

Northeast Michigan Regional Council on Aging
Monday, March 28, 2022 at 1:00 pm
NEMCSA Conference Room

The meeting was called to order by Chair T. Dutcher at 1:00 pm

Roll Call

Jerry Broad, Darlene Huff, Roberta Matelski, Lorelei King, Carol Wilder, Terry Dutcher, Dale Evilsizer, Julie Kendrick, David Burdine, Connie Messina, Mitzi Downs, Dennis Fay
Excused: Cindy Sabin, Cindy Fleming, Eileen Howell Unexcused: Mike Maturen, Tammy Emig
Guests: Chuck Corwin, Lacey Charboneau, Gary Wilder
AAA Staff: Laurie Sauer, Yvette Smigelski, Kelly Robinette, Kitty Glomski, Connie McQuarrie, Maija Aikens and Brooke Mainville

Quorum - Yes

Approval of Agenda – A motion was made by L. King with support from D. Huff to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes – A motion was made by D. Fay with support from C. Wilder to approve the minutes of 1-24-2022. Motion carried.

Nominating Committee Report

Resignation - John Paulus, Oscoda Member-at-Large has resigned due to health reasons. A motion was made by C. Wilder with support from D. Huff to approve the resignation and send a letter of appreciation. Motion carried.

Region 9 COA Directors Representative - Dale Evilsizer, Iosco COA Director, has volunteered to represent their group on this council. A motion was made by J. Broad with support from L. King to accept the appointment. Motion carried. Welcome.

Director's Report

Introductions – This was the first in-person meeting in a long time. Introductions were made of members, AAA staff and guests.

Staff Updates –Jaime Carney has been hired as our new AAA Associate Director. She is a registered nurse with a BSN pursuing her master's degree. She has experience in long term care. The AAA has also experienced challenges with our staffing levels and we are happy to report that we have hired Stephanie Prow, Case Manager in our Gaylord office, Ashley Berry, RN in Alpena, and Heather Morris, Case Manager in our West Branch office. We still have to fill a Case Manager and Intake Specialist position in West Branch and the Financial Services Analyst position in Alpena working with Yvette.

Direct Care Worker Shortage. The direct care worker premium pay amount was approved at \$2.35 per hour with an additional amount of .29 cents per hour to help with the extra taxes, etc. Last week we were informed by the state that it was a mistake, it should be .21 cents per hour. This will be a huge undertaking for both the AAA and our partners if we have to make

that correction. It is currently under review by the actuarial director. We are hoping to be able to make the adjustment at some point going forward.

M. Downs – Do we have to pay it back when it's their fault? Laurie – Yes. Yvette – These are direct passthrough funds to the care worker.

ARP – We have received the funding, but we are still waiting for final guidance from the ACLS Bureau. There are some funds that were targeted for equipment purchases. The ACLS Bureau had us talk to providers to develop a wish list. There were some factors for use. It can only be used for equipment that cost \$5,000 or more and they can only receive the percentage of the cost of the item that relays to program funded participants. You have to know how many participants using the equipment are from Older Americans Act programs, or how many are waiver. We are to receive training on this in April and we will see if there's an alternate way to fund equipment. There does have to be a methodology for the use of the funds if we get audited.

Immunization Grants – The AAA did receive two grants. The progress on spending the funds has been slow. Brooke is working on a project to do some billboards encouraging vaccination in the region. There will be 15 billboards, at least one in each county. Watch for them in the month of April.

Annual Day of Training – We have scheduled an all-day virtual Medicaid Bootcamp by Chalgian & Tripp, a law firm out of Lansing. It will be mandatory for AAA staff. We are also inviting our community partners, COAs, and MMAP counselors. The training will be held on Thursday, April 28th. Chalgian & Tripp are graciously providing the training free of charge.

AAA Needs Assessment Survey – Please complete the survey by March 31st. The information gathered will be used in developing our multi-year plan for 2023-2025. A link to the online survey is available on our website or Facebook page. We can also help you fill it out today before you leave. To date we have received 205 surveys.

C. Wilder – When completing the survey, I looked at how important things were based on my opinion, not experience. Laurie – Yes, base your answers on what you think you might need.

Input Sessions – Two input sessions were held last month. We had five participants in Cheboygan and over 20 in Ogemaw. We had good conversation at both sessions. All of the input will feed into our multi-year plan. The plan format has been approved for use by the ACLS Bureau. We will begin work on the document and present a draft to this council at our May meeting for approval and recommendation to the NEMCSA board for final approval. It is then presented to the ACLS bureau in June and then on to the State Commission on Aging for final approval.

