

Northeast Michigan Regional Council on Aging
November 16, 2020 at 1:00 pm
Virtual Teams Meeting

The meeting was called to order by President C. Proulx at 1:00

Roll Call

Mike Maturen, Darlene Huff, Cyndi Sabin, Roberta Matelski, Lorelei King, Carol Wilder, Terry Dutcher, Merianne Tappan, Elaine Ableidinger, Corleen Proulx, Eileen Howell, Dennis Fay, Mitzi Downs, Chuck Corwin, and Madeline Hiller

Excused: Jerry Broad, Connie Messina

Unexcused: David Burdine

Guests: Emil Bellenbaum, Lisa Bolen

AAA Staff: Laurie Sauer, Yvette Smigelski, Connie McQuarrie, Kelly Robinette, Kitty Glomski, Brooke Mainville, Sara Gusler, Gina Bey, Patty Rings

Approval of Agenda – A motion was made by T. Dutcher with support from D. Fay to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes – A motion was made by C. Wilder with support from D. Huff to approve the minutes of September 28, 2020. Motion carried.

Nominating Committee – D. Fay reported on the following resignations, appointments, and reappointments:

Resignations – Barbara Kay, Iosco Delegate, Violet Ward, Oscoda Delegate, and Roger Schulte, Alcona Delegate submitted their resignations. A motion was made by D. Fay with support from E. Ableidinger to accept the resignations and sent each a letter of appreciation for their service. Motion carried.

Appointments – Mike Maturen has been appointed to replace Roger as the Alcona Delegate. Jerry Broad has been appointed as the Alpena Delegate, and Connie Messina has been appointed as the Otsego Delegate. She will complete the term left vacant which will expire on December 31, 2021. A motion was made by D. Fay with support from C. Wilder to accept the appointments. Motion carried.

Re-appointments – Elaine Ableidinger has been reappointed as Montmorency Delegate. David Burdine has been reappointed as Ogemaw Delegate, and Carol Wilder has been reappointed as the Crawford Member-at-Large. A motion was made by D. Fay with support from T. Dutcher to accept the re-appointments presented. Motion carried.

Speaker – Fran Whitney – NEMCSA Outreach Coordinator

Fran gave a short overview presentation of NEMCSA and the website. We have a new tagline to empower people to live enhanced lives. Fran has been with the agency over 11 years, a little over 4 in her current position. Community Action Agencies were started after the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and NEMCSA was created in 1968 and has been around for 52 years. We have expanded quite a bit over the years. Our purpose is to alleviate the causes and conditions of poverty. We facilitate a change of thought, promote opportunities and advantages, and empower people to live enhanced lives. Community Action Agencies are unique because most poverty-related organizations focus on a specific area of need, such as job training, health care, housing, or economic development. Community Action Agencies reach out to low income people in their communities, address their multiple needs through a comprehensive range of coordinated programs designed to have a measurable impact on poverty. We provide assistance to a diverse age range of underprivileged individuals from infants to the elderly. NEMCSA programs are

divided into four service categories we call divisions: Early Childhood, Client Services, School Success, and the Area Agency on Aging. Early Childhood is by far our largest division. Each division focuses on a specific area of need. Fran also reviewed resources available on the website: the NEMCSA Guide to Programs, NEMCSA Fact Sheet, Resource Directory, and Michigan 2-1-1.

Website Review – The NEMCSA home page and components were reviewed. The landing page has a sliding bar of the latest information. When you click on the services tab at the top of the page, you get a drop-down list on the left-hand side of all the programs we offer. The AAA portion has been updated. It is user friendly and easy to access information. The NEMCSA Guide to Programs is also located on the services page. It contains a detailed description of all of NEMCSA's 30-35 programs. You are encouraged to take a look at it. The NEMCSA Snapshot, and Resource Directory provide additional information. The Resource Directory includes partner information for all 12 counties. We also provide a link to Michigan 2-1-1 for additional resources. The NEMCSA Guide, Snapshot, and Resource Directory will be included with the minutes. Fran reviewed the other tab sections at the top of the landing page: About, Community Impact, Events Calendar, News and Events, Get Involved, and Contact Us. There is also an online referral form to request information or services. The agency received CARES Funding which is enabling us to implement our CARES Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Services to help individuals who have had a negative economic impact due to the pandemic. These funds will help with home repair, rent, and mortgage, water and sewer, funeral expenses, transportation, care insurance and repairs, and school-based assistance. This program has its own intake person.

November is Homeless Awareness Month and NEMSA is conducting a blanket drive with various donation sites if you would like to donate a blanket. Fran showed brief videos on homelessness and who NEMCSA is. Further questions or information contact Whitney at 989-358-4690 whitneyf@nemcsa.org

Director's Report

Emergency Covid Order – MDHHS issued another emergency order imposing a 3-week pause targeting indoor social gatherings and other group activities to curb the state's rising Covid cases. This does impact congregate meals for in-person dining. Those will need to shut down again. Drive through and home delivered meals are fine. We expect more challenges to in-home services as more folks are reporting exposures.

