

Northeast Michigan Regional Council on Aging
Monday, December 4, 2017 at 1:00 pm
NEMCSA Annex Conference Room - Alpena

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

Roll Call

M. Fox, S. Wojnar, D. Huff, E. Corpe, J. Drozdowski, E. Corpe, M. Tappan, C. Athan, C. Proulx, D. Burdine, E. Howell, D. Henig, E. Henig, M. Downs, D. Fay, C. Corwin, M. Hiller
Excused: A. Lange J. Johnston, V. Zygiel, M. Newmann

Unexcused: J. Mathis

AAA Staff: Laurie Sauer, Connie McQuarrie, Liz Kowalski, Susan Bowen, Kelly Robinette

Guests: John Briggs, Barbara Kay, Dave Bisgrove, Erica Damstetter

Quorum – yes

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by C. Athan with support from D. Henig to approve the agenda as presented.
Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by D. Fay with support from D. Henig to approve the minutes of October 24, 2017. Motion carried.

Nominating Committee Report

Dennis Fay reported on information received reappointing Margaret Fox as Alcona Delegate, Ann Lange as Alpena Delegate, and Darlene Huff as Alpena Member-at-Large. D. Fay made a motion with support from D. Henig to accept the reappointments to this Council. Motion carried.

Speaker – Dave Bisgrove, Legal Services of Northern Michigan

Dave gave a brief update on the services provided with grant funds received from the AAA to provide services for individuals age 60 and older. They handled a lot of estate planning cases and dealt with debt collectors bothering seniors. There is never enough funding to meet the demand for services. He also introduced Erica Damstetter who will be working under a grant from the Victims of Crime Act. She will be handling elder abuse cases. There have been some questions raised by this Council regarding calls to Legal Services and the inability to get through to a person. Dave said the 800 number we were given years ago that is at the bottom of our agenda is for the Escanaba office. Please do not use that number and call 989-356-9081 for Alcona, Alpena, Arenac, Montmorency, Ogemaw and Presque Isle Counties. For the other counties call the Gaylord office at 989-705-1067.

This week NEMCSA will begin hosting presentations on services through a grant under Step Forward Michigan. \$38 million in funds are available statewide. The program assists people behind on their mortgage, taxes, association fees, etc. The funds can also help with property subject to reverse mortgage and property taxes. Most people don't realize when they get a reverse mortgage they are buying a financial services product that is fairly expensive to maintain on a monthly and annual basis. Very often the people entering into a reverse mortgage are doing so because of financial hardship. It's an attractive package to those in need. He has seen six foreclosures this past year against property owned by seniors with reverse mortgages.

C. Proulx – How does that process get into foreclosure? Dave - A reverse mortgage is a regulated product and sold to people based on the equity of the house and the youngest age of the borrower. They borrow against the equity in their home. The more equity and older they are, the more they can borrow. The money you receive comes with closing costs plus monthly fees for services each month. Every month the amount owed goes up. Not paying the property tax is considered an episode of default. When the borrower dies, the lender does not pursue the estate. They are limited to the recovered amount borrowed plus the fees. The lender collects the difference through FHA.

C. Corwin – I know a case where a nursing home resident had an Advance Directive and a guardian. The guardian retired and the court appointed another one. The new guardian may not determine the code status for the client. Dave – You're talking about a Patient Advocate Agreement. For the guardian in this situation, if there is a valid Patient Advocate Agreement prior to the second one, the code status would stick. A Living Will is a statement of your wishes if you become incapacitated. In Michigan, the Advance Directive is a form of a Power of Attorney which gives you the legal authority. You would have to go to court to disconnect someone from life support but you could offer the living will to a judge as evidence of what their wishes were. It does not give the guardian automatic authority. The paperwork must be in the hospital file before the decision needs to be made. The documents are only used in a hospital setting.

C. Corwin – Isn't there a new statewide clearinghouse to record these? Dave – I have heard that but I don't know it for a fact but it would make sense.

C. Proulx – If someone wants to do a new advance directive, can they print it off the internet? Dave – No. Every hospital in the state has advance directive forms for free.

C. Proulx – Do you need to have it notarized? Dave – You need the signatures of two witnesses and the person you are designating to make your decisions.

For anyone who is treated by the VA, they have their own set of forms. Do one of their medical information forms, authorization forms, and durable power of attorney forms. It's a good safeguard.

D. Fay – I noticed when filling out information for the doctor, the form now asks if you have a DNR and other paperwork in place. Dave – A DNR is different than a Patient Advocate Agreement which goes over the top of the DNR.

Erica Damstetter reported on her role at Legal Service of Northern Michigan under the Elder Justice Initiative. She will focus on victims of elder abuse and pursue claims for crimes. She will work out of the Alpena office and will cover all of northern Michigan. She defined what elder abuse is. The victim must be 55 or older and there are no income requirements. She will

focus on outreach to senior centers, nursing homes and other organizations working with seniors as well as law enforcement. Her contact number is also 989-356-9081.

C. Corwin – The new admission forms for nursing homes require mandatory arbitration. It says the nursing home is not liable and you will not be admitted unless you sign it. What can you do about that? Dave – The general mentality with the federal government is that mandatory arbitration is preferred. Unfortunately the nursing homes can do it.

