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**January 28, 2019**

**Department of Elder Affairs Secretary  
An Important Appointment to Governor's Cabinet**

In recent days, Governor Ron DeSantis has announced a number of appointments to serve on his administration. A pivotal appointment to his cabinet is the new Secretary for the Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) – Richard Prudom. DOEA is the State Unit on Aging, whose mission is to help Florida's 5.5 million elders remain healthy, safe, and independent.

Secretary Prudom has more than 30 years in executive leadership with the State of Florida where he has worked to develop, implement, and lead public policies and programs that improve the lives of Florida families. Since 2011, he has served at the Department of Elder Affairs as Deputy Secretary, Chief of Staff, and Chief Financial Officer.

With his appointment comes an opportunity to share information about the work being done at the state and local levels to support our aging population in Florida.

Florida is the third largest state by population and has the highest percentage of residents age 65 and older. The number of older adults will increase by 38 percent over the next 10 years. This increase will have an avalanche effect affecting Florida families, caregivers in the workplace, transportation, access to senior support programs and services, delivery of health care, community living, and so much more.

A variety of initiatives are being examined and implemented by the Department of Elder Affairs such as working alongside AARP to make Florida the first Age-Friendly State through a network of Livable Communities that focus on tackling and embracing the challenges that an aging population creates. The Dementia Care and Cure Initiative (DCCI) has been launched in 10 Florida cities to address the dramatic increase dementia and related disorders will have on communities. Most importantly, the Department relies on the work of the Area Agencies on Aging and the Aging & Disability Resource Centers to zero-in on local and regional aging issues.

Here in Pinellas and Pasco Counties, the Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas, Inc. (AAAPP) is the Aging and Disability Resource Center. We are funded by the Department and the federal Older Americans Act to implement programs and services. Our mission is to be the trusted resource to advocate, educate and empower seniors, individuals with disabilities and caregivers, promoting independence, in partnership with the community.

Many people are not aware of the resources and information available to help older adults and their family members navigate the aging process. People want and look for a trusted source.

We have proven to be that trusted source, as evidenced by the 20,000+ calls that come to our HelpLine each year in our two county service area.



Not sure what we do and how the AAAPP might help your family? Please call to learn more. You can reach our Helpline at 1-800-963-5337 (or 727-217-8111 for out of area callers). And, follow the news coming from the Department of Elder Affairs.

The aging issues facing state legislators and the community leaders in our own backyards will only continue to grow in both size and complexity. Now is a great time for you to connect with us at AAAPP and to track how aging issues will affect your families, community and businesses.

Ann Marie Winter  
Executive Director  
AAAPP