

**Northeast Michigan Regional Council on Aging and
Public Hearing - FY 2021 Annual Implementation Plan
May 18, 2020 at 1:00 pm
Virtual Zoom Meeting**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Corky Proulx at 1:03 pm.

Roll Call

D. Huff, R. Matelski, C. Wilder, B. Kaye, T. Dutcher, C. Proulx, D. Burdine, E. Howell, D. Fay, C. Corwin, and M. Hiller

Excused: V. Zygiel, E. Ableidinger, M. Downs, R. Schulte, J. Mathis

Unexcused: M. Tappan, V. Ward

Guests: Bonnie Altman, Cyndi Albrecht (AASA), Debbie Cooley, Colleen Motley, Emil Bellenbaum, Andrea Hepburn, Reagan Moffit, Anna Rogers, Lorelei King, Sandy Woods, Tom Pettit

Aging Staff: Laurie Sauer, Connie McQuarrie, Kelly Robinette, Yvette Smigelski, Kitty Glomski, Brooke Mainville, Sara Gusler

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by B. Kaye with support from C. Wilder to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by B. Kaye with support from T. Dutcher to approve the minutes of April 27, 2020. Motion carried.

Nominating Committee

No report.

Meeting Closed – A motion was made by T. Dutcher with support from C. Corwin to close the Regional Council on Aging meeting. Motion carried. A motion was made by B. Kaye with support from T. Dutcher to open the public hearing. Motion carried.

Public Hearing – FY 2021 Annual Implementation Plan

Roll Call

Darlene Huff, Roberta Matelski, Carol Wilder, Barbara Kaye, Terry Dutcher, Corky Proulx, David Burdine, Eileen Howell, Dennis Fay, Chuck Corwin, Madeline Hiller, Cindy Albrecht, Andrea Hepburn, Colleen Motley, Emil Bellenbaum, Debbie Cooley, Regan Moffit, Bonnie Altman, Anna Rogers, Lorelei King, Sandy Woods, Tom Pettit, Laurie Sauer, Gina Bey, Yvette Smigelski, Kitty Glomski, Kelly Robinette, Sara Gusler, Brooke Mainville, Connie McQuarrie, and Becky Hawks.

Laurie Sauer, AAA Director, gave a PowerPoint presentation. The Region 9 Area Agency on Aging is one of 16 in the state. Our region encompasses twelve counties. Each AAA must submit a three-year plan to the Administration on Community Living and to the Michigan Aging and Adult Services Agency (AASA). Plans must be approved by the Michigan Commission on Aging. Yearly updates are made to the plan. Today is the annual process for the Fiscal Year 2021 Annual Implementation Plan (AIP).

The AIP includes: An Executive Summary, Local Government Review, Direct Service Requests, Approved Program Development Objectives, FY 2021 Program Development Objectives, Plan Highlights, Advocacy and Budget. The Older Americans Act was established in 1965 by President Lyndon Johnson. The Act is reauthorized every five years and establishes the national framework for AAAs. In March, a new act was reauthorized for another five years with increased funding levels of 7% the first year and 6% for the remaining years.

A needs survey was conducted with 530 completed. Results show that 43% live alone, 43% live with a spouse and 11% live with a family member or friend. 33% of those who took the survey were between the ages of 70-79. The majority live in Alpena county. The bulk of our funds are spent on meals, in home services and respite care with 89% reporting that congregate meals are important and 93% for home delivered meals. We expect the survey numbers to grow for adult day services. It is still a relatively new concept and we only have it available in six of our twelve counties. We continue to reach out with our Evidence Based programs. The Matter of Balance is highly recognized. These are fall prevention workshops. All of the programs on this list are not available in each county. Caregiving and the need for dementia care is growing. The AAA provides the Creating Confident Caregivers (CCC) program which specifically targets dementia caregivers and Powerful Tools for Caregivers. Powerful Tools is a new program we started last year. We are currently holding a virtual class. We hope to increase awareness that help is available for caregivers.

