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Subject: Fighting for Access to Affordable Health Care

Oral Health and Older Adults

Justice in Aging has launched a project to improve the oral health of older adults in California, [which ranks 30th](#) among the states in how it addresses dental care for older adults. We'll educate local advocates and service providers on how to help the older adults they serve access oral health care. What we learn in California will be used to support advocates in other states and also inform our national advocacy. We kicked off our Oral Health project with an issue brief, [Oral Health in California: What About Older Adults?](#) and an [accompanying webinar](#). We've also launched a blog series, [Beyond Lip Service: Improving the Oral Health of California's Older Adults](#). All of our Oral Health materials are [available here](#). This project is funded by a grant from The California Wellness Foundation.

Balance Billing in the New York Times

Justice in Aging's work to protect dual eligibles from illegal balance billing was highlighted in [a recent article in the New York Times](#). When a health care provider bills a person who qualifies for both Medicare and Medicaid for the difference between the Medicare reimbursement rate and the cost of the service, it's called balance billing. And it's illegal. We have been working to educate providers and advocates about this practice because it deprives poor older adults of funds they need to meet their basic needs for food and shelter and decreases access to care. Low state Medicaid reimbursement rates are part of the problem. As Justice in Aging attorney Denny Chan is quoted saying in the piece, "Because of this gap in payment, many doctors and other health care providers try to bill the beneficiaries or refuse to provide services to them."

Senior Poverty on the Rise in California

"What we're seeing now is people who were middle class when they were of working age. Now, they've become poor just in their older age," said Justice in Aging Executive Director, Kevin Prindiville, in [a recent story about senior poverty in the Sacramento Bee](#). Food insecurity is rising among California's low-income seniors as their budgets are stretched ever tighter by high housing and other costs. Nearly 1 in 5 California older adults cannot afford basic needs, and therefore save where they can, by eating less. The story talks about poor nutrition and hunger among seniors, as well as efforts to bring more fresh fruits and vegetables to senior communities.

Washington Council of Lawyers Profiles Justice in Aging's Shana Wynn

Shana Wynn, who has been with Justice in Aging for the past year under a Borchard Foundation Center for Law & Age Fellowship, has made a big impact for low-income seniors in Washington DC. In addition to her work with Justice in Aging on [Social Security's Representative Payee Program](#), she's been working several days a week at the Southeast DC office of [Neighborhood Legal Services Program](#) to provide legal representation to DC seniors living in poverty. Specializing in representing applicants for SSI and SSDI during reconsideration and hearings before administrative law judges, she's made a name for herself as someone who fights diligently during the reconsideration phase, sparing her clients long painful waits for appeals and retrials. The Washington Council of Lawyers published [a glowing profile of Shana](#) last month, praising her tenacity and skill. We're so proud to work with Shana!

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