



Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services

Director's Quarterly Leadership Meeting with Boards, Commissions and Committees (BCC)

Date: June, 2017

BCC: Commission on Aging

BCC Representative: Noelle Heyman, Chair, COA

The Commission on Aging believes that Montgomery County can become a Community for a Lifetime as envisioned by the Montgomery County Council resolution adopted in 2012, and it continues to focus on the quality of life for older adults. With support from the County Executive and the County Council, the COA's advocacy has resulted in adoption of the Senior Agenda; continued funding of essential supports and services such as the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program and Senior Center Services; as well as the hiring of a Transportation Coordinator, a Village Coordinator, and a part-time Caregiver Support Coordinator.

Most recently, the COA's efforts in collaboration with the County Executive and the County Council, led to the County's invitation by the World Health Organization to continue the process toward becoming a certified Age Friendly Community, and the creation of a Senior Fellow position to help implement this initiative.

In 2017, the COA continues monitoring implementation of the County's Age Friendly Initiative. The CoA Annual Stakeholders Meeting, held in March 2017, brought focus to progress made toward Montgomery County certification as a WHO Age Friendly Community. We continue monitoring implementation of recommendations from the 2015 Stakeholder Meeting and the Summit on Aging. We continue to support and monitor implementation of the Senior Agenda and recommendations from our 2014 Summer Studies, "Commonalities and Differences in Local Government Approaches for Aging in Community" and "Long-Term Care and Supports: Nursing Home Quality."

In addition to activities described below in support of FY 2017 priorities, the COA identified priorities for the FY 2018 budget cycle. COA Summer Study findings and input from participants at the Legislative Breakfast and other sources, will contribute to the development of CoA priorities for the coming year.

FY 2018 Priorities

The COA's FY'18 recommendations continue strengthening Aging in Place, Community and Planning efforts and Health Planning, Services and Community Supports by: increasing staffing and programming to accommodate the growing needs of our most vulnerable older adults; addressing affordable housing, rental protections and seniors' homelessness; and building upon efforts to enhance transportation and mobility—particularly the Transportation Service Fund.

CoA's overarching priority is affordable housing, including the urgent need for more affordable units for seniors, additional rental protections, and programs and services to address seniors' homelessness.

1. Fiscal Year 2017 Priorities

The Commission was pleased to support the County Executive's FY17 Senior Initiative budget enhancements including: increase in funds for Medical Daycare subsidies for additional clients to attend Adult Day Care program; additional funds for mandated Adult Evaluation and Review Services (AERS) evaluations; new funds for a Senior Fellow position to support the County's Age-Friendly Communities initiative. The budget also included additional funds for operating and staffing a full senior program at the new North Potomac Community Center; additional funds to support Victory Crossing, a mixed-income senior development in Silver Spring; enhancing the Call-n-Ride program by decreasing the minimum age for eligibility from age 67 to 65; additional funds to provide low-income immigrant seniors with in-center and educational field trip activities, and an increase in funding for home delivered meals.

The COA also advocated for and supported funding for the following priorities in and support for the FY 2017 budget:

A. Health/Mental Health

- a. Provide Additional Subsidies for Respite Care and Medical Adult Day Care.
- b. Increase Funding for a Full-Time Caregiver Support Coordinator.

B. Protection for Vulnerable Adults

- a. Increase funding for Case Management - Social Services to Adults Program, for one full-time social worker position.

C. Aging in Place

- a. Create a full-time high level manager position within the County government structure to implement the Age Friendly Montgomery initiative.
- b. Increase Rates for Adult Foster Care Small Group Homes, which represents a multi-year effort to increase payment rates for providers of Small Group Homes.
- c. Exempt people over 65 years of age from the property tax increase if their income is less than three times the federal poverty rate.

2. Action Items completed since the last Quarterly Leadership Meeting that support your FY 2017 priorities

Health/Mental Health

The **Health & Wellness Committee (H&W)** 2017 goals include exploring dental health services for underserved seniors, exploring mental health outreach and education, and improving the quality of long term care. To this end, H&W conducted a Summer Study on the topic of dental health for seniors. The Study included presentations from county dental programs and providers, discussion of ideas and opportunities to enhance and expend dental services to low-income county seniors, and development of

a plan/recommendations. The report was issued in late September and copies were provided to the County Executive and County Council. Recommendations from the Summer Study include an increase in Maryland Medicaid funding to cover dental care for adults and the expansion of dental hygienist services to assisted living facilities and other senior living communities.

During January, February and March 2017 the Committee advocated for proposed legislation supporting dental coverage in Medicaid and including Oral Health in programs created or directed by the Maryland Department of Aging. Legislation passed in April 2017.

H&W members continue to develop relationships with and support the Primary Care Coalition, the Wish Program, and Dental Services.

H&W members are actively involved in the Dementia Friendly Montgomery initiative.

Protection for Vulnerable Adults

The PPC advocates on budget, program, and policy issues at the County, State, and Federal levels in consultation with other CoA Committees and in accordance with CoA priorities.