Additional needs include lawn care, snow removal, as well as help finding and accessing health care and supportive services. It is difficult finding funding for these services. These services are available to clients in our MI Choice Waiver program. Transportation is also an ongoing need in the region. 83% said it is important to have available transportation to attend medical appointments or participate in community activities with 44% saying they lack transportation. We continue to try to address this need by working with local transit authorities and the use of volunteers, and our Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

The core functions of the AAA are to concentrate resources to develop capacity; develop a comprehensive and coordinated service delivery system; provide planning, program development, administration and monitoring, and advocate for vulnerable populations.

We work closely with our community partners including the County Councils and Commissions on Aging. They all receive millage dollars to serve older adults. They have leveraged \$795,736 with \$114,943 to provide Outreach, \$285,492 for Transportation, and \$395,301 for Information and Assistance. These funds are in addition to what the AAA provides.

The Aging and Adult Services Agency (AASA) is required to set state goals. With the pandemic situation, the state has carried over the goals from the previous plan year into this year. Updates will be made as we receive more guidance. The Region 9 AAA has set goals to align with the four state specified goals as follows:

State Goal #1 - Advocate, inform, and empower those we serve.

Region 9 Goals:

- A. Advocate for senior programs and engage in dialog with the aging network, constituents and elected officials.
- B. Host an annual legislative town hall-style meeting with state and federal elected officials. We may not be able to do this unless restrictions are lifted before the end of the year. Virtual meetings may be an option.

State Goal #1 – Advocate, inform, and empower those we serve.

Region 9 Goals:

- A. Promote caregiver wellness and empowerment by providing education to enhance the caregiver experience.
- B. Host a caregiver wellness and empowerment conference to provide a supportive and educational environment for learning and skill enhancement. A conference is scheduled for July with speakers covering a variety of topics. Information on the conference can be found on our website: www.nemcsa.org.

State Goal #2 - Help older adults maintain their health and independence at home and in their community.

Region 9 Goals:

- A. Increase capacity to provide non-emergency medical transportation within the PSA.
 - Recruit volunteer drivers for Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT)
- B. Expand opportunities for seniors to participate in Evidence-Based Disease Prevention (EBDP) programs
 - Increase number of classes and trained leaders
 - Increase number of seniors accessing dementia resources

State Goal #2 – Promote independent living and self-choice in developing care programs by offering long term care supports and services

Region 9 Goals

- A. Ensure a person-centered approach to all seeking services. We require all partner and AAA staff to be trained.

State Goal #3 – Promote elder and vulnerable adult rights and justice

Region 9 Goals:

- A. Provide education on Medicare and Medicare-Fraud awareness
Provide New to Medicare classes and education on scams
- B. Increase public awareness of signs of abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation among senior populations. This year we are exploring having a virtual presence.

State Goal #4 – Conduct responsible, quality management and coordination of Michigan’s aging Network

Region 9 Goal

- A. Foster development of new collaborations and enhance current partnerships to build the aging continuum
- B. Improve the quality and effectiveness of services provided through the regional aging network and Region 9 Area Agency on Aging partners

The AAA provides five direct services: Long Term Care Ombudsman, Outreach for Kinship Care, Care Management, Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program (MMAAP) and Dementia Consultation. There is not enough money to fund twelve entities appropriately in the region. The Ombudsman and MMAAP rely on volunteers, and we are always looking for new ones if you are interested or know someone who may be.

Purchase of service is available primarily for Care Management clients for Medication Management, Specialized Respite, and Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS). The area plan budget of \$5,128,912 is broken down with 2% in purchase of services, 15% in direct services, and 83% in contracted services. All services are contingent upon funding. Funding amounts are anticipated and will likely change.

Advocacy Strategy is also very important. The AAA holds membership at the local, state, and federal levels, and has representation on four advisory councils. The AAA will continue to support a coordinated system of information, referral and access to services with support for MMAAP, Long Term Care Ombudsman, and Senior Corps Programs which include the Foster Grandparent Program, Senior Companion Program, and Retired Senior Volunteer Program, the Michigan Senior Advocates, and other senior organizations. We also support Community Based Care Programs, long-term care rebalancing, and provide legislative advocacy and education.

