

**Commission on Services to the Aging (CSA)
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS)
Aging & Adult Services Agency (AASA) Virtual Meeting
Friday, July 16, 2021**

Meeting MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Commission on Services to the Aging was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Commission Chair Wishart.

ROLL CALL

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

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Dona Wishart, Mark Bomberg, William Bupp, Georgia Crawford-Cambell, Nancy Duncan, Walid Gammouh, Marshall Greenhut, Kathleen LaTosch, Guillermo Lopez, Tene Milton-Ramsey, Michael Pohnl, Bob Schlueter, and Kristie Zamora.

COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED

Peter Lichtenberg and Linda Strohl.

AASA STAFF PRESENT

Presenters/facilitators: Scott Wamsley, Brenda Ross, Kelly Cooper, Jen Hunt, Cindy Masterson, Cynthia Farrell, Steve Betterly, and Julia Thomas.

Attendees: Kristina Leonardi, Lauren Swanson-Aprill, and Becky Payne.

WELCOME FROM GAYLORD HONORED GUESTS

Commission Chair Wishart introduced several members of the community who offered a welcome to the Commission.

- Bill Wishart – Mayor of Gaylord
- Phil Alexander – Local Historian
- Frank Cleays – Gaylord Chief of Police
- Laurie Sauer – Region 9 AAA Director

REMARKS BY MDHHS DIRECTOR ELIZABETH HERTEL

Director Hertel offered the following updates to the commission:

- Statistically, one quarter of the population in Michigan is over the age of 60 – more than 2 million adults. Additionally, individuals 85 years and older are still the fastest growing age group in the state.
- COVID-19 has taken its toll on the aging population both physically and with overall wellness.
 - Grandparents have found themselves assisting grandchildren with remote learning or serving as childcare for children whose parents needed to work in person.
 - Others have found the pandemic very isolating.

- The commission's leadership has allowed the department, healthcare workers, and partners across the state to continue to reach older Michiganders and serve the public despite all the challenges in the last year.
- Special thank you to the commission for their responsiveness during the pandemic and working on policy waivers giving AASA and the department the ability to move quickly outside of commission meetings. This allowed the entire aging network to remain agile and best serve our older adults, even during a once-in-a-century pandemic.
- Special recognition was offered to Commission Chair Wishart for her time and energy dedicated to the work of the commission with emphasis on the way she leads with care and integrity. The team at AASA also appreciates her helpfulness and responsiveness.
- Resources, programs, and state policies impacting the full spectrum of older Michiganders continue to be among the department's priorities. This includes the active, less active, and those depending on caregivers, and will mean more access to resources, services, and choices. The department will continue to build upon the incredible work already occurring across the aging network.
- The *GetSetUp* series on brain health and wellness in conjunction with Alzheimer's and brain awareness is a fantastic tool for education and a source of community for adults aged 60 and older. Over 80,000 Michiganders have taken classes since the program began. Classes are also being developed to train older adults on using the *MiBridges* platform. Changes will allow for ease of use and timely determination of benefits.
- The budget bills are still being considered in the legislature. MDHHS continues to support programs, policies, and services that will allow adults to age in place, have choices in their care, ensure family caregivers have what they need, and express the importance of increased wages for direct care workers. We look forward to continuing work with legislators in these areas and answer their questions as the budget work continues.
- A permanent \$2 per hour increase is a goal for the department. Additionally, MDHHS continues to work with the DCW Advisory Committee to support wage increases and access to education for the direct care workforce.
- Information and Assistance requests totaled 135,000 hours of service and 21,185 unduplicated clients received case management and in-home services. The top three requested services were homemaker, personal care, and case coordination and support.
- Age-friendly communities play important roles in aging in place with access to nutritious food, healthcare providers, broadband services, and social opportunities. As friends, family, and neighbors continue to age, it remains important to support these options.
- Equity in the delivery of services is an important priority for the department. Eliminating disparities continues to be an initiative in the state.
- With Dr. Travis taking a new role recently, a special thank you was offered to Scott Wamsley and Jen Hunt for their assistance during this transition. MDHHS recognizes there is interest in the opening for a new leader and the department

expects to have an update soon.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commission Chair Wishart requested a motion to approve the CSA agenda with the accommodation to move director ahead of recommended actions.

