

April 2019

A Message from the CEO

By Diane Slezak
AgeOptions President and CEO



Diane Slezak

It is hard to believe that April marks my six-month anniversary as CEO and president of AgeOptions. There have been so many changes over the past months and weeks.

I am so pleased to welcome and congratulate **Paula Basta, the new Director of the Illinois Department on Aging, on her appointment.** Her confirmation hearing is scheduled before the Senate Executive Appointments Committee on April 12.

A new group of CEOs and executive directors have also joined our suburban aging network. I welcome Grace Hong-Duffin, the new Director at the Kenneth Young Centers, Tish Rudnicki, the new director at North Shore Senior Center and Candace Crisman, the new director at Solutions for Care. I have had the pleasure of meeting all the new directors since their appointments and can attest to the energy and vision they bring to our network. I look forward to working with them and hope we can harness all the new energy to address the challenges and opportunities that face us.

We also welcomed four new Board members to AgeOptions over the recent months and I hope you will read the story about their backgrounds in this newsletter. They each have amazing backgrounds and skills to bring to our mission.

Thank you to everyone who attended our Open House/Ribbon Cutting on March 22. We welcomed more than 80 visitors to our new space and you will see some photos in other sections of this newsletter. Please stop in and visit if you were not able to join us for the open house.

I attended the annual National Association of Area Agencies on Aging Policy Briefing on March 4 and 5 and returned energized by the presentations offered by our national association. Jon Lavin was able to join me and Amanda Wojan of our staff to meet with nine congressional aides and legislators and we were pleased with their support for reauthorization of the Older Americans Act. The current two-year authorization expires in September 2019. Please see the article on our efforts to meet with members of Congress while they are in the districts for spring break this month.

The governor's budget was introduced last month and we are pleased that there are three new allocations: a one-million dollar line item for combating social isolation, a one-million dollar allocation for services to those with Alzheimer's and related disorders and a \$900,000 allocation to help address the cost of minimum wage increases. The budget hearings begin the second week of April.

AgeWave - AgeOptions engaged Rob Paral to prepare a demographic study of the older adult population. We are sharing the results of his study on our web site ([click here](#)). His projections show that in five years we will have a 23% (121,568) increase in the number of adults age 60 and over in suburban Cook County. This will bring our 60+ population to more than 650,000. In addition to the Age Wave piece, the population projections he prepared has reports on disease and risk in the older population, and a legislative district breakdown of data.

You'll find more about AgeOptions' events and activities in the rest of this newsletter. I hope you find it informative and interesting.