COVID-19 - Some of the things we have been doing during the pandemic include; remote workstations, policy revisions and additions, implementation of the Microsoft Teams software, well check calls, distribution of Q boxes, cards for nursing home residents, care plan reviews and service prioritizations, technical assistance to the field, personal protective equipment (PPE) acquisition and distribution, engage volunteers in mask making, and we are a USDA food box partner. What other needs are out in the community?

C. Proulx – The biggest need I see is for handyman help. It's difficult to find someone to do those small, odd jobs. We may need volunteers or funds. Laurie – We hear this every year. Funding is an obstacle and it is difficult finding someone to do the work. We have been talking with Habitat for a possible solution.

C. Proulx – Maybe approach churches or veterans' groups or maybe high school seniors in shop class. Laurie – We tend to explore all avenues when we have a need to fund.

T. Dutcher – One of the problems we see in the construction industry is to do a job of \$600 or more you need a license. They charge for labor and materials. Additionally, if they come back for multiple jobs, those may go over \$600. It is very difficult to find those who are unlicensed. Shop classes at schools are a good idea. I have also been approached by the Kindness Movement. It is a platform for sharing and collaboration.

B. Altman – What I'm hearing from seniors is that they need to know the people are safe and cost effective that are providing the work at their homes. Maybe a police check so that a senior knows a person or company is safe to use. Also, Southwest Michigan is getting broadband services. We need to advocate for this in our region. More and more seniors will be staying

connected in this way using portals and Kindles. Maybe 1/3 of our exercise classes at the center could meet virtually to maintain distancing. In the winter there will be an increased need for something like Foster Grandmothers or someone in charge of calling folks for a small stipend for well checks to seniors and maybe give a topic of information per call, say Alzheimer's or KIT (Keep in Touch). Laurie – We are hoping to add friendly reassurance calls to our services this year. The idea to use volunteers to keep in touch with seniors virtually is unique.

C. Proulx – Regarding loneliness, maybe think about pets for older persons. Maybe a program for those living at home where they can make a contract with the animal shelter to foster a pet. The shelter would provide vet care, food, etc. There would be very little expense for the senior. The Animal would go back to shelter when the senior was no longer able to care for it. Laurie – We are hearing a lot about robotic pets. C. Proulx – No, that would be like giving someone a doll to keep them occupied. That's the point of having someone else responsible for the animal. I don't feel a robot would work.

T. Dutcher – As an insurance agent I can tell you that both home and auto are going up. Is there any help for seniors on a fixed income? Laurie – No there is not. Auto insurance is supposed to come down. T. Dutcher – It's not likely. Portions are as long as you lower your coverage for personal injury protection. Personal injury protection will go down 10% but there will be 4.5% overall additionally in coverages going up. Beginning in July, the standard coverage will be \$250,000 and \$500,000. If the state decides to raise the coverage, why would anyone want to go with less? I predict there will be more lawsuits because you can choose a cap for your personal protection coverage. You must prove your Medicare or Medicaid will be primary if you get in an auto accident. The average retired person doesn't have that kind of money sitting around. There are a lot of stipulations and options. Insurance companies are losing money so they will raise other costs.

C. Proulx – I would suggest we contact a few different insurance representatives to give a talk to this council and have something in writing explaining the options to give to seniors. Laurie – I guess I would point that back at T. Dutcher. Corky – Yes, but I would like one or two for different opinions.

Coronavirus Questions, Needs or Ideas:

C. Corwin – Aging is an area of loss, it's defined by the loss of mobility, health, friends, etc. We don't have any programs that deal with loss. Many seniors feel they are just waiting to die. We are trying to address this through the State Advisory Council senior isolation paper. Maybe as a region we could make counseling or some other kind of options available.

B. Altman – Anxiety and feelings of loneliness are normal, but simple things can help. Brief ads in the newspaper or short TV clips that say something like “if you feel this, try this”. Simple mental health tips.

R. Moffit – The Internet for seniors is important. Seniors need to be taught how to use technology. Show them how to set up email and use Zoom or video chat to connect with people. Laurie – I agree. We certainly can look to develop something. This links in with the need for broadband.

Deadline for AIP Submission

Deadline for written and/or electronic testimony is June 12, 2020. Send testimony or written

comments to: Region 9 Area Agency on Aging, Attn: Laurie Sauer, Director, 2375 Gordon Rd. Alpena, MI 49707, Email: SauerL@nemcsa.org

There being no further questions or comments, a motion was made by T. Dutcher with support from B. Kay to close the public hearing. Motion carried.