A motion was made by Commissioner LaTosch and Commissioner Bomberg seconded the motion. The amended agenda was approved by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF CSA MEETING MINUTES

Commission Chair Wishart requested a motion to approve the June 18, 2021, CSA meeting minutes without amendments.

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

APPROVAL OF UPDATED 2021 MEETING SCHEDULE

Commission Chair Wishart requested a motion to approve the 2021 updated meeting schedule for 2021.

A motion was made by Commissioner Gammouh and Commissioner Zamora seconded the motion. The meeting schedule was approved by voice vote.

COMMISSION CHAIR OPENING REMARKS

Commissioner Wishart welcomed all to the virtual meeting offering thanks to commissioners for time and travel to attend this in person meeting. She offered the following comments.

- Realizing there are several commissioners whose terms are coming to an end this month, we anticipate information from the Governor's office the week of July 19 with news of appointments and reappointments. During this time of transition, we are committed to help each other along with leadership and support.
- Continued thanks were offered to Commissioners Duncan, Bomberg, LaTosch, Lopez, and Strohl for their work on the Advocacy Committee. As new CSA members are welcomed, we will bolster the committee's membership.
- The new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee has been created within the CSA, and Commissioner Gammouh is appointed as Chair. Roles, responsibilities, and tasks are under development and members will be appointed in the coming weeks. Special thank you to Commissioner Gammouh for his willingness to lead this important work.
- Additional thanks to Chair Zamora and Commissioners Crawford-Cambell and Strohl for their work and support on the SAC applicant and review committee.
- In the very near future, the Intrastate Funding Formula Committee will be established and begin their early work of learning how funds are established and distributed across the state of Michigan.

Chair Wishart paused her comments to allow all commissioners to introduce themselves

to the guests in the audience. Commissioners stated where they live in Michigan and provided their areas of expertise in commission work.

- Commissioner LaTosch is stepping away from the commission, choosing not to seek reappointment, to prioritize other important work. A special thank you was offered to Commissioner LaTosch for her commitment to serve as an advocate for the CSA and older adults in Michigan. She assisted in developing the structure of the Advocacy Committee, taking it from concept to action, and served as the Chair. She has transferred all knowledge learned to the new chair so the work can continue. A special plaque was read and presented to Commissioner LaTosch, honoring her for her commitment to the Commission on Services to the Aging.
- With AASA being in the state of transition of leadership, Scott Wamsley, AASA Deputy Director, is serving as Acting Senior Deputy Director for AASA and doing a wonderful job supporting the network and keeping the work moving forward.

PUBLIC COMMENT RELATED TO AASA PROGRAMS, SERVICES, POLICIES, OR ISSUE IMPACTING OLDER AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

- Heidi Gustine, Director, AAA of Northwest Michigan, addressed the commission offering thanks for their leadership and the leadership of AASA during the pandemic. The flexibility in programming and policy waivers made a tremendous difference in the AAA's ability to continue serving older adults in the region during such a difficult time.

STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING (SAC) UPDATE

Commissioner Kristie Zamora, SAC Chairperson, provided an update on the work of the council.

- Plans are underway to prepare for the Council's first in-person meeting since the start of the pandemic, which is scheduled to occur in October.
- The schedule for 2022 is under development. All meetings begin at 9:30 a.m. and will take place in Lansing. The SAC always seeks a guest Commissioner to join their meetings to provide updates on the work of the CSA. The tentative 2022 meeting dates are as follows:
 - March 17, 2022
 - April 16, 2022 – this will be the joint CSA/SAC meeting.
 - May 26, 2022
 - July 21, 2022
 - October 27, 2022
- The SAC is working to complete tasks related to items that were approved at the last CSA meeting – bylaws and welcome and orientation of new appointees.
- Aging in Place research workgroups are making tremendous strides in developing content for the 2021 report. Strategies continue to identify needs and gaps in research.

