

Northeast Michigan Regional Council on Aging
Monday, June 26, 2017 at 1:00 pm
ESD Building - Alpena

The meeting was called to order at 1:04 by Chairman E. Corpe.

Roll Call

M. Fox, S. Wojnar, A. Lange, D. Huff, V. Zygiel, M. Newman, E. Corpe, K. Schreiner, J. Johnston, M. Tappan, C. Athan, C. Proulx, D. Burdine, E. Howell, D. Henig, E. Henig, M. Downs, D. Fay, C. Corwin, M. Hiller

Excused: J. Drozdowski, J. Mathis

AAA Staff: Laurie Sauer, Connie McQuarrie, Liz Kowalski, Yvette Smigelski, Becky Hawks, Susan Bowen, Heidi Powers, Lisa Bolen

Guests: Rep. Sue Allor, John Briggs, John Murphy, Suzan Krey, Annie Hepburn

Quorum – yes

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by C. Athan with support from V. Zygiel 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 May 22, 2017. Motion carried.

Nominating Committee Report

No report.

SCP and FGP Update - Heidi Powers, Project Director

Heidi passed around a booklet about the three Senior Corps programs in the state. A handout was distributed and reviewed on volunteer programs updates. The Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent Programs are two of the three Senior Corps Programs. The third is the RSVP directed by Amy Fuller. Senior Corps is the federal funding source. Our volunteer programs also receive state funds through AASA along with local support. In program year 2016-2017, 57 Foster Grandparents served with an average enrollment of 49 and an average age of 72. They serve in 23 schools throughout the area. The program is back up to healthy enrollment numbers. In 2015-2016 the Foster Grandparent Program served 184 students who demonstrated gains in reading, math, behavior management and individual special needs as a result of the program. The Senior Companion Program had 37 serving in program year 2016-2017 with an average enrollment of 36 and an average age of 76. Companions served at 24 stations throughout the area. In 2015-2016, 146 individuals received companionship and/or respite services. Of that number, 135 experienced decreased isolation, 75 increased access to services, and 117 made additional social contacts. The program is currently under-enrolled due to attrition. We can go

up to 45 volunteers. Our recruiting efforts are paying off as we have several pending. So please refer anyone you think may be interested and eligible.

Both programs benefit the participants and seniors. It reduces isolation and increases access to other resources leading to better health and independence. Participants remain physically and mentally engaged. Both programs benefit the community at large by increasing the academic success of children and reducing the need for long term care for seniors. Participants receive a stipend of \$2.65 per hour for a minimum of 20 hours per week. They also receive mileage reimbursement as well as excess liability insurance and auto insurance for those that drive. Heidi relayed two stories of how these programs benefit and change participant's lives for the better. Discussion followed.

M. Downs – The 40 or so is for what? Heidi – A given year total enrollment for SCP is 45.

E. Corp – Keep this handout and use it as a tool for talking points when advocating to your legislators because these are two of the programs slated to be eliminated in the federal budget.

Representative Sue Allor

Sue reported she typically travels down to Lansing on Mondays for work on Tuesday through Thursday. Last Tuesday was their last day in session so she is back home holding coffee hours to meet with constituents and attending other meetings throughout her district. She is on the Appropriations Committee and reported both the House and Senate passed the state budget. It is just waiting for the Governor's signature. The passed budget included \$4 million for adult services staffing, \$10 million for nutrition education, \$6.8 million to maintain the funding for the Heat and Eat programs at the federal level. \$2.1 million for in home services, and \$2.1 million for meals on wheels with \$1.5 million of that to focus on the wait lists. Also being proposed is an increase of .25 cents an hour for direct care workers. After a year, those making under \$10.90 will get another .25 cent an hour increase. Sue will clarify with Laurie exactly which workers have been identified for these increases. Sue also shared that her mother passed away a month ago at the age of 88. Her care exposed her to what the elderly deal with on a daily basis for medical care, transportation, isolation, medication costs, services needed in home and what is available. She is very much aware of the needs of the elderly. Our median age is 76 in our region. We have a shortage of medical workers. To address this shortage, she is aware of large medical facilities who are looking at seniors in high school that are interested in pursuing a career in the medical field to focus on paying college tuition for becoming a registered nurse, etc. Discussion followed:

C. Corwin – The additional .25cents for care workers, is that coming out of state funds? Is it a mandated amount? If that applies to the COAs and their staff, where will the funding come from? Laurie – I believe this refers to Adult Home Help workers. The \$3 million is coming from the general funds.

