

**Commission on Services to the Aging (CSA) and
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS)
Aging and Adult Services Agency (AASA)
Virtual Meeting
Friday, February 19, 2021**

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Michigan Commission on Services to the Aging was called to order at 9:03 a.m. by Commission Chair Wishart.

CSA ROLL CALL

The commission roll call was taken, and a quorum was present.

CSA MEMBERS PRESENT

Dona Wishart, Mark Bomberg, Georgia Crawford-Cambell, Nancy Duncan, Walid Gammouh, Marshall Greenhut, Kathleen LaTosch, Peter Lichtenberg, Guillermo Lopez, Michael Pohnl, Robert Schlueter, Linda Strohl, and Kristie Zamora.

CSA MEMBER EXCUSED

William Bupp and Tene Milton-Ramsey.

AASA STAFF PRESENT

Dr. Alexis Travis, Scott Wamsley, Brenda Ross, Kelly Cooper, Sherri King, Cindy Masterson, Amy Colletti, Steve Betterly, Tari Muniz, Becky Payne, Lauren Swanson-Aprill, Julia Thomas, Gloria Lanum, and Jennifer Onwenu.

APPROVAL OF CSA AGENDA

Commission Chair Wishart requested a motion to approve the CSA agenda with the removal of AASA Legislative and Communications updates.

A motion was made by Commissioner Duncan and Commissioner LaTosch seconded motion. The agenda was approved by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF CSA MINUTES

Commission Chair Wishart requested a motion to approve the January 15, 2021 CSA minutes without amendments.

A motion was made by Commissioner Lopez and Commissioner Greenhut seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by voice vote.

COMMISSION CHAIR OPENING REMARKS

Commissioner Wishart welcomed all to the virtual meeting, and offered the following comments:

- A special thank you to all Commissioners joining the call as well as those representing the public and services to the aging. We have an interesting and important agenda to look forward to today. We will have our usual updates from committees as well as AASA staff, and presentations from special guests. Special thanks to those working on the

State Advisory Council and Advocacy Committee and all the important work they are doing.

- Thank you for continued patience and willing participation in our virtual meetings. We look forward to the time when we can safely meet in person again, visiting locations across this great state of Michigan.
- Along with the opportunity for questions and answers throughout the meeting, Commissioners are always welcome to offer comments during the public comment portion.
- An announcement was made to recognize the retirement of AASA staff member Sherri King, a stellar and long-serving member of the team. The following accomplishments from Sherri's time with AASA were shared:
 - Sherri has worked in state government for 16.5 years, all with the former Office of Services to the Aging, now Aging & Adult Services Agency.
 - She served as a field representative for 13 years and as the nutrition and wellness consultant for the last 3.5 years.
 - Sherri was responsible for growing the Senior Project FRESH program from three counties in 2004 to all 83 counties by 2016. As a result, participation increased from 300 to 20,000 participants.
 - Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Sherri received and managed over \$7 million in grants for wellness programs and additional nutrition programs.
 - Sherri has partnered with many internal and external stakeholders to expand the scope and reach of programs, including:
 - ✓ Partnering with colleagues to create the electronic multi-year plan/annual implementation plan system – Michigan being the first state in the nation to do so.
 - ✓ Organizing and hosting annual nutrition summits since 2009.
 - ✓ Partnering with colleagues to create the Senior Project FRESH IT system for scanning and reporting the redemption of coupons.
 - Sherri has also presented at various conferences on the following topics:
 - ✓ Evidence-based disease prevention programs for tribal communities and adults with disabilities.
 - ✓ Seven Spheres of Wellness – It is Never Too Late to Get Healthy
 - ✓ Wellness in the workplace.
 - ✓ Using GIS mapping to view progress of programs and future planning.
 - Sherri co-authored an article on the benefits of enhanced fitness programs for a national publication.

In closing, Sherri has been the consummate professional. She successfully managed statewide nutrition and wellness programs and happily answered many questions about them. Sherri thoroughly enjoyed being an advocate for older adults. Thank you to Sherri for her many contributions to ensure the well-being of older adults in Michigan. Congratulations was offered on her retirement.