A motion was made by T. Dutcher with support from B. Kaye to reopen the Regional Council on Aging meeting. Motion carried.

Director's Report

Coronavirus Update – As of today, cases in our region are up 4% from 405 to 419. Hot spots are Alpena, Crawford, Iosco, and Otsego. Montmorency and Presque Isle are holding steady with their numbers.

Families First and CARES Act Funding – We have received some guidance for the use of these funds. The AAA received from Families First, \$85,960 for C-1 and \$171,919 for C-2. SGAs will go out to the COAs today. We received from the CARES Act: \$794,700 plus \$27,710 for the Long Term Care Ombudsman program.

Q Boxes – Distribution continues. We have received 350 total and would like to equally distribute 29 per county. Alpena and Crawford received their maximum already. Cheboygan and Roscommon are close, we continue to have low responses in Arenac, Montmorency, Oscoda, Otsego, and Presque Isle. Iosco and Ogemaw are picking up, but they still have some available boxes. We have another 100 boxes coming in June. Recipients must be age 60 and over and not receiving home delivered meals, food stamps, commodities or participating in any other food programs. Those in need can register on our website or call either Kelly or Laurie.

Fresh Food Boxes – A USDA grant to distribute fresh food boxes will be starting soon. There is a variety of four seasonal boxes to be delivered weekly. Six COAs have agreed to be distribution sites, Alpena, Cheboygan, Crawford, Montmorency, Otsego, and Roscommon.

PPE – We received a large shipment of personal protective equipment over a week ago that we are distributing as quickly as possible to our partners. We're not sure when more will come. Thank you to Cindy Albrecht from AASA for helping with the arrangements.

Strategic Planning Survey – NEMCSA will be sending out a survey to begin the process of gathering information. Please encourage your COA and let other community organizations know about it and encourage them to complete it.

Census – Please encourage family and friends to complete the census. Numbers in Michigan are still low.

Re-Opening Strategies – NEMCSA is working on re-opening strategies for the office and our partners as well. We are also starting to consider restarts to more services. Stay tuned. The governor is expected to announce more openings for the state.

Direct Care Workers – Workers are to receive a \$2 per hour wage increase for April, May, and June. This is for Medicaid behavioral health and long term care programs only. The new stimulus package includes a \$3 per hour increase. This would not be on top of the \$2, but \$3 total. We are advocating for the increase for all direct care workers.

State Furloughs – Furloughing of AASA staff begins today. Half of the staff will be off on Mondays and the other half on Fridays for a period of ten weeks. Steve Betterly is in the Monday group, so Cindy Albrecht is attending the meeting today on his behalf.

AAA Annual Report – A copy of the 2019 AAA Annual Report was provided in your handout materials.

Program Reports

Legal Services Board – Jim Mathis no report.

Region 9 Directors Report – Merianne no report.

Long Term Care Ombudsman Program Report – Sara reported the Elder Abuse Prevention Grant is being used to develop one 5-minute and one 30-second video by Olive Animation. They will be used for public service announcements on tv, radio as well as on various websites, and for use at conferences, speaking engagements, etc. The 30-second video has a storyboard. The focus is on senior isolation.

Ombudsman Updates – Three of our counties have nursing homes with the coronavirus. Ongoing policy changes due to the spread of COVID-19 significantly impacts resident's rights. She continues to receive complaints regarding general services such as supplies and food. Nursing facilities continue to receive deliveries of personal protective equipment from the police and National Guard. She has been giving out the mental health call line and working with a few homes to be sure residents have access to telehealth for mental health.

National Webinar – Sara will be presenting on dementia awareness and law enforcement as well as bias in medical settings at the 44th Annual Consumer Voice National Conference on October 25-28, 2020 in Arlington Virginia. This conference is provided by the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long Term Care. On June 10th Sara will be a panelist on the webinar “Cultural and Linguistic Competence: What it means for Ombudsman Programs” regarding bias in medical settings. This webinar is being put on by the National LTC Ombudsman Resource Center and the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long Term Care.