- Hard copies of the 2020 SAC Report – *Social Isolation with a Focus on Equity* – were provided to Commissioners. Additional copies as well as the digital link are available to distribute in the network. Special thank you to Lauren Swanson-Aprill and Kelly Cooper for their continued support to the members and work of the SAC.

CSA ADVOCACY COMMITTEE UPDATE

Commissioner Duncan, Advocacy Committee Chair, provided an update on the work of the committee.

- Continuing to follow actions around the state budget. The legislature passed a budget for K-12 education but have not passed budgets for other areas at this time. The goal for the legislature was to finish the budget by the end of June, however having missed this deadline, we are looking at late August/early September for a completed budget.
- On June 29, 2021, the House passed an Omnibus bill that contains MDHHS services and senior services including a wage increase for direct care workers (DCW). The bill did not, however, include increased funding for the *MiChoice* waiver program or the wait lists for home and community-based services.
- Prior to the summer break, the Senate passed a bill containing only revenue sharing.
- Chair Duncan remains optimistic the final budgets for the FY 22 will include wage increases for DCWs and waiver slots, but not the wait lists.
- Committee had their second learning session on rebalancing funding for home and community-based services vs nursing home services. Their goal is increased funding for home and community-based services as the pandemic has elevated the importance of these services. The plan is to spend the next two meetings developing advocacy recommendations to present to the full commission.
- Elder abuse guardianship bills have bipartisan support and will likely have action in the fall. Monitoring for advocacy opportunities.
- Due to changing roles within the Medical Services Administration, the previous attempt to meet informally with that agency did not occur and therefore the committee is requesting a meeting with Director Hertel or her designee to discuss recommendations the commission made regarding the DCW. Looking specifically for federal funding to support training.
 - Change Medicaid law to mandate home-based services and have the same requirements as facility based.
 - Work with *MiChoice* waiver program to take lead role in DCW trainings.
 - Develop quality improvement programs and goals for trainings.
 - There is commitment from MDHHS to require training of *MiChoice* waiver DCWs.
 - IMPART Alliance has submitted a proposal to the department to outline training that generated interest in further conversation and moving the training forward.

AGING AND ADULT SERVICES SENIOR DEPUTY DIRECTOR REPORT

Scott Wamsley provided the following updates:

- There is an understanding in the department of the importance of our work in providing services to the aging. As we wait for decisions to be made during this time of transition, AASA is committed to continuing the work of providing supports and services to the network. AASA has always had excellent staff committed this work, and our current staff is the best it has ever been. AASA is very busy working with AAAs to set their service plans in place for the coming year. These plans will be presented to the commission in the coming months for review and approval.
- This past week, AASA staff returned to work in a 'hybrid' model. Management team will be together on Tuesdays to have opportunity to work together in person. Many other staff have varied remote work schedules, with some working 100 percent remotely going forward. The opportunity to offer remote work has broaden our reach in recruiting staff to join our team.
- Two new staff members joined the AASA team in past few weeks
 - Marla Price – Nutrition Specialist
 - Kayla Smith – Health and Wellness Promotion
- Discussing technology needs within the aging network and looking at flexibility in fund expenditures to support virtual programs within the network. Also contacting the network to determine if any equipment needs exist that can be supported with federal funds.
- Reviewing policy waivers approved by the CSA over the past several months, such as allowing for telephonic and virtual assessments, to determine which policies can remain virtual and which will need to transition back to in person models.
- A National Core Indicators Aging and Disability pilot project surveying participants' experience with service delivery was recently completed. This project was funded by Michigan Health Endowment Fund and originally intended as an in-person project. Due to the pandemic, the project adjusted to virtual surveys, and proved to be successful. Now working to distribute information via electronic postcards, and information and referral resources with the support of the aging network.
- Progress is continuing with the Direct Care Worker Registry. This tool is intended to match DCWs looking for work with employers looking to hire. Platform concerns have been resolved and will now work with the Direct Care Workforce Advisory Committee and other content experts for feedback on how to best execute this tool.
- Moving back timing of work on Virtual Senior Centers to late this fall. Shoring up capacity issues with technology and funding sources and using the extra time to talk with the network to determine what functionality will best support their residents.
- Continuing to work with Office of the Auditor General on a state long-term care ombudsman audit and area agencies on aging audit. These audits are standard and pose no concerns.
- Thank you to Dave LaLumia with 4AM for the invitation to join their "Coffee and