C. Corwin – I recently spoke with Daire Rendon about our concern with the lack of qualified direct care workers. The State Advisory Council developed a report on direct care workers. Have you seen it or heard of it? Daire went on to say as far as she knew nobody was doing anything about addressing this issue. Our intent was to get the report into the hands of all the legislators. Sue – I am aware of the report and will touch base with Daire on this issue. I know in dealing with my parents' health issues the caregiver turnover was pretty rapid which can greatly affect a person's quality of care.

S. Krey – This increase for home healthcare workers does affect our COAs because now we need to compete with the increased wage and we don't have the funding to cover it. We will be fighting even harder to maintain the staff we have.

C. Proulx – We as seniors really have to worry about the funding for Medicare and Medicaid.

Sue – The concern is the unknown. We don't know all of what will happen with the health insurance at the federal level. At the state level we are trying to create different options but a lot is unknown. Everyone wants the cost of car insurance to come down but what happens when the per-vehicle fee goes away? Do the individuals currently receiving benefits get placed on Medicaid?

C. Proulx – Would it be beneficial to have the block grant?

D. Fay – The Michigan Education Association (MEA) has a surplus of money. What is the state going to do with the extra funds? Sue – The focus is to educate the kids. There are counties that have the ability to put millage dollars towards education and others that don't. This leaves a gap. The state is looking at the Two Times Formula. For example, if one school district is getting \$100 per student, the formula will allow the other school districts to receive two times that amount per student. This will close the gap in funding between school districts. This year there was a push to give \$100 to every student but that isn't going to close the gap. In Lansing we are stressing the two times formula to close the gap with a goal to educate the kids and put a focus on the shortage in technical and skills trades such as plumbing and electrical.

E. Corpe – I met with Daire in May and we talked about the cuts in the federal budget. If they do make these cuts what can we get from the state to make up for these cuts? The Senior Corps Programs and MMAP are scheduled to be cut. Will the state offset the cuts? Sue – Those decisions go through the Appropriations Committee which is a total process starting in January and ending in June. I would anticipate any issues on the horizon for cuts, the time to make legislators aware of the issues is now so come January, those on the Appropriations Committee will be aware of the issues. Keep the information flow going.

S. Krey – We are having trouble with DHS payments. Our DHS is requiring our board president to give his social security number in order to provide payment. He is refusing. We may be in a situation where we will not receive funds from DHS. Sue – I'm familiar with what's happening. We're getting different bits of information. I was told that is a requirement but if you are a non-profit, you can use your Federal ID number. It's posing a lot of questions and conversation. Laurie – This is a newer requirement designed to aid in fraud detection and conflicts of interest. It's a federal issue. This will be a requirement for the MI Choice Program as well.

S. Krey – Is this a problem others are having? This is a particular problem with our board. Lisa – Yes, we have that problem at NEMCSA. Sue – This is the time to call your federal legislators; Moolenaar, Bergman, Kildee, and Stabenow.

E. Howell – Could you clarify, are the checks being issued to the COA? Laurie – Yes, they receive payment if providing to Medicaid recipients. They want the board chair's social security number when authorizing for payment.

E. Howell – The yearly NAPIS form asks for your social security number also. Sue – Yes, it's ironic we tell people not to give their social security number out because of fraud and now they require it.

Directors Report

Senate Budget Bill 135 – Section 1852 of the bill contained language directing the DHHS to implement a pilot program that would require individuals receiving home and community based services through the Medicaid Fee-for-Service Program to transition to a long-term service and support program administered by an integrated care organization. We provided a lot of information to legislators in opposition. The decision was reversed and the section was removed.

LTC Arbitration Agreements – We received news from the Justice in Aging about CMS who regulates nursing home residents on a federal level. CMS is proposing to roll back on a critical protection for nursing home residents. It would reverse the recent rule that banned nursing homes from using pre-dispute arbitration agreements. Now nursing home residents would sign an arbitration agreement that says they will not seek legal action if something negative happens. This is very concerning because people generally enter a nursing home during stressful times and in stressful situations, people are likely to sign away their legal rights. This creates a danger to older adults' safety and well-being. A handout was distributed with more information and directions on how to comment on this proposal.