AAA Staff Changes – We have a new nurse in our West Branch office, Jamie Rau. She comes to us with hospice experience. Becky Hawks has taken the position of Alpena Intake Specialist. A new financial person has been hired to replace her. Yvette will update you in her report. Also, Sara Gusler is back to a 4-day work week. Staff continue to work remotely with no in-person visits.

GetSetup Program – AASA released a new training partnership that benefits older adults. It provides a wide range of technology sessions on topics such as setting up email, Facebook, how to use Zoom, etc. Trainings are free. Check it out at:

https://www.getsetup.io/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI7_qe0fSR7QIVBL7ACh1AvAENEAAAYASAAEgLud_D_BwE

Caregiver Promotion – AASA is developing promotional spots for caregiver services. Ads will focus on minority print publications, there will be radio spots as well.

Connect To Care Jobs Platform – This is being expanded throughout the state. It was initially piloted in southeast Michigan to find direct care workers. The program matches direct care workers seeking employment with employers.

L. King – How do they access that information? Laurie – All COA directors have the information. You also received it in the Aging Newsletter.

Q-Boxes – There are no boxes available for Alpena, Cheboygan, or Crawford counties. They already received a second round of distribution, but all the other counties are open to sign up or call us. Each box

contains 33 items. You must be 60 or older and not participating in any other food programs. Please help spread the word in your communities.

Criminal History Check Policy - AASA released an updated policy which is more restrictive. It will affect some of the COA staffing.

Premium Pay – The Direct Care Worker Premium Pay of \$2 per hour has been extended to December 31st. This is for those working in AASA or Medicaid funded programs.

ACL Grant – AASA is moving forward with this grant to create a No Wrong Door system to reduce barriers to care. They enlisted the Michigan Public Health Institute (MPHI) to conduct a rapid assessment of the aging network with focus groups, surveys, etc. The state has assigned regions mainly according to Covid statistics. Region 9 and 10 are combined covering all of northern Michigan. Arenac was put in with the Mid-Michigan group for purposes of this grant. The AAA' and Centers for Independent Living (CILs) are to work together. There are two CILs in our region: The Disability Networks of Traverse City and Mid-Michigan. Regions were given four options to focus on: 1) Mitigate social isolation through proactive information and referral follow-up, 2) Virtual management of ADRC access functions to provide critical access functions to populations with the most Covid risk, 3) Develop and/or enhance innovative services or service functions, and 4) Deploy targeted care transition services. For our region, the funding is only \$69,023. We will discuss with Region 10, the best way to go about this grant. The care transition services caught our eye since a lot of work is currently being done in that area.

Oscoda COA – The COA has a new director, Suzanne Barker. Merianne will be leaving in December. We are sorry to see her go. C. Proulx asked that a card or letter of appreciation be sent on behalf of this council.

Program Reports

Legal Services Board – C. Proulx reported meetings are being held virtually. The next Zoom meeting is scheduled for December 12th. They discussed budget spending. Travel costs are down while phone costs have gone up. Some of that included installation costs for phones at their new offices in Gaylord and Traverse City.

Region 9 Directors Report – M. Tappan reported the group met last Friday. None of the COAs have really opened up fully. Congregate meals will continue as drive through pick up. The Crawford COA is moving ahead with their new building project which is very exciting. The Alcona COA has been very active, and they are keeping their seniors busy with class offerings. Alpena is also doing very well. Many of the COAs are getting very creative during this pandemic in keeping seniors active and just letting them know we continue to be available for them. Our new director will do great. I want to thank this council for the opportunity to represent the COAs. The group will work on a replacement. Laurie – I think that all of the COA directors have a lot on their plates right now so it's hard to find a volunteer right now.

Long Term Care Ombudsman Program Report – Sara reported on the following:

PREVNT Grant Closing Report – Sara held nine in-person trainings for a total of 55 attendees totaling 36 hours of direct training. She received mixed reviews, but the evaluations were overwhelmingly positive. One measure we used was to have them rate their confidence and competence levels in working with people with dementia on a scale of 1-10. For confidence, the average score before the training was 5.63. After the training it was 7.52. For competence it was 4.37 before the training and 7.68 after so I feel we did well for the first year.

Elder Abuse Prevention – The EAP videos are in the final stages of completion. The final 30-second script is expected today, and the 5-minute story board soon.

Covid Update – There has been an uptick in facility cases. One facility has only four Covid free residents. It is the biggest outbreak since the spring. Sara was able to make a few in home visits but that has now stopped. Every area of Michigan is getting hit hard and all of our nursing homes are rated an E on the safety map. Last week only Alcona county and the city of Detroit were allowed nursing home visits, now visits are not allowed anywhere in the state. She will only be able to visit in areas once they are allowed and only for those with a specific request or issue, we're working to resolve.