Questions” meeting that included a diverse group of individuals representing the aging network.

- July 14, 2021, was the 56th anniversary of the Older Americans Act. This act was signed by President Johnson and provides much structure to do our work in the network. It is flexible and recognizes the need for services and service delivery at the local level, a bottom-up process for services plan. We count of this law as the backbone of our work.

LEGISLATIVE, COMMUNICATIONS, AND AASA PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATES

Jen Hunt, AASA State Assistant Administrator provided legislative and communication updates.

- Potential Federal Legislation
 - Older Americans Act (OAA) modernization. New York State Unit on Aging leading conversation with other state units on aging around modernizing the OAA to make some of the flexibility granted in response to the pandemic permanent. Conceptual at this point. Some of the ideas discussed include:
 - ✓ Eliminate the 10 percent state/county match for new investments in OAA programs beginning in 2021 and beyond.
 - ✓ Eliminate restrictive transfer language between Title III C-1 and C-2 to meet local needs.
 - ✓ Flexibility in use of all OAA funds to meet local needs that vary county to county.
 - ✓ Change age criteria to 50 for National Family Caregiver Support Program services.
 - ✓ Expand OAA eligibility for those with younger onset Alzheimer’s.
 - ✓ Increased funding for OAA overall, including LTCOP, SHIP, legal services
 - ✓ Annual appropriation for ADRCs, elder abuse education/outreach, and technology support including devices and wi-fi services.
 - ✓ Fully fund SCSEP.
 - Better Care Better Jobs Act, also known as the Home and Community-Based (HCBS) access bill, has been officially introduced in Congress, led by Senators Casey and Wyden in the Senate and Rep. Debbie Dingell in the House. The legislation aims to strengthen the landscape of home and community-based services by giving states more money to expand HCBS. One section of the bill sets \$100 million aside specifically for workforce development. It also requires states to address HCBS payment rates to promote recruitment and retention of direct care workers in part by regularly updating payment rates with public input
- Communications Updates
 - Will request proclamations/press releases from the Governor’s office for SCSEP month in September.

- Working on ways to maximize awareness of the MMAP program during open enrollment during the months of October and November.
- Contract has been renewed with *GetSetUp*. It now has 95,259 users. Michiganders rate the classes 4.59 out of 5, which is up from 4.46. June was the biggest month for Michiganders taking multiple classes. Fitness was the popular choice for classes taken.

FINANCIAL UPDATES

Cindy Masterson, AASA Operations and Aging Network Support Division Director, provided AASA budget updates. Her updates are attached below.