American Health Care Act (AHCA) – The Senate votes this week on the new AHCA. This Act includes a 25% cut to Medicaid over ten years. A handout from Bridges Magazine was distributed on the impact of the repeal of the Affordable Care Act in Region 9's service area. The results are pretty impactful for Michigan. Currently Medicaid pays for 65% of nursing home residents. The Senate Bill repeals payroll tax on wealthy Americans hastening insolvency of Medicare by two years. It contains less subsidy options for those in their 50s and 60s, higher premiums due to age and pre-existing conditions, and it allows states to deny coverage for some services such as ambulance or prescriptions.

Senior Empowerment Day – Region 10 is hosting a Senior Empower Day on Thursday, September 21, 2017 at the Little River Casino Resort Event Center. Copies of the brochure were distributed.

Aging Assessment – On Monday, July 24, 2017 at 9:00 am Dan Doezema will be at our annex office to conduct an assessment of our programs. All Council members are invited to attend.

State Commission on Aging – Reminder, the Commission will hold their meeting and public hearing in Alpena on October 20, 2017. Tentative location is the Marine Sanctuary. All Council members, COA Directors and staff are encouraged to attend.

MI Choice Waiver Program – The program currently has no wait list for services. We need referrals to fill 13 slots this month. Please refer anyone you feel could benefit from this program.

Volunteer Recognition – The FGP and SCP held their recognition events. They both went very well. Good food and inspiring stories. RSVP had an ice cream social this year with about 50 people. It was a very nice social event. Both Heidi and Amy are doing a great job of infusing new ideas into the volunteer programs.

RFP – Approval will be needed on the recommendations for funding at our July meeting. It is very important that we have a quorum and keep the process moving.

Program Reports

Legal Services Board – Jim Mathis is not here today. His mother passed away last night. No report.

Region 9 Directors Report – Merianne Tappan reported the directors met in Roscommon in June and reviewed HR issues including hiring, training, HIPAA, and staff evaluations. They will meet next at the Ogemaw COA.

Ombudsman Program Report – No report. Sara is out addressing nursing home complaints today.

MMAP Program Report – Susan Bowen reported she provided a new counselor training two weeks ago for six volunteers for our region and one for the west side of the state. Another training is scheduled for September 12-14 tentatively in Alpena. Applications for anyone interested in the fall training are needed by August 4 to allow time for background checks and processing. It also gives them time to do the online portion of the training. A handout was distributed regarding SHIP/MMAP services. The program is funded through March of 2018. There are currently no funds allotted as of April 1, 2018. This year the program took a \$3 million cut, 15% of which was for Michigan. To make up for the cut, MMAP Central has reduced some staff and has applied for a grant from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund for \$150,000 to keep the current year at last year's funding level. Susan reviewed the handout and discussed what MMAP does. Be sure when advocating to legislators to refer to it as SHIP or SHIP/MMAP. In Michigan, SHIP/MMAP helps Medicare beneficiaries make choices among a vast array of options that include an average of more than 25 prescription drug plans, 29 Medicare Advantage plans, and 142 Medigap supplemental insurance policies. The program also provides assistance with Medicare fraud and abuse issues, billing problems, appeal rights, and enrollment in low-income assistance programs. In 2016, MMAP had 125,524 contacts with Medicare beneficiaries, hosted 239 enrollment events and 2,499 outreach events. Region 9 has 70,454 Medicare beneficiaries with 15,559 being persons with disabilities. 17,670 beneficiaries are considered low-income with income levels at 150% of poverty or less. During the grant year from 4-1-2016 – 3-31-2017, Region 9 served 5,696 beneficiaries, 856 with disabilities, 2,994 low-income beneficiaries and assisted 3,680 people with enrollment in subsidy programs and/or Part D and healthcare plans. MMAP counselors provided 6,081 hours of free healthcare benefits counseling and participated in 830 hours of training saving beneficiaries \$2,640,538.

C. Proulx – Do you have enough funding through March 2018? Susan – We do for this fiscal year. We just started a new fiscal year in March. Cuts were already made to the fiscal year we just started. MMAP Central applied for a \$150,000 grant that will balance the amount that has been cut. We are fully funded at the state level.

