of Policy Integration

Areas of Expertise

Medicare, Medicaid, and long-term services and supports

Profile

Dorothy Siemon is vice president of AARP’s Office of Policy Integration (OPI). She is responsible for the oversight and management of AARP’s policy development process, working closely with AARP’s all-volunteer National Policy Council and the AARP Board of Directors to develop AARP public policies that address major issues facing older Americans. In that capacity, Dorothy coordinates AARP’s deliberative policy development process and ensures that AARP initiatives and practices are consistent with AARP policy. From 2007 to 2012, she served as director of health and long-term services and supports in OPI.

Before joining OPI, Dorothy was a senior litigation attorney for more than 10 years for the AARP Foundation, writing amicus briefs in federal and state courts, including the US Supreme Court. In addition, she served as counsel in numerous class-action cases involving Medicare, Medicaid, and long-term care facilities.

Dorothy is a member of the National Academy of Social Insurance and has served as a commissioner for the American Bar Association’s Commission on Law and Aging. She graduated from the Georgetown University Law Center.

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Christina Smith FitzPatrick, MPA

Policy Integration Director for Economic Issues

Areas of Expertise
Social security, income tax policy, employment policy, federal and state budgets, and low-income assistance

Profile
Christina Smith FitzPatrick is the policy integration director for economic issues in AARP’s Office of Policy Integration. She works with AARP’s all-volunteer National Policy Council and the AARP Board of Directors to develop AARP public policies that address economic issues facing older Americans. Christina helps coordinate AARP’s deliberative policy development process, with a focus on budget and taxation, retirement income, employment, and low-income assistance. She also ensures that AARP economic initiatives and practices are consistent with AARP’s policies.

Before starting at AARP, Christina worked for the Congressional Joint Economic Committee, the National Women’s Law Center, and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. She is a member of the National Academy for Social Insurance.

Christina received her bachelor’s degree from Harvard University and her master’s degree in public affairs from the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University.

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Sharene Johnson
Policy Integration Manager

Areas of Expertise
Budgeting management, project management, and event management

Profile
Sharene Johnson is a policy integration manager in AARP’s Office of Policy Integration (OPI), which coordinates AARP’s deliberative policy development process and supports AARP’s all-volunteer National Policy Council (NPC). In that role, she manages AARP’s annual policy solicitation process and the NPC nominations and reappointment process. In addition, Sharene manages OPI’s departmental budget and sits on a cross-departmental AARP team that ensures that contracting and financial procedures are executed properly across the association.

Before joining AARP, Sharene worked at the American Lung Association and at the transportation planning and engineering firm Gorove/Slade Associates, where she gained experience in accounting, contracts, and event management.

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Logan Ruppel
Health Policy Research Analyst

Areas of Expertise
Writing and editing, policy research, and project management

Profile
Logan Ruppel is a health policy research analyst in AARP’s Office of Policy Integration, which coordinates AARP’s deliberative policy development process and supports AARP’s all-volunteer National Policy Council. In that role, he works with the policy integration directors across health, economic, and consumer issues to ensure that AARP’s policies meet the needs of the 50-plus population.

Before joining AARP in 2013, Logan worked as a grassroots organizer in Montana, Virginia, and New Jersey.

Logan graduated from American University in 2012 with a bachelor of arts in political science and a minor in international affairs.

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Yvonne Tobias
Policy Integration Manager

Areas of Expertise
Publications production, copyediting, and event management

Profile
Yvonne Tobias is a policy integration manager in AARP’s Office of Policy Integration (OPI), which coordinates AARP’s deliberative policy development process and supports AARP’s all-volunteer National Policy Council (NPC). In that role, she works with staff members to develop, produce, and disseminate information regarding AARP policies. Yvonne also works with staff members to ensure that AARP products and services are consistent with AARP policies and social impact goals. In addition, she administers the secure online communications system used by the NPC.