Commissioner Strohl offered words of congratulations to Sherri as well, stating she has worked very hard over the past year, along with Dr. Travis, on several new initiatives focused on providing seniors with fresh produce. As a nutrition services provider, Commissioner Strohl has seen how Sherri's leadership has allowed for the receipt of additional grants to continue to local programs. While Sherri has always done great work, this past year has demonstrated her innovation and enthusiasm to meet the emerging needs of seniors.

- Across the network of services to the aging in the state, care is being given for the safety of older adults and their caregivers. Our partners across the network stand eager and ready to provide services when it is safe to do so.
- May 9-15, 2021 is designated for Older Michigianians Week. Please mark calendars in anticipation of many wonderful events.

PUBLIC COMMENTS RELATED TO AASA PROGRAMS, SERVICES, POLICIES, OR ISSUES IMPACTING OLDER AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Brandi Knivila, representing the Foster Grandparent/Senior Companion program for Claire, Gratiot, and Isabella counties, where she serves as the director, offered the following comments:

- Thank you to Commissioners for the opportunity to speak and for the continued support for the Senior Volunteer programs. Program accomplishments over the past year were elevated:
 - Assuring seniors have food, which may include home-delivered meals, food boxes, food pantry referrals, and assisting with SNAP applications.
 - Provide safety/activity kits which include masks, gloves, sanitizer, toilet paper, and activities/games to stimulate their brains.
 - The programs have become seniors’ connection to the outside world. They are making wellness calls to help seniors cope, be a listening ear, and even provide mental health resources.
 - In the past few weeks, the volunteers have assisted with helping individuals get signed up for the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Senior Volunteer programs are “two for one” programs. The volunteers strengthen their communities with the services they provide to students and older adults, but repeatedly she hears how the programs have impacted the volunteers personally. They state their lives would not be the same if not for the programs that give them purpose, a connection, and a reason to get up in the morning. Without these volunteers, the programs would not exist, so making sure their needs are being met during a pandemic is a necessity.

STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING (SAC) UPDATE REPORT

Commissioner Zamora provided an update on the work of the SAC.

The SAC held a virtual meeting on January 21, 2021. They continue to have great attendance and active participation from the council members.

- Dr. Travis, Scott Wamsley, and Jen Hunt all provided AASA updates at the meeting.
- Marjorie (Marj) Hobe was unanimously elected co-vice chair of the SAC. Commission Zamora she holds the following credentials: MBA, MS-plant pathology, Post Baccalaureate Math/Chemistry, BA-biology/education. Marj retired from Consumers Energy as the IT Asset Manager. She had a varied career starting as Research Technician at the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center and transitioned to Nuclear Power Chemistry Technician when they relocated to the Midland, Michigan area. Since retiring, she has been a MMAP Volunteer at AAA Region 2 enjoying the interaction with new retirees and those with challenges. Marj lives in Horton, Jackson County, and is an active member of the Pieces and Patches Quilt Guild of Jackson. She received the Jackson County Senior Volunteer award in 2018. In December 2018, Marj joined the SAC and she has served as a workgroup chair and assisted with researching and writing our SAC reports.

The SAC is fortunate to have Marj in this new role where she will be working closely with Audra Frye, vice-chair, Lauren Swanson-Aprill, and Commissioner Zamora.

- The council members discussed the 2021 report topic of Aging in Place and laid the foundation for the year's work. Four smaller workgroups were created and will be led by two council members in each.
- The SAC leadership team met also and established upcoming workgroup agendas, reviewed research templates, and brainstormed ideas to develop Aging in Place work.
- The 2020 report "Social Isolation and Older Adults with an Emphasis on Equity" draft is currently under development to move forward for final approval.
- The next SAC meeting is scheduled for April 16, 2021 and will be a joint meeting with the April CSA meeting where the SAC hopes to share the current version of the 2020 report.

CSA ADVOCACY COMMITTEE REPORT

Commissioner Duncan provided an update on the work of the committee.