Special Projects Coordinator Report – Liz reported she recently completed a 4-day PATH Chronic Disease Self-Management Master Trainer Training. She now must complete two workshops within 12 months of the training and conduct a leaders training within 18 months. There are extended opportunities for two COAs who have not had a PATH workshop offered in our region; the Iosco COA and Cheboygan COA. Iosco has agreed to host a PATH workshop at the Oscoda Center one day a week for six weeks from July 21 – August 25th. She is waiting to hear back from the Cheboygan COA. There is an outreach effort by Pastor Kathleen Rowe and the Tawas Area Presbyterian Church in Iosco County. They have developed a community

engagement task force to address goals for community engagement. They recognize that their county has one of the worst health rankings in the state. Liz looked up the county health rankings and the four worst counties identified were Genesee, Iosco, Arenac and Lake. The taskforce is interested in hearing the communities' needs and determining how they can help meet those needs. They want to be a resource for the community and work with organizations such as ours. This is a great opportunity to build a strong community relationship and utilize programs that are community directed such as the Evidence-Based Disease Prevention Programs (EBDP). Liz reached out to the Iosco COA to inform Dale of the church's effort. The COA has offered their support in the church's efforts. Liz will attend a dementia presentation hosted by the church this Thursday and offer AAA and EBDP information and resources.

Advocacy Reports

MSAC – Karl Schreiner reported MSAC is done meeting for the summer. Laurie covered a lot of the topics they discuss. He stressed that he is our advocate to the legislators in Lansing and encouraged the Council to follow the senior issues and let him know if there is anything you need him to address. The problem is that most of the time he talks with staff members, sometimes the information doesn't get passed on well to the legislator.

State Advisory Council – Everyone received a copy of the 2016 Annual Report on Direct Care Workers: Training, Certification, Accountability and Retention. Chuck Corwin reported they are in the final editing process for this year's assignment, the Creative Aging Report.

State Updates

State Commission on Aging – John Briggs reported their last meeting was in Flint on June 16th at McFarland Home which is for women only. The Commission did approve the state plan which is the framework of our regional plans. The group is very active in their advocacy efforts, writing letters and speaking to appropriate programs. SCSEP funding was approved. Hopefully by October we'll know what the federal budget will look like. The Commission will meet next on July 21st in Iron Mountain. One topic of discussion has been emergency preparedness. Phil Lewis, Director of Emergency Preparedness at the state level reported they held a drill dealing with a major power outage. Are we able to deal with emergencies at a regional and county level and are we doing enough to be prepared? We need to pay attention to this issue and be sure we can take care of the seniors in our region. Laurie – The COAs have emergency plans in place and agreements with the community entities to be warming centers and the ability to use their kitchens in emergencies.

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

Action Items:

None

Local Updates, Questions or Concerns

V. Zygiel – The Sunrise Side Senior Services received the 2% grant from the Native Americans Council to complete the paving of the parking lot.

C. Proulx – A cucumber plant in our new hay bale garden has a blossom on it.

C. Corwin – Save the Date for an Elder Abuse In-Service scheduled for August 21, 2017 at the Houghton Lake Center. We have Susan Bowen and Sara Socia presenting along with myself. I will be speaking on the abuse people get from the elders they care for.

D. Fay – The Presque Isle COA has a Facebook page. There is a picture where we used walkers for tomato cages in the garden.

A. Hepburn – The Alpena Senior Center kicked off a 6-month Alzheimer’s series called “You Are Not Alone”. Eleven attended the first one. They are held on Saturdays from 9:00 am to noon. Various topics will be covered such as wandering, driving, etc. We hope attendance will increase. We also received a \$200,000 grant from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund. We are working with students from Aces Academy to make raised vegetable gardens. In the fall, they will learn how to pick, prepare and serve the produce. We have also scheduled an elder abuse event to be held on September 14th at Alpena Community College.

E. Corpe – Our next meeting will be held on Monday, July 24, 2017 at 1:00 pm at the NEMCSA large conference room.

Adjourn

A motion was made by V. Zygiel with support from D. Henig to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was ended at 2:45 pm by Chairman Corpe.

Reminder . . . Please remember to attend July’s meeting. A quorum is needed to approve funding proposals for the one year grants.