Yvonne has years of experience assisting low-income individuals with consumer, economic, and health concerns. Before joining OPI, she worked as a legal associate at AARP’s Legal Counsel for the Elderly. Previously, she worked in the Legal Aid Bureau’s midwestern Maryland office and the legal services department of St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center. Yvonne is a former member of the University of Maryland University College Paralegal Advisory Board and the Emergency Food and Shelter Program Board in Washington, DC, where she oversaw allocation of funds to agencies in DC’s Ward 1. She is also a member of Generations United’s policy committee.

Yvonne received her bachelor of science degree from the University of Southern Mississippi.

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About International Affairs

The Office of International Affairs (IA), directs the Association’s global outreach. IA identifies best practices in policy, practice, and products and services that serve AARP’s goals.
International Affairs

Josh Collett, MPAff
Vice President, International Affairs

Areas of Expertise
Global aging, age-friendly communities, real international possibilities

Profile
Josh Collett leads AARP’s international efforts, positioning the association as a catalyst for international exchange on aging-related issues and highlighting global models and innovations for application in the United States. He works to raise AARP’s profile internationally and place issues of interest to the association on the international agenda by sponsoring and participating in international social and economic policy debates worldwide.

Before joining AARP, Josh worked at the Embassy of Australia in Washington, DC; the Council of the Americas; the United States Senate; and CBS News. Originally from New York, he is a graduate of Haverford College and holds a master of public affairs degree from the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin.

In His Words
“The world’s population is aging and we, individually and globally, have an opportunity to imagine new possibilities that enhance the individual experience and benefit society as a whole.” (J. Collett, “From the Editor,” AARP International, The Journal [2014 print edition])

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Erica Dhar, MA
Senior Advisor

Areas of Expertise
United Nations, global aging, human rights, and transnational caregiving

Profile
Erica Dhar is a senior advisor with AARP’s Office of International Affairs. She has expertise working with the United Nations; advocating on issues of global aging, including the human rights of older persons; and on transnational caregiving. Erica manages the AARP Office of International Affairs in New York City, where she is responsible for relationships with international nonprofits and organizations dealing with aging, as well as international visitors. She spent 18 years in the broadcast and financial services industry.

Erica received her bachelor’s degree with honors from Delhi University in India, a master’s degree in corporate political communication from Fairfield University in Connecticut, and a master’s degree from the New York University Gallatin School of Individualized Study.

In Her Words
“Globalization and the aging of the world’s population are affecting the already complex issue of intergenerational transnational caregiving. Globalization has caused an increase in workforce mobility with large numbers of individuals seeking employment overseas. This, coupled with increased longevity globally, has resulted in many workers leaving their elderly parents in need of care in their home countries.” (E. Dhar in “Transnational Caregiving: Part 1, Caring for Family Relations across Nations”)
Selected Publications


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Jeffrey Gullo is a policy analyst in AARP’s Office of International Affairs, where his responsibilities include outreach to the diplomatic community and management of AARP’s International Visitors Program.

Before joining AARP, Jeffrey served as assistant director of the Washington Meetings Program at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), where he worked from 2008 to 2014. At CFR, he was responsible for the strategic direction of the department, the development of new programming initiatives, and diplomatic outreach. Jeffrey covered numerous issues, ranging from national security and defense to health and economic competitiveness. Jeffrey received a bachelor’s degree in public policy studies from Duke University.

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Bradley Schurman, MA
Senior Advisor

Areas of Expertise
Asia, employment, income, money, pensions, retirement income, savings, and work

Profile
Bradley Schurman is a senior advisor with AARP International with expertise in employment and volunteering. Bradley is a member of the Center for Global Engagement Advisory Committee. He is responsible for a number of AARP’s global relationships, including those with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and nations within Asia and Europe. Bradley also administers AARP Best Employers International. He holds undergraduate and graduate degrees from American University.

In His Words
“The challenges of demographic change should be seen as opportunities, and it is clear that some organizations recognize this. Engaging individuals to remain in the workforce longer is beneficial not only to the individual, but also to the organization and the nation.” (B. Schurman, “Age Management: Best Employers Lead the Way,” Huffington Post, November 11, 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/bradley-schurman/age-management-best-emplo_b_4333542.html)
Selected Publications


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