C. Messina – Is this process done every year? Laurie – Yes. The multi-year plan is done every three years with an annual conducted every year. The annual 2023 plan will be part of the multi-year process this year.

Provider Monitoring – Monitoring for waiver providers will resume in April as well as the assessment of general and nutritional programs. It will be a busy spring and summer.

MI Choice Waiver Clinical Quality Assessment Review – Good news for our region. The results of the review showed us at 95% of compliance. During this process charts are reviewed as well as procedures and making sure services are being provided as ordered, etc. We currently have over 400 waiver clients. Some minor things need to be addressed but there were no major issues. Along with the review, home visits are conducted on a few participants. We received 100% on that section of the review.

T. Dutcher – 95% is really good. That shows good work.

Regional Council Membership – Chuck Corwin has expressed interest in returning to this council in May to represent Roscommon County. We will consult with our attorney before the next meeting.

Program Reports

Legal Services Board – Terry Dutcher – He missed the last meeting but reported on the minutes from their December meeting. Their cost wages were over budgeted \$14, 836 and \$5,698 for staff. A 5% bonus for employees put them over budget. The HUD grant showed an overage, but six months had not been entered. Several other items over budget costs were offset by various grants. They ended the year \$9,000 in the black.

Region 9 Directors Report – Dale Evilsizer reported the directors group met on February 28th. They are working on getting compliance to complete the community needs surveys. They have all started to track the drive through meals and the dine in congregate meals separately. The state is implementing a new NAPIS form on April 1st. They are all working on getting people to participate in Older Michiganians Day and Senior Action Week and discussing the importance of advocacy. The group has concerns about funding and the sustainability of programs, labor issues and the increases in food and mileage costs. Filling in revenue for those will be a challenge now and in the future. The direct care worker shortage remains a big issue. In Iosco, Dale needs 8 workers and currently has 3 and he's not alone. They have raised wages twice this year and direct care workers are getting to where they may make more than the director wages.

T. Dutcher – At the county, we were told the restricted funds were no longer restricted. I understand that is done. Laurie – The funds we get come from the ACLS Bureau. They have some flexibility but also have specific requirements for use.

Long Term Care Ombudsman Report – Maija Aikens – Maija reported she has been working with Brooke to develop three Elder Abuse webinar series scheduled June 15, 2022 Challenging Perceptions, Sexual Violence in Later Life July 20, 2022, and Basics of Elder Abuse August 17, 2022. For more information go to: https://www.canva.com/design/DAE8XuPkK7U/nUkKjIXCuEOMxSg1jcqlsQ/view?utm_content=DAE8XuPkK7U&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=publishsharelink. The webinars will also be posted in our newsletter and on our website and Facebook page. The recorded webinars will be on Facebook as well.

An elder abuse poster has also been developed (a sample was shared with the group). Topics include signs of physical abuse, financial abuse, emotional and behavioral abuse,

sexual abuse, and neglect. Copies will be mailed to various agencies. The elder abuse hotline number is included on the poster.

L. King – Is there a plan for a smaller version to put in other public places such as public restrooms, etc.? Brooke will have a smaller version emailed to each council member.

C. Messina – Where will they be distributed? Maija – We are printing 250 that will be distributed to the COAs, various financial institutions, dental and doctor's offices, etc.

T. Dutcher – Do you discuss financial abuse. Maija – Yes, it's covered during the second webinar. Also, last year when a new law came out about mandatory reporters, Brooke held a conference to train staff of financial institutions in the region.

C. Messina – Where will they be posted? Brooke – Break rooms or bulletin boards accessible by the public, the COAs will post at their centers.