- In January, the Advocacy Committee met with members of the Governor's office to make a budget request to increase funding for wait lists. While that ask was not addressed in the Governor's budget, there is a recommendation for significant increase in support to home and community-based services.
 - \$2 per hour rate increase for direct care workers be made permanent.
 - Funding for 1,000 additional slots in the Medicaid Home and Community-Based Waiver program.
- A draft information document was developed and shared with the Commission for review. The intent of the document is to provide information to the Legislature about the Commission and the network of services in Michigan. The committee is seeking CSA member input on edits to the document. It discusses trends in the older adult population and contains priorities that the CSA is advocating for.
 - Home and Community-Based Services.
 - Skilled and well compensated direct care workforce.
 - Desire for seniors to age in place and supports needed to do so.
 - Lessons learned from COVID-19 and AAA response.

A motion was made by Commissioner Strohl to approve the draft letter developed by the Advocacy Committee adding input received during the meeting: addition of community partners, statistics about rural communities, a transitional paragraph between population graphs and wait lists for services, emphasizing strengths in older communities, and updated Arab American Chaldean language, and then send finalized document to the Legislature. Commissioner Gammouh seconded the motion.

Additional discussion followed and the motion was approved by roll call vote 13-0-0.

- Future actions of the committee will include:
 - Thank you to the Governor for her budget recommendations that support older adults in Michigan.
 - Discuss ways the CSA can actively support the recommendations.
 - AASA will assist with distribution of finalized letter to the Legislature. Commissioners will be asked to provide a copy to their legislators as well.
 - Seek ways to intersect with MDHHS leadership to discuss ways to strengthen the direct care workforce e.g., federal funding or training.

AGING AND ADULT SERVICES SENIOR DEPUTY REPORT

Dr. Alexis Travis provided the following updates:

- Current COVID-19 data in Michigan is as follows:
 - 579,000+ total cases
 - ✓ 146,000+ adults 60+ (23 percent)
 - ✓ 14,500 deaths adults 60+ (90 percent)
- Vaccine doses given:
 - 1.6 million total vaccines administered.
 - 2.29 million doses distributed to the network.
 - Press release issued advising people to call the 2-1-1 line for assistance in signing up for the vaccine.
 - Michigan goals:
 - ✓ Vaccinate 70 percent of 60+ adults.
 - ✓ Ninety percent of vaccines distributed within seven days of receipt.
 - ✓ Ninety-five percent of individuals receive their second dose of the vaccine.
- MDHHS will be hosting multiple town hall meetings around the COVID-19 vaccine. The first one will discuss communities of color and will be held Thursday, February 25, at 4:00 pm and will stream on the MDHHS Facebook page.
- AASA is the staff partner for the Protect Michigan Commission Aging/Seniors workgroup. This group meets regularly to discuss barriers to seniors getting their vaccine and strategies to mitigate concerns. The chair of the workgroup is Dr. Surae Eaton with AARP. The group also has representation from AAA members.
- *CV19 Checkup* tool, allowing older adults to anonymously complete an online survey to better understand their risk of contracting COVID-19, showed that seniors age 75+ were more likely to engage in risky behaviors. Over 27,000 Michiganders have completed the survey to date. More data will be developed from these surveys.
- *GetSetUp* program, an online community where older adults teach other older adults different technology platforms, currently has over 55,000 users. A national advertising campaign will be launched soon. Dr. Khaldun hosted a webinar session last week and shared information about the state's vaccination efforts.
- AASA's Annual Report was released to the Legislature recently, and Dr. Travis was able to present the budget to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services.
- Dr. Travis will attend the House Children, Families and Seniors Committee meeting next week to provide an overview of Michigan's aging network and services.
- Center for Healthcare Strategies is doing an environmental scan of the direct care workforce in Michigan. Some CSA and network members may receive calls to participate in surveys to assist with the economic analysis. This project is funded by Michigan Health Endowment Fund.
- Care Transition project will identify best practices and will work closely with AAA directors to develop a service definition with the goal of reducing hospital readmittance rates. This project is also funded by Michigan Health Endowment Fund.
- Essential Jobs/Essential Care coalition has been launched to work with stakeholders to develop and recommend policy for direct care workforce shortage in the state.
- Michigan has been showcased in health aging workshops in multi-region meetings where COVID response innovations and care transitions models were presented.

