



Front line support for seniors

● By Rajeshwar Prasad

A senior needs transportation help to reach a medical facility; another needs some help with light chores around the house; a third is sort of depressed being lonely in the house or apartment. The list of problems elderly people face goes on; and the bottom line is not knowing where to call, which agency to approach that can help and how to procure that help. In short, elders need the so called front line support for innumerable problems and issues. The most important entity in this regard is to reach ELDERCARE LOCATOR. The Eldercare Locator, established in 1991, is a free national service or resource funded by the Administration on Aging. It is administered by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (AAA).

The Area Agency on Aging is a generic name; the actual name of AAA could be different such as in Nassau County, NY, it is called Office for The Aging; in Florida, it is Department of Elder Affairs. To reach Eldercare Locator one should call its toll free number - 800-677-1116 during weekdays from 9:00 A.M to 8:00 P.M. Other times a caller can leave a message with name and telephone number, and normally the call will be returned next business day. Its web site, available all the time, is: www.eldercare.gov. It is Eldercare Locator which can connect you with AAA.

An Area Agency on Aging is a designated



Nassau County Commissioner of AAA, Sharon Mullen, with (L to R) Rajeshwar Prasad, Dr. Samir Dutta (NIAASC VP) and Dr. Thomas Abraham (founder of GOPIO). Sharon gave a citation to NIAASC on behalf of Nassau County Executive.

local agency by the State to address concerns of all seniors of 60 years or older. An AAA could be public entity or a private not-for-profit organization. The AAA provides information about available programs and services for seniors; and provides and administers funds through contacts with a number of service agencies

addressing issues of seniors. In all there are about 620 local and state agencies throughout USA, which provide service to elderly.

Among the Indian seniors there are two distinct groups: those who have been in the USA for 4-5 decades and came here mostly as professionals; and those who

came later normally sponsored by their elder children or brothers/sisters. Seniors in the first group have lived here, worked here and are thus entitled to all benefits, and they have basically adapted themselves to the America mainstream. The other group normally live with their children, and are dependent on them for all support. Many of them face serious adaptation problems, language and communication difficulties, and primarily confined to their family members as far as their exposure is concerned. Even the earlier group may not be familiar with 'how to get services for seniors' and it is thus incumbent for them to know where to call for services. They may need to help their parents or grandparents. The National Indo-American Association for Senior Citizens Inc. (NIAASC) can also help locate the AAA for seniors who are unable to communicate properly. In case such help is needed a person can send an E-mail with the question, state and zip code he or she lives in, and the telephone number. E-mail of NIAASC is niaasc@aol.com. For some handy information for seniors they can reach its web site www.niaasc.org and browse Articles of Interest, and proceedings of its conferences. NIAASC has held 28 conferences since its inception in 1998, and its 29th conference is scheduled for November 4 & 5, 2017 in Florida and focus in the upcoming conference will be Special Needs Of Indo-American Seniors, And Health Care Advances For Seniors.