

**AGING & ADULT CARE OF CENTRAL WASHINGTON (AACCW)
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
DATE: March 16, 2023**

MINUTES

OPENING

Members in Attendance:

Judith Tonseth, Judy Gladden, Kathleen Miller, Shanon Davis, Roy Fraticelli, Dean and Ellen Warren, Eloise Hurst, Marylu Martin, Kay Williams, Linda Finlay, and Ivan Schultz.

AACCW Staff:

Bruce Buckles, Ken Sterner, Tammy Harvey, Diane Tribble, Debbie Peterson, Josh Hamilton and Christine Johnson.

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING: Kathleen Miller moved to accept the meeting minutes from the February, 2023, meeting. Ellen Warren seconded and the motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS:

Nothing discussed.

NEW BUSINESS:

Ageism:

Bruce Buckles gave a short discussion on the issues surrounding ageism, and how there is a lack of equity for the aged population. Bruce thanked the Advisory Committee members for their participation, and reminded them how important it is to have such committees, and how they have a unique opportunity to be the voice for the elderly population. Kathleen Miller agreed, saying that many rules and legislative actions are made without input from the elderly population and without their needs in mind.

Audit:

Debbie Peterson reported that the State performed an audit of 16 case management files in February, and that the AACCW CM staff received 100% proficiency in their record-keeping. Debbie said that this is

especially significant considering that the materials audited contained work performed during the pandemic, during which the CM staff were greatly challenged to provide services to our clients. Debbie said that the proficiency rating is very important to Area Agencies on Aging, as it can affect future funding.

Debbie said that there was one audit finding for the Nursing Services staff, however, the finding was a result of the nursing staff not receiving a client referral in a timely manner, and that the issue had already been resolved.

Debbie also reported that there is still an issue with the lack of Independent Providers available to serve clients. Many were lost during the pandemic, and there currently is still not enough, which results in clients not being able to access programs and services they need. She also said that many State employees are still working from home, and will still not go into client's homes, which is affecting clients ability to receive the support they need.

Debbie said there is still a waiting list for Medicaid beds, and that the agency is seeing more of the homeless population seeking services, particularly in securing housing.

Diane Tribble reported that the Information & Assistance department was also audited by the State, and that there were issues of concern identified. Diane said that her entire department is meeting regularly to discuss ways to address these areas of concern. She also said that some of the finding will be challenged, and she is confident they will be reversed.

Homelessness:

Ken Sterner reported that AACCW is working closely with the Chelan-Douglas Homeless Taskforce in an effort to provide shelter and wrap-around services to the local homeless population. He said that many of the homeless are over 60, and could therefore take advantage of programs that AACCW has to offer.

Ken also reported that elected officials are looking at ways to find relief for the housing crisis around the state (housing is too expensive, not available, etc.). One idea being explored is to diversify the zoning in neighborhoods that are traditionally single-family homes, by adding the ability to build multi-family housing. This could greatly affect who senior citizens will find themselves interacting with in the future. Ken said that if this is a concern, seniors should be contacting their legislators to tell them how they feel about it.

Bruce said that issues involving homelessness, such as substance abuse and mental health issues, can also lead to higher crime levels. He said that the regional County Commissioners are working on diversion programs to lessen the impact homelessness is having on the criminal justice budget. As an example, Kay Williams said that there is a new 124-bed facility getting ready to open in Wenatchee that will house non-violent criminals as they transition back into society.

Legislative Update:

Ken Sterner reported that there are over 2000 bills being sorted through by the Washington State legislators, many of which could affect programs for senior citizens.

Ken said that although there was a large influx of funding for case management programs in 2022, there could be even more funding coming in 2023, and that currently they are considering how to allocate the available funds to maximize their affect on programs. One of the programs needing expanded is Health Homes, which works directly with clients in their homes to better their health, from birth to end of life, to keep them out of institutionalized living. Ken said that the Health Homes program saved Medicare over \$17 million last year. He said that he hopes the money saved will be put back into the program to help it expand.

Debbie Peterson said that the State is introducing programs for clients that are dual Medicare/Medicaid, and that she will present information on this topic at the next meeting.

Ken reported that with the end of the Covid 'emergency' in May, there is concern there will be a negative effect on the nutritional assistance programs that were borne during the pandemic. Ken said that Senate House Bill 1784, which passed the House with a vote of 84-0, will bridge this lack of funding by providing approximately \$20 million for food banks throughout the State, and about \$6million for nutrition programs provided through the Area Agencies on Aging. However, these funds have to be spent by the end of June, so AACCW is working to come up with ways to maximize their allocation on nutrition assistance.

2024-2027 Area Plan Update:

Christine Johnson provided the Advisory Committee members with copies of the Area Plan survey to hand out, and also with a list of Area Plan meeting dates and times throughout the 6-county region. She also discussed the upcoming Senior Center Forum, and invited the AC members to attend.

Operation Good Morning:

Ivan Schultz, a new Advisory Committee member, presented 'Operation Good Morning' – a proposed project intended to engage memory loss patients by using ways to stimulate their memories through such means as recordings of descriptions of who they are, video autobiographies, music therapy and eye-hand therapy. These types of therapies have been used to increase moments of clarity in alzheimers and dementia patients in programs elsewhere, and Ivan said that he would like to find a way to get this kind of program going in our region.

Josh Hamilton showed a video titled "Alive Inside", which illustrated the effect music therapy can have on dementia patients.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:08.