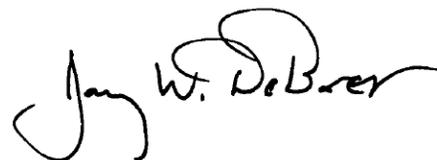

**Report on the Response of the
Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation
to the Impact of the Aging of Virginia's Population**

September 20, 2007

Pursuant to legislation enacted by the Virginia General Assembly of Virginia, the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation submits this report of its progress in addressing the impact of the aging of Virginia's population.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jay W. DeBoer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Jay W. DeBoer
Director

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation meets all service demands of interested seniors, with special emphasis on the need to prevent fraud and discrimination against older Virginians. Agency efforts targeted toward seniors and their families include a dedicated complaint hotline, enforcement of the Fair Housing Law prohibition against age-based housing discrimination, specialized print and online publications, and partnerships with law enforcement and other senior-focused entities.

As in public agencies throughout Virginia and the federal government, the Department faces a potential staff shortage and loss of institutional knowledge due to a “graying” workforce. Fifty-seven employees – 37 percent of the agency’s classified workforce – are retirement-eligible within the next two years. The Department’s workforce plan provides for position replacement through promotions facilitated by professional development training, recruitment strategies, and the use of wage staff including retirees.

AGENCY DESCRIPTION

The Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation’s mission is to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public by licensing qualified individuals and businesses and enforcing standards of professional conduct for professions and occupations as designated by statute.

A Commerce and Trade secretariat agency, the Department comprises three major service areas:

- Licensure, Certification and Registration of Professions and Occupations;
- Enforcement of Licensing, Regulating and Certifying Professions and Occupations; and
- Administrative Services.

REPORT

This report responds to guidance from Secretary of Health and Human Resources Marilyn B. Tavenner in a memorandum dated September 14, 2007.

1. *To the extent such data is available, the number of persons who received services from the agency in the past fiscal year who fell into each of the following age ranges: 65-74; 75-84; and 85 and older. If the agency can provide data that compares such numbers to numbers of senior citizens served in the past, please do so. If the agency lacks specific information about the numbers of senior citizens it serves, but has other evidence indicating that it is serving more or fewer senior citizens than it has in the past, please describe the basis for that estimation.*

The Department does not collect data on the age ranges of persons it serves.

- 2. Identify the agency services that are utilized by senior citizens 65 and older in significant numbers. Indicate whether the agency has the capacity at present to serve all interested seniors or whether the demand for certain services exceeds the agency's capacity. If so, does the agency maintain waiting lists for services?*

Senior citizens 65 and older are eligible to utilize all agency services. The Department currently meets all service demands of interested seniors.

- 3. Identify current agency programs, specifically designed to serve seniors 65 and older, that fall into any of the following six categories: Health Care/Wellness; Education; Public Safety; Recreation; Financial Security (including Housing); and Transportation.*

Public Safety

While consumers of all ages are served through and affected by the agency's services, the Department places special emphasis on the need to prevent fraud and discrimination against older Virginians. Senior citizens are often targets for unscrupulous business practices, particularly in five areas under the Department's purview: construction and home repair; hearing aid specialists; cemeteries and pre-need burial contracts; opticians; and fair housing.

The Department hosts a dedicated hotline for seniors and their families and partners with law enforcement, other state agencies, and private-sector advocates such as AARP Virginia and Senior Navigator to promote elder fraud prevention and consumer protection for older Virginians. In addition, Department staff offer presentations to senior citizen organizations throughout the Commonwealth.

Financial Security (including Housing)

The Department administers and enforces the Virginia Fair Housing Law (Title 36, Chapter 5.1 of the *Code of Virginia*), which prohibits housing discrimination on the basis of "elderliness," defined as age 55 and older.

- 4. Identify the extent to which your agency provides "consumer-oriented" publications and websites online that are designed to be "senior-friendly." If the information you currently provide is not readily accessible to seniors, identify any steps your agency is taking to improve accessibility.*

The Department offers "senior-friendly" print publications and a website section of consumer guides for older Virginians on: construction and home repair; hearing aid specialists; cemeteries and pre-need burial contracts; opticians; and fair housing. Information is provided to seniors online and through partnerships with local senior centers, the Department for the Aging, TRIAD chapters, AARP Virginia, Senior Navigator and other partners.

5. *Describe the effect that the aging of the agency's own workforce will have on its ability to deliver services. Consider the number of retirements expected in the next two years, the effect these retirements might have (e.g., loss of leadership or institutional knowledge in certain programs), how losses might be replaced (e.g., promotions or transfers, recruitment, use of wage staff, including retirees, re-engineering, outsourcing), and the costs or savings from the replacements (e.g., staff development cost, salary savings). This item might be addressed by summarizing relevant portions of the agency's workforce plan.*

As in public agencies throughout Virginia and the federal government, the Department faces a potential staff shortage and loss of institutional knowledge due to a “graying” workforce. Based on 2007 data, the median years of service for a Department employee is 8.8 years, compared with the statewide median of 8.3 years. Fifty-seven employees – 37 percent of the agency’s classified workforce – are retirement-eligible within the next two years.

The Department uses tools such as compensation factors, employee recognition awards and tuition assistance to recruit and retain qualified employees. The agency regularly monitors, analyzes and reports turnover, with positions in active recruitment remaining vacant on average less than 39 days after approval to fill is granted. The Department’s workforce plan provides for position replacement through promotions facilitated by professional development training, recruitment strategies, and the use of wage staff including retirees. Minimal overall fiscal impact is anticipated, as salary savings are offset by strong investments in staff development.

6. *Describe any other services or programs that the agency has implemented or plans to implement in the future to address the impact of the aging of Virginia's population.*

The Department will continue its partnerships and sharing of best practices among all public agencies and private organizations targeting older Virginians to promote coordinated service delivery.