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Wayne State faculty to help streamline dual Medicare and Medicaid services in Michigan

DETROIT - Thomas B. Jankowski, Ph.D., has been appointed to the Michigan Department of Community Health committee tasked with streamlining a new system to better serve persons who are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid benefits. Jankowski is the associate director of research for the Institute of Gerontology at Wayne State University, and an expert on the history and financial and social impact of Social Security and Medicare on older adults.

Persons who are dual-eligible for Medicare and Medicaid must currently navigate both systems to access services, carrying two cards and filing two sets of forms for services. Under the new integrated care program, recipients would carry one card, work with one manager and be eligible for one set of benefits that incorporates both programs. "Though the number of persons who are dual-eligible is not large," Jankowski said, "their use of health and human services is above average. A streamlined approach will simplify life for these people while reducing the overlaps and loopholes that raise costs."

The Michigan Department of Community Health is fast-tracking its four working groups so the pilot program can be launched by early spring 2012. "We are collecting data on the array of services accessed and the provider network," said Jankowski. "These extend beyond medical services to include home-delivered meals, personal care and chores. This is a major undertaking and must be accurate." If the pilot is accepted, Michigan will become one of only a few states in the country to have an integrated care plan for dual-eligible patients.

Jankowski served on the board of directors of the Michigan Society of Gerontology and provided executive leadership at the Senior Alliance. He is the only person in the Senior Alliance's 30-year history to receive their McNamara Award two years in a row, in 2009 and

2010. Jankowski also heads Seniors Count!, a user-friendly database of senior demographics in Southeast Michigan (seniorscount.iog.wayne.edu).

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The Institute of Gerontology researches the aging process, educates students in gerontology, and presents programs on aging issues relevant to professionals, caregivers and older adults in the community. The institute is part of the Division of Research at Wayne State University, one of the nation's preeminent public research institutions in an urban setting. For more information about research at Wayne State University, visit <http://www.research.wayne.edu>.