National Consumer Voice Annual Conference – The conference will be held virtually this year. Sara has been invited to present on bias and healthcare on December 16th. Along those same lines, she was also able to participate in the Implicit Bias Workgroup as it relates to the content of the programs expected to be offered to various agencies throughout the state. That was in October. The group submitted their recommendations to the governor's office and are waiting for feedback.

E-Pet Program – The ombudsman program is working on an E-Pet program with a grant from AASA to purchase electronic pets for nursing home residents. Every nursing home was notified and provided information about the program. All are encouraged to apply. Each facility can ask for as many as they want but they are to specify the type of resident the pet will be going to and a plan of care for that pet. We also want to ensure there is a plan in place to address any issues that may arise from those with dementia. They are a wonderful tool to combat loneliness however, occasionally, a resident will become concerned that the cat isn't eating or the dog's not barking or going outside to the bathroom. We don't want it causing more distress.

Planning and Volunteer Coordinator Report – Kitty reported Open Enrollment began on October 15th and will continue through December 7th. All MMAP counselors are assisting clients by phone or virtually by Zoom. There is no face-to-face allowed this year. We initially thought it would be a big challenge, but they are doing it. All trainings, both Region 9 and statewide, were held virtually. We are able to accommodate more people doing it this way. Of the five new counselors trained for our region, three are job shadowing, one has completed their job shadowing and started counseling, and one has postponed training for a year due to Covid.

Additional challenges we are facing, three of our counselors accepted new jobs and left MMAP, four community health counselors are providing limited counseling, and Medicare launched a New Medicare Plan Finder on the opening day of Open Enrollment. We are experiencing daily issues with it.

MMAP State Awards – Our region received the top three state awards: 2020 MMAP Site Coordinator of the Year John Panci from Otsego county, the 2020 MMAP Team Member of the Year Kelsey Helton from Otsego as well, and the Region 9 AAA was also awarded the 2020 MMAP Team of the Year. We have a phenomenal team and will continue providing services to benefit our seniors. We are also happy Merianne Tappan is continuing as a counselor and Darlene Huff as a new addition to our team.

Special Projects Coordinator Report – Brooke reported on some virtual programs scheduled for next year. Powerful Tools for Caregivers January 12, 2021 from 1:00-2:30 pm and April 26, 2021 from 5:30 – 7:00 pm. A Creating Confident Caregiver Workshop is scheduled for January 11, 2021 from 1-3 pm. We are the first AAA in Michigan allowed to conduct the workshop virtually. We hope it goes well. Tentatively scheduled is A Matter of Balance for March 1, 2021 form 1-3 pm. An online virtual class is being piloted for release the first part of the year. Kelly and I will be trained and then we will be able to provide training to other leaders in our region.

Brain Health Toolkits – The grant is for Roscommon county. Kits are being put together that include activities like crosswords, coloring pages, spot the difference, etc. We were also just awarded the funds to provide them in Arenac county.

Personal Care Boxes – We received funding from AASA to provide personal care boxes. These will include all types of personal hygiene items such as toilet paper, shampoo and conditioner, deodorant, hand soap, etc. everyday items. We are starting with homebound care management and waiver clients for now. They are the most at risk during the pandemic.

AAA Website and Facebook Page – We had a focus group look over our website and give us suggestions for improvement. Thank you to those who participated. If you are not following our Facebook page, please do so. It contains a lot of resources and information. Brooke showed an example of what you may find on the site.

Services Coordinator Report – Kelly reported all of our 12 counties are doing drive up congregate meals. COAs are providing anywhere from zero to 200 plus meals a week. Some are seeing consistent numbers while a couple of COAs have seen a slight drop. A survey was sent to all COA directors regarding some of their training needs. Based on the results, Kelly will work on some paper and pencil trainings per their requests.

New Financial Services Analyst – Yvette introduce Vicki Goodburn. Today is her first day. She has extensive educational and work background.

Advocacy Reports

Michigan Senior Advocates (MSAC) – Pat Rondeau reported the last meeting was a month ago and held virtually. She has not received notification of the next one to date. It may not be until after Christmas.

State Advisory Council – C. Corwin reported the Council is continuing to work on pulling their report together. It's hard to organize, brainstorm, and do some of the things we need to do virtually. We are sending massive packets of data back and forth and trying to condense it into something workable. Isolation is getting worse as time goes on, so we really need to get something out to the communities with suggestions and resources.

State Updates

State Commission on Aging – No report.

Aging and Adult Services Agency (AASA) – No report.

Local Updates From Council Members

Nothing further.

Action Items

No items.

Question or Comments

No further questions

Adjourn

A motion was made by M. Maturen with support from M. Downs to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned by Chair C. Proulx at 2:11 pm. Our next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Monday, January 25, 2021.