- A federal contingency transfer request approved allowing expenditure of \$2.8 million Adult Protective Services (APS) Grant dollars. Funds support field staff closing out APS cases previously not completed due to no face-to-face activities. Will also be used for COVID scam and administrative charges.
- AASA received approximately \$52 million in funding from the Federal Consolidated Act and ARP. Still waiting for federal authorization for approximately \$50.7 million to be appropriated allowing spending of funds. Currently working with MDHHS Bureau of Budget to identify how to meet the state's match requirement allowing awarding of funds once identified and authorization is appropriated.
- House passed HB 4410, an Omnibus budget bill to provide base funding for FY 22. In reviewing the Executive Budget to the House and Senate bills the following is identified.
 - Governor's budget includes \$360 million - \$121.4 million general fund to continue and make permanent the \$2 per hour wage increase. The Senate continues the increase at \$2.35 per hour at a cost of \$100 million, \$39.8 million above the Executive budget. The House originally included a \$100 placeholder, but now agrees to concur with the Executive budget.
 - House was proposing to authorize our administrative budgets quarterly. House Omnibus budget bill now recommends full year funding for all appropriation line items.
 - Senate proposed adjusting numerous line-item full time equivalent positions (FTE) to December 2020 levels based on a boilerplate #2971 report resulting in a \$22.8 million gross and \$9.4 million general fund savings. This is still being proposed by the Senate with no changes identified at this time. For AASA, FTEs will be reduced from 47 to 27.6 based on boilerplate #2971. This is based on the pay period ending December 26, 2020. This boilerplate compares the appropriated FTEs to the actual FTEs that were charged against the appropriation in that pay period. AASA has been aiding other areas in the department as well as charging work projects, so this boilerplate report does not accurately reflect the number of staff currently in AASA. Bureau of Budget has been made aware of our concerns.

- Executive Office removed one-time funding of \$150,000 for a small grants program for health-related senior programs at multipurpose senior citizen centers. House originally maintained the funding at the current year levels. Senate concurred with the Executive Office to remove the funding. House Omnibus budget bill did not include this funding.
- Senate included a \$100 placeholder to continue negotiations on the creation of a dementia care unit within DHHS. No proposed change at this time so this will be discussed during conference committee.
- Senate removed the \$200,000 general fund appropriated for kinship council funds, that were never established in state statute. This will be discussed during conference committee.
- AASA has contacted Advancing States who indicated it is still early in the process for the federal budget. A few bills have made it out of the house subcommittees, but nothing tangible has happened to date. No information has been provided showing funding levels under the Older American's Act. Continuing to monitor the budget and will share information as it becomes available.

BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Request for Approval of Federal CARES Act Administrative Funding for Fiscal Year 2021 for Animatronic Pets Grant to Michigan Advocacy Program (MiAP)

Cynthia Farrell, Manager, Supportive Adult Services Section, provided an overview stating AASA has collaborated with the State Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (SLTCOP) to purchase animatronic pets intended to address social isolation for residents in homes for the aged (HFA). The SLTCOP has prioritized residents living with dementia and cognitive decline. MiAP received a total of 780 request for these pets from HFA facilities. The request for an approval of an additional \$150,150 will allow MiAP to support the purchase of approximately 780 additional pets (cats and dogs), 780 chargers with four rechargeable batteries, and other related costs (shipping, etc.).

A motion was made by Commissioner Schlueter to approve the Request for Approval of Federal CARES Act Administrative Funding for Fiscal Year 2021 for Animatronic Pets Grant to Michigan Advocacy Program (MiAP). Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion.

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

b. Request for Approval to amend Fiscal Year 2021 Senior Volunteer Program Grants

Julia Thomas, AASA Senior Volunteer Program coordinator, provided an overview stating the reduced Senior Companion Program and Foster Grandparent Program awards reflect requests from the Methodist Children's Home Society to relinquish a portion of their current funding projected to go unspent due to unfilled staff positions, volunteer vacancies, etc. The grant increases described in the chart provided to commissioners reflect requests by

grantees to receive portions of these grant funds for FY 2021. The increased funding will support local volunteer program activities and will be expended by September 30, 2021.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bupp to approve the Request for Approval to amend Fiscal Year 2021 Senior Volunteer Program Grants. Commissioner Bomberg 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 Senior Call Check Pilot Program

Steve Betterly, Manager, Technical Assistance & Quality Improvement Section, provided an overview stating the purpose of the program is to connect with vulnerable seniors experiencing social isolation. The program will provide recurring well check services and connection check-ins.