Maija also reported on February 28th, the Biden Administration announced a set of wide-ranging reforms aimed at improving the quality of nursing home care for residents. If implemented, these reforms would be the most significant increase in protections for nursing home residents in decades. The announcement was broken into five categories:

1. Ensuring Taxpayer Dollars Support Nursing Homes That Provide Safe, Adequate, and Dignified Care. This will establish a minimum nursing home staffing requirement, reduce resident room crowding, strengthen the Skilled Nursing Facility Value-Based Purchasing Program, and reinforce safeguards against unnecessary medications and treatments
2. Enhancing Accountability and Oversight. This will adequately fund inspection activities, beef up scrutiny on more of the poorest performers, expand financial penalties and other enforcement sanctions, increase accountability for chain owners of substandard facilities, and provide technical assistance to nursing homes to help them improve
3. Increasing Transparency. This will create a database of nursing home owners and operators, improve transparency of facility ownership and finances, enhance nursing home care compares and examine the role of private equity.
4. Creating Pathways to Good-Paying Jobs with the Free and Fair Choice to Join a Union. This will ensure nurse aide training is affordable, support state efforts to improve staffing and workforce sustainability, and launch the National Nursing Career Pathways Campaign.
5. Ensuring Pandemic and Emergency Preparedness in Nursing Homes. This will provide continued COVID-19 testing in long-term care facilities, continued COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters in long-term care facilities, strengthen requirements for on-site infection preventionists, enhance requirements for pandemic and emergency preparedness, and integrate pandemic lessons into nursing home requirements.

Planning and Volunteer Coordinator Report – Kitty Glomski – Kitty reported the open enrollment period for Medicare Advantage Plans ends on March 31st. Aggressive marketing by insurance agents continues to be an issue. People are getting cold calls or respond to the

TV commercials and sign up for something that may not work for them. The MMAP counselors are working to inform and assist. All states are having the same issues. We're hoping the Medicare rules may change.

Our Count Down to Medicare virtual event held in February was a success with 31 participants and speakers from the Social Security Administration, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Veteran's clinic.

Monthly meetings continue on the first Wednesday of the month for MMAP counselors and the second Wednesday of the month for New to Medicare Presentations. We hope all of our MMAP counselors will attend the Medicaid Bootcamp by Chalgian & Tripp on April 28th. They have provided trainings for counselors in the past through the MMAP office in Lansing and they always provide excellent training.

The state's requirement to keep people enrolled in Medicaid throughout the COVID public health emergency will be ending soon. When that happens, the state will resume the Medicaid recertification process. This will create a risk of coverage loss for a lot of recipients and an increased demand for MMAP assistance is expected.

Kitty is also working on two new counselor applications: one in Otsego and the other from the Alcona Health Center. Counselors are providing documentation for the current CMS audit of the Open Enrollment. The recertification for MMAP counselors starts in April and will now include counselor job evaluations.

Podcast – Kitty and Brooke have developed a Podcast "Let's Talk About Aging". Each podcast will feature a scam alert, calendar of events and a topic of interest. Kitty will report on MMAP topics and Brooke will report on various AAA services. We are doing two per month. Two episodes (2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month) are already uploaded on Facebook for you to listen to. We hope all the COAs will link the podcast to their websites as well. Call Kitty if you need help with this.

T. Dutcher – These people that are calling from Medicare insurance, I'm curious what can be done. Kitty – We report them through the CMS network (Medicare), DIFS (Department of Insurance and Financial Services), the police and other agencies as appropriate. It's an industry, so it's not just one insurance company. It's also against Medicare rules for insurance agents/companies to make cold calls. We tell our beneficiaries, "Don't answer the phone if you don't recognize the number."

Special Projects Coordinator Report – Brooke Mainville – Brooke passed around a sample of the billboards that will be going up in the region in April regarding COVID information. There will be at least one in every county. Let Brooke know if you see it. The COVID poster will be mailed out soon with the elder abuse poster. Two handouts were distributed on the Caregiver and Living Healthy webinar series. The free webinars will be held on the 2nd and 3rd Fridays of the month from 1pm – 2pm beginning in April and cover a variety of topics.

Various virtual Evidence Based Disease Prevention Programs are scheduled as follows:

- Powerful Tools for Caregiver May 3, 2022 – June 7, 2022 from 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm and July 11, 2022 – August 15, 2022 from 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm.

- Creating Confident Caregivers workshops May 5, 2022 – June 9, 2022 from 10 am – noon.
- Matter of Balance at the Hale Senior Center June 6, 2022 – June 29, 2022 from 9:30 am – 11:30 am and we are looking to schedule one in Cheboygan for August 2, 2022 – September 20, 2022 from 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm.
- Chronic Pain PATH August 26, 2022 – September 30, 2022 from 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm.

An Alzheimer's Association Lunch and Learn session on Financial Planning for Caregivers is scheduled for Wednesday, May 25, 2022 from 11:00 am – 12:30 pm followed by a Community Forum from 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm.