- Eight AASA staff attended Michigan Rehabilitation Services ADA Compliance and Disability Cultural Competencies training. This is part of AASA's commitment to DEI and strengthening programs.
- AASA wishes Sherri King great happiness in her retirement and Dr. Travis expressed gratitude for her hard work in developing nutrition programs for the department. Kristina Leonardi has joined AASA as the Health Promotion & Policy Management Division Director. She is an accomplished leader with over 14 years of experience working with government. She has led and managed many strategies similar to AASA projects.

FINANCIAL UPDATES

Scott Wamsley, AASA Deputy Director, provided the following updates:

- The state budget for FY 21 is in place and is essentially flat funded from original allocation levels for FY 20.
- The federal budget was approved in December 2020. Notices of Awards are now being received and will be placed in the state grant process to distribute for services. AASA has current authorization for federal funds through the end of February, so finance team will continue to issue funds to support services for the remainder of the year.

A budget document was shared with Commissioners and reviewed by Deputy Director Wamsley. The document is included with the minutes.

BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Request for Approval of Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program (MMAP)/State Health Insurance Program (SHIP)

Tari Muñoz, MMAP Program Manager, provided an overview stating the expected grant amount of \$1,502,853 is for the agreement period April 1, 2021 through March 31, 2022. This is year two of a five-year grant from Administration for Community Living. Grant funds will be used to continue core grant duties including supporting local MMAP counselors in providing outreach, education, and assistance with Medicare/Medicaid-related issues, long-term care insurance coverage, and the Medicare prescription drug coverage program Part D.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bomberg to approve the Request for Approval of Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program (MMAP)/State Health Insurance Program (SHIP). Commissioner Schlueter seconded the motion.

Additional discussion followed and the motion was approved by roll call vote 11-0-1, with Commissioner Wishart abstaining.

b. Request for Approval of Fiscal Year 2021 USDA Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program Funding

Sherri King, Nutrition and Wellness Coordinator, provided an overview stating the grant awarded to AASA in the amounts detailed in the memo provided to Commissioners is for the period March 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021. Counties will receive coupon booklets to distribute in exchange for fresh food. Funds from unused coupons will be redistributed to the counties of origin.

A motion was made by Commissioner Strohl for the Request for Approval of Fiscal Year 2021 USDA Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program Funding. Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion.

Additional discussion followed and the motion was approved by roll call vote 12-0-1, with Commissioner Wishart abstaining.

- c. Request for Approval of Fiscal Year 2021 COVID-19 Immunization Support Grant**
Steve Betterly, Technical Assistance & Quality Improvement Acting Manager, provided an overview stating the purpose of the grant is to provide funding to Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) to support activities for Michigan’s COVID-19 vaccine efforts. Federal grant funds were received, and AAAs were asked to assist local health departments and other organizations in the coordination of vaccine efforts. AAAs were also asked to identify the amount needed to provide support. Those amounts are listed in the memo provided to Commissioners.

A motion was made by Commissioner Lopez for the Request for Approval of Fiscal Year 2021 Immunization Support Grant. Commissioner LaTosch seconded the motion.

Additional discussion followed and the motion was approved by roll call vote 11-0-1, with Commissioner Wishart abstaining.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- a. Medical Services Administration Home and Community-Based Services**
Dr. Sara Grivetti, MDHHS Medical Services Administration Division Director, presented information to the CSA.
The written presentation was provided to Commissioners following the meeting.
- b. State of Michigan Aging Populations Demographic Data**
Eric Guthrie, State Demographer, presented demographic information to the CSA.
The written presentation was provided to Commissioners following the meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next *virtual* Commission on Services to the Aging meeting is tentatively scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on Friday, March 19, 2021. Please note, these meetings are open to the public, and anyone wishing to attend may do so. Those needing technology assistance should contact Brenda Ross at least five days before the meeting date.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Wishart adjourned the meeting at 12:19 p.m.