

Northeast Michigan Regional Council on Aging
Monday, July 25, 2016
NEMCSA Large Conference Room - Alpena

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm by Chairman E. Corpe.

Roll Call

R. Lynch, D. Huff, S. Allor, G. Guenther, E. Corpe, K. Schreiner, J. Drozdowski, J. Johnston, C. Athan, S. Krey, C. Proulx, E. Howell, D. Henig, E. Henig, J. Mathis, M. Downs, D. Fay, C. Corwin

Excused: D. Burdine, M. Fox

Unexcused: None

AAA Staff: Connie McQuarrie, Kelly Robinette, Kara LaMarre, Susan Bowen and Sara Socia.

Guests: None

Quorum – yes

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Carol Athan with support from Karl Schreiner to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by D. Fay with support from D. Huff to approve the minutes of June 27, 2016. Motion carried.

Nominating Committee Report

Dennis Faye reported the Alpena Senior Center appointed Mary Jo Oke as their new delegate. She will complete the term left vacant by Annie Hepburn. A motion was made by D. Fay with support from D. Huff to accept the appointment of Mary Jo Oke. Motion carried.

Directors Report

Laurie is off this week to attend the N4A Conference in San Diego. Susan gave the report in her absence.

State Commission on Aging – Laurie attended their meeting on July 15th in St. Ignace. Approval was given to contract with the Michigan Advocacy Program under its Michigan Elder Justice Initiative arm (MEJI). MEJI already houses two long term care programs. Only the state office portion will transition over to them for now. All local ombudsmen, including Sara, and funding levels will remain as is, however, it is expected they will seek to transition over all local ombudsman in the future.

State Advisory Council – Five new members were approved. None were from our area. They will be considering two applicants from our region to the State Commission on Aging. Only one position will be filled. The decision will be made in August.

Federal Funding Update – The U.S. House Appropriations Committee approved increases in funding for fiscal year 2017 as follows: \$5.3 million more for Title III-B Supportive Services, \$5.8 million more for Title III-C Congregate Meals, \$8.1 million more for Title III-C Home-Delivered Meals, a \$325,000 increase for Family Caregiver Programs, a \$165,000 increase for the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, a \$640,000 increase for the Lifespan Respite Program, a \$115,000 increase for Title III-D Preventive Health, and \$100 million more for the LIHEAP. They also rejected the Senate proposed cut to MMAP funding. A continuing resolution is expected with flat funding for October.

State Funding – House Bill 5294, the omnibus budget bill for all state spending was passed by the Legislature in June and is currently before the Governor for review and signature. The bill includes: \$1.55 million in new funds for public dental clinics coordinated through local public health departments to serve seniors, children and adults enrolled in Medicaid and low income uninsured; \$7 million funding reduction for MI Choice based on actual expenditures. This was due to underspending last year; boilerplate language directing up to \$3.7 million from long term care services to nursing facility transition activities, this would be our Housing Coordinator and Outreach Specialist position; and boilerplate language encouraging the Food Bank Council and Area Agencies on Aging to collaborate in securing food access for vulnerable seniors. Also introduced was Senate Bill 986 which would add public health emergency to the list of statutory purposes of the Health Endowment Fund, and House Bill 5422 which expands the definition of fourth degree criminal vulnerable adult abuse, was passed by the House in June by a 105 to 3 vote. HB 5422 would include acts that knowingly or intentionally create a reasonable risk of physical harm, whether or not harm actually occurs.

AASA – Requested transfer funds were granted by AASA recently and new SGA's will be going out to the COAs soon.

RSVP Monitoring – The results of the recent monitoring visit came in with a few issues. A plan to address the issues was sent to CNCS and accepted. Program tweaks will be made in the coming year.

Lunch and Learn – Kara and Laurie will be attending a Lunch and Learn in Grand Rapids on August 15th. This will be a joint meeting of six AAAs and representatives from Medicaid Health Plans to talk about Diabetes PATH and Matter of Balance regarding the possibility of working with them to offer these programs to their members.

MI Choice Waiver – The program recently underwent a home visit review by the State Clinical Review Team and scored a 98.04% overall. We are very thankful for the excellent staff we have working in this program.

Social Security – Recent reports are indicating a very small increase, .2% or \$2.60, is proposed for 2017 due to a stagnant Consumer Price Index. You may recall there was no COLA in 2016

Impact of the Older Americans Act – A handout was distributed with facts and figures on the impact of the aging network over a 5-year period.

Program Reports

Legal Services Board – Jim Mathis reported the board will meet again in October.

Region 9 Directors Report – Suzan Krey reported their group has not met since last month but they are working on compiling the results of a wage study which they hope to share soon.

Long Term Care Ombudsman – Sara Socia reported the annual Elder Abuse Prevention Conference is scheduled for September 7, 2016 at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Oscoda. There is no cost and lunch is included. Information was distributed. Sara is excited about the speakers lined up for this year. Attendees will learn about financial exploitation and fraud, the role and responsibilities of DHS Adult Protective Services, Hope Shores Alliance will present understanding domestic and intimate partner violence including an elder's right to consent, and the Senior Brigade will talk about e-scams, telephone and mail scams. Sara will present her Prevent Grant training on senior bullying on August 12th in Lansing. We are testing it before we roll it out to the public. Sara is also looking for more ombudsman volunteers. Chuck Corwin recently became a volunteer. She hopes with enough volunteers to expand services to assisted living facilities and adult foster care homes.