A motion was made by Commissioner Greenhut to approve the Request for Approval of Fiscal Year 2021 Senior Call Check Pilot Program. Commissioner Bomberg seconded the motion.

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

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

a. Area Implementation Plan overview

Steve Betterly, Manager, Technical Assistance & Quality Improvement Section, provided an overview stating the purpose of this presentation is to provide an overview of what to expect at the August and September CSA meetings as AASA staff make presentations on FY 22 Area Plans for each of the 16 AAAs.

- This year's FY 2022 plans are the 3rd year of a 3-year Multi-Year Plan approved by the Commission back in the fall of 2019 for the 3-year period of 10/1/19 through 9/30/22.
- Last year's plans were presented as streamlined extensions of the AAA's previous years FY 2020 plans, this year returns to the normal process for AIP development and presentations for approval by the Commission.
- Eight AAA Area Plans will be presented in August and 8 in September.
- AAAs have been working on their area plans since early spring.
 - On March 19th., The Commission approved the FY 2022 Area Plan Approval Criteria.
 - AAAs are developing their FY 2022 plan updates based on the CSA's Approval Criteria.
 - These updates include both programmatic and budget information for their Region's planned programs and array of services.
 - Prior to their presentations in August or September, AAAs will have held public hearings on draft plans, presented plans to the AAA Policy

Board for formal approval, distributed FY 22 plans to local units of government for review and approval, and submitted plans to AASA for review.

- Before presentations of AIPs to the Commission ASSA staff will have provided AAAs with Commission approval criteria and AASA AIP development instructions, reviewed AAA plans against CSA-approved criteria, and prepared AIP review packets for each AAA schedule for Commission review and approval.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next *virtual* Commission on Services to the Aging meeting is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on Friday August 20, 2021, at Hilton Garden Inn, 633 N. Canal Rd., Lansing, MI 48917.

Please note, these meeting are open to the public and anyone wishing to attend may do so. Those needing technical assistance should contact Brenda Ross at rossb11@michigan.gov at leave five business days prior to the meeting date.

ADJOURN

Commission Chair Wishart adjourned the meeting at 11:56 a.m.

PUBLIC HEARING

The public hearing was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Commission Chair Wishart. Commissioners and AASA leadership staff introduced themselves to the guests joining the meeting. Commission Chair Wishart provided guidelines for those wishing to speak to the commissioners.

1. Rudi Edel, representing Otsego County Commission on Aging, addressed the commission about the importance of volunteer programs for our communities and what it means.
2. Kathryn Schellie, direct care worker, addressed the commission about her employment and critical needs of clients and her experiences.
3. Vicki Ramsey, direct care worker, addressed the commission about direct care services.
4. April Wilson, direct care worker, addressed the commission about her employment and experiences.
5. Emil Bellenbaum, representing Roscommon County seniors, addressed the commission with a thank you for attention to background check law and request special attention to seniors' voices when problems arise.
6. Barb Selesky, representing foster grandparent programs, addressed the commission about the program.
7. Brooke Mainville, representing NEMCSA Region 9 AAA, addressed the commission about caregiver support.
8. Anita Wadsworth, representing Otsego County Commission on Aging, addressed the commission about the importance of volunteering and what it means to her.
9. Maartje Nolan, representing Friendship Center of Emmet County, addressed the commission about senior volunteer and senior companion programs in Michigan.
10. Heidi Powers, representing NEMSCA Region 9 AAA, addressed the commission about foster grandparent and senior companion programs.
11. Laurie Andrews, representing Otsego County United Way and RSVP Program, addressed the commission about measuring impact of the RSVP program.
12. Pam Nickel, representing senior companions, addressed the commission about benefits to both the volunteers and the clients.
13. Amanda Dobrzelewski, representing Otsego County Commission on Aging, addressed the commission about the importance of health aging programs and funding to support these preventative programs.

The public hearing adjourned at 2:07 p.m.