Directors Report

Federal Budget - The Senate passed their version of the budget deal. Now it has to be reconciled with the House version before it goes to the president for signing. We are hoping a resolution is reached by December 8th. The main provisions of the senate version include: Seven tax brackets, It doubles the standard deduction and eliminates the personal exemption, Eliminates state and local income tax deductions and limits the deduction on property tax, Expands the child tax credit, Preserves the Alt Min tax, Preserves estate tax but exempts most people, Medical expense deduction down to 7.5% of income from 10% but only for two years, Repeals the individual mandate for ACA, and triggers major cuts to Medicare because the budget bill increases the deficit by \$1.5 trillion. Sequestration would come into play.

AAA Staff Changes - We have recently had a supervisor and a nurse in our West Branch office resign along with our Clinical Quality Specialist in the Cheboygan office. In addition, we have three case managers in the Alpena office at risk of layoff. We are working to secure an alternate contract with a health plan, but there are no guarantees.

Michigan Health Endowment Fund – Congratulations to the Otsego COA who received a \$363,320 grant for the expansion of their Innovation Technology and Aging Programs.

RSVP To Host Veterans – Honoring the service of our military veterans, all veterans are invited to enjoy coffee and donuts beginning January 4, 2018 the first Thursday of every month from 9am – 10am at the Roscommon County Airport, 5218 E. Houghton Lake Drive, Houghton Lake, MI.

MI Health Policy Forum – Laurie attended the forum held on November 13th in Lansing. Discussion centered around budgetary constraints at the state and federal level. Utilizing Managed Care Organizations is a strategy they seem to favor. 30% of Michigan Medicaid is spent on long term care. 75% of Medicaid beneficiaries are in managed care but they are not 75% of dual eligible. We are trying to find legislators that will help protect the MI Choice and what has been built. It's an uphill battle.

Diabetes PATH Accreditation – We had some problems with our application which were corrected and resubmitted. We have a phone meeting scheduled for this Wednesday and hope it all goes well.

MMAP - Kudos to Susan and her volunteers for the great work so far during open enrollment. They have done an enormous amount of work this past month.

RAC Meetings – We are required to have six meetings a year and currently average about nine. The meetings are expensive to our budget. What are your thoughts on reducing our meetings to the required six? We have certain months that we have to have a meeting; January for elections,

April for RAC appointments to the NEMCSA Policy Board, May for the AIP, July for the RFP contract recommendations, and October to set the November/December meeting. Discussion followed.

C. Proulx - I think that's a good idea.

J. Drozdowski - What happens if you don't have a quorum? Laurie - We would call another meeting for required action items.

C. Corwin – It's a much lighter burden and easier to work my schedule around.

A motion was made by C. Proulx with support from D. Huff to go to six monthly meetings (unless more are needed): January, April, May, July, October and the combined November/December. Motion carried.

Program Reports

Legal Services Board – Minutes of September 23, 2017 were distributed. Jim Mathis was not present, no report.

Region 9 Directors Report – Merianne Tappan no report.

Ombudsman Program Report – Laurie distributed copies of the updated Michigan Long Term Care Ombudsman Program brochure. Sara's program accomplishments for fiscal year 2017 are attached.

MMAP Program Report – Susan Bowen reported open enrollment ends December 7th. She distributed advocacy information which includes your local congress person. The House is not supporting SHIP in their budget.

Open Enrollment - Preliminary numbers are through December 1st and only includes information reported so far. There are some discrepancies in the state reporting system so the figures are low. The state is looking into it. So far we have reported 2,341 client contacts, 2,479 hours of counseling, and \$1,613,630.80 in savings but Susan knows we have saved closer to \$1.7 million.

Special Projects Coordinator Report – Liz reported she has been very busy. She is in the fourth session of her CCC workshops in East Tawas. That workshop is at capacity and she started a wait list for another one. She will work to recruit for leaders in Iosco County as well as the others. All CCC trainers are to send her their 2017-18 training schedule along with COA directors for their planned workshops. On April 24, 2018 the AAA will provide a Caregiver Empowerment and Wellness Conference at the Diocese of Gaylord. It will be an all-day event with speakers, lunch and respite provided. She will have more to report as the conference comes together.

Advocacy Reports

MSAC – No report. Need a volunteer.

State Advisory Council – Chuck Corwin reported the SAC continues to work on the Volunteerism report through group phone conferences. His area of focus for the larger report is "Orientation of Volunteers and Volunteer Trainers/Assigned Staff". Their next meeting is scheduled conference call is January 22, 2018.

State Updates

State Commission on Aging – John Briggs reported they did not meet in November and are scheduled to meet on December 15th. He is still receiving comments from the other Commissioners appreciating the testimony offered at public hearing in Alpena. This will be an interesting year with elections for state representatives and governor.

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

Action Items:

MSAC Appointment – We continue to look for a volunteer. Please consider this position to advocate in Lansing. Hotel and mileage are paid. ***Update: Corleen Proulx has volunteered to represent us on the MSAC.**

Local Updates, Questions or Concerns

Iosco Delegate – J. Drozdowski introduced Barbara Kay, Vice Chair of the Iosco COA Board. He hopes she will replace him as delegate to this Council.

Adjourn

A motion was made by E. Henig with support from M. Hiller to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was ended at 2:30 pm by Chairman Corpe.