Corky – Why are there complaints of low supplies and food? Sara – I don't know what it stemmed from, but I am still working with the residents on that. They do feel the supply is better now. The complaints were specifically about no selection just soup and sandwiches and oatmeal for breakfast. Another complaint was they felt the meat they were getting was old or spoiled. Another complaint was about having to use paper plates and the food being cold by the time it's delivered to their room.

PREVNT Grant – The courses for dementia awareness for law enforcement are being rescheduled now for July and going forward. We expect to host lower numbers to comply with social distancing. Your COA still has time to send me an informational video.

Planning and Volunteer Coordinator Report – Kitty reported MMAP counselors are still working. A lot of them are working remotely and one has been laid off. The big urgency for counselors is that it is more difficult for people to get services with both DHHS and Social Security offices closed to the public. Scammers have also been very active. Kitty continues to provide daily support to the counselors themselves. She held her first Zoom meeting with the site coordinators. A total of seven participated and it worked well. She is hoping to hold them monthly. A conversation meeting regarding counselor certification is also planned. A process to conduct New to Medicare meetings is being discussed as well as discussions with the state office on what open enrollment in the fall might look like this year due to the pandemic.

Special Projects Coordinator Report – Brooke reported she has a Best Practices meeting with the adult day care centers in our region scheduled for June 5, 2020. The Caregiver Empowerment and Wellness Conference is scheduled to be held in Roscommon on July 31, 2020. We have a great lineup of speakers and vendors. Please consider attending.

A copy of our first Caregiver Quarterly Newsletter can be found on our website www.nemcsa.org. Click on senior services and then caregiver. Many of the Evidence-Based Disease Prevention Programs have been rescheduled. Powerful Tools for Caregivers is on its third week of virtual workshops. It is going very well. The Kinship Handbook for Grandparents is also available to view on our website.

Advocacy Reports

MSAC – No report.

State Advisory Council – C. Corwin reported they are completing work on their report, due to be released in July.

State Updates

Ageing and Adult Services Agency (AASA) – Cindy Albrecht reported Steve Betterly is on layoff status today. AASA appreciates all the work NEMCSA has done during the pandemic.

Local Updates From Council Members

D. Fay – We are in a transition period with a new director and assistant director. Denise is retiring at the end of the month. Our home delivered meal count is up. Our board is very proud of the great job our staff has been doing during the pandemic.

Action Items

Endorsement of the FY 2021 Annual Implementation Plan - A motion was made by C. Corwin with support from M. Hiller to endorse the Fiscal Year 2021 Annual Implementation Plan. The motion passed unanimously.

Question or Comments

M. Hiller – Who is going to help the seniors center re-open? Laurie – We are waiting for guidance from the state. AASA is working on a tool specific to older adults. The governor's order will come into play as well with regards to social gatherings. The Ogemaw COA already

has their dining room planned out to meet social distancing requirements. They are limiting two people per table for couples and limits for others. I can get a picture out to you all. The COAs are eager to get going but cautious to do it correctly.

Are the local COAs required to hold their monthly meetings during the pandemic? Laurie – That depends on your by-laws and how many you're required to hold per year. I believe they have all been trying to continue having meetings via Zoom or conference calls.

Corky – MCCOA meets every other month. The last time was by phone, so some are allowed by phone.

D. Cooley - Is it difficult to set up a Zoom meeting? Laurie – We have Brooke doing ours. I don't think it's difficult. There is a free version with limited time and number of participants.

D. Cooley - What about the senior center in Houghton Lake? Our center is full on most days, how would you go about spacing? Laurie – I'm sure Tom is looking at various ways. Perhaps alternate days and times. They will have to restrict the number of people that can gather. In talking with Tom, he is giving it a lot of thought and being quite mindful.

D. Fay – We had our second board meeting via Zoom this morning. It was brought up that up to 15 people can congregate, is that true? Laurie – I can't verify that; I have not heard the Governor's directive today. You can check www.michigan.gov/coronavirus for latest information.

Adjourn

Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 27, 2020 at 1:00 pm via Zoom. A motion was made by C. Corwin with support from T. Dutcher to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 2:52 pm by Chair C. Proulx.