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RHODE ISLAND SENIOR BEAT

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CATHERINE TAYLOR NOMINATED BY GOVERNOR CHAFEE TO BE THE NEXT DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ELDERLY AFFAIRS

CRANSTON --- When Governor Lincoln Chafee nominated Catherine Taylor as the new director of the Rhode Island Department of Elderly Affairs, he selected a person with extensive experience in public affairs and government, as well as an enthusiasm and instinct for excellence in public service. Her nomination revealed a desire to take a fresh look at programs and services for seniors. The governor also made a commitment to enhance support for families and caregivers in their desire to keep their loved ones at home.

In her first weeks at the department, acting director Taylor has already expressed a desire to honor the tradition of the DEA mission: “To preserve the independence, dignity and capacity for choice for seniors and adults with disabilities.” She has re-affirmed the department’s central missions:

- To ensure excellence in services, advocacy and public policy.
- To treat each individual with courtesy, respect, patience and compassion.
- To direct an agency dedicated to the needs of constituents through a single, visible and responsible agency.

Acting Director Taylor grew up in the Hartford, Connecticut area and received a B.A. degree in History from Yale University. In 1985, she moved to Washington, D.C. and began her career in public service as a receptionist for Congressman Bob Smith of Oregon

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. In 1987, Acting Director Taylor was hired by U.S. Senator John Chafee and eventually became the legislative assistant for defense and foreign policy. In the 1990s, she served as a speechwriter for Senator Chafee while he was in the forefront of health care reform and environmental protection. Her experience in the field of health care reform will prove to be a valuable asset as the state and the nation begin to implement the provisions of the Affordable Care Act.

Acting Director Taylor moved to Rhode Island in 2001 and served as the speechwriter and senior editor on the staff of Senator Lincoln Chafee. In 2007, she founded Lang Taylor, Ltd., a public affairs consulting firm based in Providence.

She is also involved in many volunteer activities with educational, civic and faith-based organizations including the Moses Brown School, Yale Global Day of Service, St. Sebastian's Church, Crossroads Rhode Island, and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School, and was a Den Leader and Assistant Cubmaster for Cub Scout Pack 88 for many years.

Now that you know a little bit about Acting Director Taylor, you should also know about her priorities for DEA. She intends to ensure that seniors, adults with disabilities, families, caregivers and aging network agency professionals receive fast, accurate and courteous customer service-a major priority of the Chafee administration.

Acting Director Taylor is strongly committed to raising the public profile of both DEA and THE POINT, Rhode Island's Aging and Disability Resource Center. She notes that it is imperative to provide an easy single point of entry into the Rhode Island's long-term care and community based support systems.

In talking about her priorities, Acting Director Taylor is excited about her statutory role as an advocate for Rhode Island's seniors, adults with disabilities, families and caregivers. She looks forward to giving voice to their concerns as she advises state leaders and legislators about the issues of growing older in Rhode Island.

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Rhode Island has a strong tradition of support for seniors and adults with disabilities. Catherine Taylor is eager to build on that foundation and to meet the challenges presented by the aging of the baby boomers and the austere budgetary climate with creativity and care.

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The Department of Elderly Affairs was established as a cabinet-level position in 1977 under Rhode Island General Law 42-66-1. DEA is responsible for the development and implementation of a comprehensive system of programs and services for Rhode Islanders ages 60 and older and for adults with disabilities. DEA is also the state's single planning and service Area Agency on Aging under the provisions of the Older Americans Act of 1965.