Services Coordinator Report – Kelly Robinette – Kelly reported March celebrates 50 years of the Senior Nutrition Program and is also National Nutrition Month. The COAs have been very busy with the meal programs. In 2015 they served a total of 623,840 meals, 614,114 in 2016, 612,374 in 2017, 617,076 in 2018, 623,229 in 2019 and 629,152 in 2020.

One idea to celebrate the month is to celebrate a world of flavors. Step out of the box and prepare dishes we normally don't eat. Enjoying different flavors of the world is a chance to learn more about other cultures. Familiar ingredients can be presented in new ways. You may come across ingredients and flavors you've never experienced before. Trying new flavors and foods from around the world can help increase the variety of foods we eat. Other cuisines offer dishes which include foods from all food groups.

Think seasonally when it comes to ingredients. For example for breakfast try a smoothie with low-fat yogurt or buttermilk with papaya or mango, a Spanish omelet with potatoes and other veggies, or Scottish oatmeal or bulgur with low-fat milk topped with fruit or nuts. For lunch try Gazpacho, a soup made with tomatoes, peppers, and other vegetables served cold, Sambar a spicy lentil and vegetable stew from India, or Mahshi, a Middle Eastern dish made with zucchini stuffed with cooked rice, lamb and spices served in tomato sauce. For dinner how about Da pan Ji a Chinese stew made from chicken, potatoes, ginger and garlic, salads that include different types of produce along with whole grains, dairy and protein foods. Many options exist, such as tuna salad with Greek yogurt, onion, celery, and whole wheat pasta. Try different snacks such as fruit chutney and goat cheese eaten on crackers, raw veggies with hummus or tzatziki, which is a creamy yogurt-based dressing made with cucumbers, garlic, and dill, or whole grain tortilla chips with guacamole or salsa made with veggies or fruit. We have some recipes posted on our Facebook page using simple ingredients.

Mileage Sheet Review – Yvette – You were all emailed a copy of the new mileage sheet and have a paper copy in your packet today. Please be sure you are using the newest mileage sheet. In the past we had to have odometer readings, now we just want you to record your total miles. Be sure to include the type of vehicle and sign and date at the bottom. Checks will be mailed on Monday for mileage turned in today.

Advocacy Reports

MSAC – Lorelei King reported Representative Phil Green's policy for insurance reform hit a back burner for now. Lobbyists have to prioritize issues and this one is not a priority right now. The MSAC group has been disappointed the governor has chosen not to attend some of

their meetings when invited. The GCSI lobbying group is trying to flush out federal funds that were stalled. Other issues are taking priority due to some senators and representative's time terming out. Handouts on decreasing auto insurance premiums and the legislative platform for Older Michiganians Day (OMD) were distributed. The platform and a form letter will be sent out and to local COAs with a goal to collect as many as possible to take down to Lansing for Older Michiganians Day because there is limited attendance this year. Three to five delegates will be selected from each AAA to attend the event in Lansing. A formatted schedule of events for OMD – Senior Action Week can be found online at: <https://4ami.org/event/older-michiganians-day-senior-action-week-2022/2022-05-08> The focus is to stress advocacy for seniors. There will also be a special livestream event on Wednesday, May 11th from 11:00 am – 12:00 pm.

State Advisory Council – Chuck Corwin reported there are funds available through the Federal American Rescue Plan as Laurie discussed previously. The new charge for the State Advisory Council this year is Living Transitions. What resources are available to families to transition from home to a more supportive environment. The purpose of our Mi Choice Waiver program is to keep people at home if that is where they want to be, and it's proven to be more cost effective than nursing home placement. Representative Dingell recently authored the Better Care Better Jobs Act to strengthen and expand access to the long-term care system while supporting the direct care workforce. Chuck also brought copies of the council's 2020 report on social isolation.

State Updates

ACLS Bureau (Administration for Community Living Supports) – Lacey Charboneau reported she's been with the bureau now for 11 months. She previously worked at the Region 8 AAA and was a long-term care ombudsman for 5 years. The ACLS Bureau works specifically with Older Americans Act funding.

Local Updates from Council Members

None

Action Items

None

Questions or Comments

None

Adjourn

A motion was made by D. Huff with support from C. Wilder to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 2:27 pm by Chairman Dutcher. Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 23, 2022. It is important you and we have a quorum. This is also a public hearing for the multi-year plan and a recommendation for approval from this council will be needed for the NEMCSA Board.