R. Lynch – Is the state licensing for an adult foster care home based on occupancy? Sara – There are several types of licenses and classifications with various requirements. I have a meeting in August to learn more about that structure and licensing requirements and will be able to better answer your question at a future meeting.

E. Corpe – There is an internet scam right now that notifies you that your computer has a virus. Be aware when using the internet. Don't open any mail if you don't recognize the sender.

MMAF Program Report – Dennis Fay congratulated Susan on receiving the MMAF Coordinator of the Year as well as Team of the Year. Susan Bowen reported she nominated Region 9 and Region 10 together because of their combined efforts and friendly competition this year. Additional awards given to our region: Sara Skowronski – Most In-Kind Counseling Hours, Jan Williamson – Most Volunteer Counseling Hours, Sandy Allison – Most Volunteer Hours, and Ann Weir, 2016 In-Kind Outreach Hours. Tomorrow is the first new counselor training using the new curriculum. Five are signed up for the in-person training starting tomorrow in Grayling. There is a change this year to the Blue Cross Legacy Medigap Plans. The cost is no longer protected so they intend to raise their prices. For example, the current plan costing \$122 per month will increase to \$314 and their Plan A will increase from \$40 to over \$100. There will be a subsidy available through the Health Endowment Fund for Blue Cross Blue Shield as well as other companies offering plans. Susan anticipates scheduling educational presentations on how to shop for a Medigap plan throughout our region. MMAF counselors can't tell clients the costs, just what the plans offer. They would have to research various company plans and costs on their own. You have to apply for the subsidy which will be available on October 1, 2016. Discussion followed:

G. Guenther – My wife and I are both 81 and have BCBS. We got a notice to go to our local agent to see what kind of policy they can offer. Is there someone I can check with? Susan – Yes, you can check and compare policies with any other insurance agencies.

D. Fay – My brother was contacted about his policy by phone and has an appointment. Most seniors are apprehensive when receiving a call from insurance companies. Susan – It's ok to talk and get comparison costs, just don't make any decisions over the phone.

J. Johnston – This is only for BCBS? Susan – No, other companies are participating.

K. Schreiner – I was working with a client on this issue and I printed a list of the companies for them to pick and call for their insurance. When you call the insurance company, explain your circumstances. I will even help clients call if necessary.

C. Corwin – Can you write up an explanation on this whole change so we can put this in our newsletter prior to October? Susan – Yes, I will put something together.

Special Projects Coordinator – Kara LaMarre reported assessments on the adult day care centers will be conducted in August. There are some updates happening with the Diabetic PATH. Kara and Kelly will take an on-line training and then provide a one-day update training for the other leaders. The Michigan Health Endowment Funds have noted that all AAAs are to get to the point of billing Medicare. We're not sure if we'll get there but we will be accredited. All COAs are asked to look at their Kinship Care and turn in any unspent funds soon so we can reallocate them where there's a need. Kara is also available for assistance if anyone is interested in being designated a Community for a Lifetime.

Advocacy Reports

MSAC – Karl Schreiner reported they will not meet again until September.

State Advisory Council – Chuck Corwin reported the Creative Aging Workgroups have been conference calling and will meet again in person in September.

Local Updates From Council Members

K. Schreiner has Crawford COA fundraiser raffle tickets available for anyone interested.

C. Proulx – MCCOA will start a newsletter in August. They have also scheduled four food giveaways over the next few months at the Atlanta center.

Action Items:

Endorsement of the FY 2017 Funding Recommendations – Handouts were sent previously to all members for review. Discussion followed.

C. Corwin – I notice the variation in amounts from the request to the recommended is closer than in past years. Is that due to the assistance offered by you and Yvette? Susan – I can't answer that because I was not involved in the review process. Kara – I can say that we did not have as many outside requests this year.

C. Corwin – Were the applications better? Kara – In some areas yes. We did offer some technical assistance. Susan – We make that offer every year and stress the importance of attending the pre-bidders conference to receive current application instructions and forms.

C. Corwin – I would recommend to each COA that you take advantage of the help offered by the AAA. We found it very helpful.

M. Downs – The first sheet says 2017-2019. Is the funding amount for three years? Susan – No, the contract is for three years but the funding amount listed is for the first year, 2017.

There were no other questions and a motion was made by C. Athan with support from D. Huff to approve the recommendations as presented. Both C. Corwin and S. Krey indicated they will abstain from the vote because they are direct beneficiaries of the funds. The motion passed unanimously. The recommendations will now go to the NEMCSA board next Friday for approval.

Questions or Concerns

E. Corps – Just a reminder the August meeting has been cancelled. Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 26th.

Adjourn

A motion was made by D. Henig with support from G. Guenther to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was ended at 2:03 p.m. by Chairman Corpe.