

Michigan Kalamazoo Gazette

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Plan would Watch Seniors' Costs

KALAMAZOO -- State Rep. Robert Jones plans to announce an initiative to create a county and geographic-area index that measures income older adults need to maintain their independence and meet their daily expenses.

Jones and Kate White, executive director, Elder Law of Michigan, Inc. plan to announce **Michigan's Elder Economic Security Standard Index** at the Aug. 17 meeting of Kalamazoo County Advocates for Senior Issues.

The only measure of income adequacy now available is the federal poverty level, which does not account for older adults' rising living costs, in particular illness, loss of spouses, the need to care for disabled spouses and adult dependent children or grandchildren. In addition, in today's struggling economy, the rising costs of food, gasoline, housing, and health care are factors.

The **Elder Economic Security Standard Index** also would provide a framework for developing a policy agenda to help Michigan policymakers appropriate funds fairly.

The meeting begins with refreshments at 1:30 p.m. followed by a business meeting and program from 1:45 to 2:45 p.m. at Senior Services' Cover Center, 918 Jasper St., Kalamazoo.

For more information, call the Area Agency on Aging Region III at (269) 373-5147.