The PPC reviewed more than three dozen bills filed in the Maryland General Assembly and of interest to Montgomery County seniors. PPC members communicated with members of the Montgomery County Delegation, researched relevant topics, including protection for vulnerable adults, affordable housing (property tax credits), and led the drafting of testimony and position letters. All bills supported by the CoA passed the State House and Senate successfully. They are:

- HB 147 Establish a Healthy Aging Program in the Maryland Department of Aging. The Commission wrote in support, and requested that the program include oral health. (2/2)
- HB 256/SB 260 Increase the Time for APS to Conduct investigation from 30-60 days. (2/21)
- HB 387 Assisted Living Program Transparency Act, to require assisted living programs to post on their websites, the disclosures that they are required to provide to consumers. The bill was withdrawn by the sponsor, Del. Korman after discussions with DHMH. DHMH will amend the regulations to require this posting. (2/21)
- HB 601/SB 248, to establish a voluntary Senior Call Check Service and Notification Program. (2/21)
- HB 644/SB 180, Independent Living Tax Credit Act, to create a credit against state income taxes for certain home accessibility modifications. (2/17)
- HB 1149/ SB 951 Maryland Securities Act – _Vulnerable Adults. Extends the mandatory reporting of suspected abuse or exploitation of vulnerable adults to mortgage lenders. (2/23)
- HB1158, to authorize the Maryland Medical Assistance (Medicaid) program to include adult dental care in its covered services. (3/13).

At the County level, the PPC worked with the COA chair to develop talking points for COA participation at the County Executive's budget forums. The COA also reviewed the County Executive's FY18 operating budget and will draft testimony for the April 4, 2018 budget hearing.

The PPC is pleased that on March 7, 2017, the County Council passed Bill 42-16, which creates a 20% property tax credit for homeowners age 65 and older who have lived in their homes for more than 40

years, if the assessed value of the home does not exceed \$650,000. The COA testified in support of this bill and advocated that the home value limit be increased from \$500,000.

The COA contacted the County's Congressional and Senate delegation to express support for their advocacy to retain the Affordable Care Act and to share an analysis of the impact of the proposed American Health Care Act on seniors.

During the second quarter, the PPC will continue to advocate at the state level as the legislative session winds down; will advocate on County budget issues and other priorities that may arise, including through in-person meetings with Council members in April; and will monitor federal legislative and regulatory activity and respond as appropriate to actions that would impact County seniors. The PPC will also work with other COA committees to review findings and recommendations from the March 29, 2017, Stakeholders Meeting, and to prepare for the May 2017 Annual Meeting.

Aging in Place and Community Planning Committee

The **Aging in Place Committee (AIPC)** continued the focus was on housing affordability, including the goals articulated in the strategic plan of the Age Friendly Montgomery County Housing Working Group. Those goals include: affordable housing (including home sharing), promote aging in place with wrap-around services, and affordable assisted living. The Committee also plans to meet with private rental property owners to follow up on their conversations about affordable housing with Mr. Leggett.

To ensure that Montgomery County's older adults have affordable housing options available to them, and to incorporate the goals of the Age Friendly workgroup on housing, the AIPCP Committee is sponsoring a Summer Study to further examine the current state of affordable, supportive rental housing in Montgomery County. Summer Study Sessions have been scheduled for the following dates: June 28 in the Rockville Library; July 18 and August 3 (tentative) at sites to be determined. The Sessions are scheduled from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM each date. The basis of the 2017 Summer Study Session is the COA's 2012 Affordable Rental Housing Summer Study. The affordable housing progress made by Montgomery County since 2012 will be reviewed.

The focus of Session 1 will be expanding affordable senior housing. Invitees to this roundtable discussion include MC Housing & Community Affairs, MC Planning Dept., nonprofit and for-profit housing developers. The focus of Session 2 will be preserving affordable senior rental housing. Invitees to this roundtable discussion include MC Council members, Rental Alliance, Action in Montgomery and the Homecrest Executive Director. The focus of Session 3 will be the development of recommendations to preserve expand affordable senior rental housing in Montgomery County.

The Committee also planned a for-profit and non-profit developer/landlord roundtable discussion for the COA Annual Meeting in May to learn more about the issue of building and sustaining affordable housing for seniors in Montgomery County.

Communications and Community Outreach

The **Communications and Community Outreach Committee (CCO)** collaborates with other COA committees and the County to facilitate communication about issues and resources of relevance to the senior community in a variety of age friendly formats.

CCO takes the lead in the CoA's co-production with the County of the cable television show, "Seniors Today", which can also be viewed on line at any time, and which continues to present relevant and engaging programming. AARP has recently commented on the professional and valuable aspects of this show. Topics and guests for the fourth quarter have included: Maryland Attorney General Brian Frosh, Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett, Montgomery County Council Chair Nancy Floreen, and Captain James Resnick, Fire Safety for Seniors educator. Other topics included Dementia Friendly Montgomery County, the CARE act, Interages programming and the Jewish Social Service Agency. The CCO congratulates host Austin Heyman and director/producer Michael Bruen for this important service to the community.

Commission members participated in Age Friendly Montgomery workgroups and in the development and implementation of the Age Friendly strategic plan as appropriate.

3. Collaboration with other Boards, Commissions, and Committees

The COA collaborates with other boards, commissions, and committees, as appropriate. The CoA also welcomes representatives of other boards and commissions at its meetings and as members of its committees. These representatives are invited to report on their B/C/or C's activities at COA meetings.