



Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services

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

Date: December, 2017

BCC: Commission on Aging

BCC Representative: Noelle Heyman, Chair, COA

The Commission on Aging believes that Montgomery County is making progress in becoming a Community for a Lifetime for all its residents 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 Caregiver Support Coordinator. Significantly, it has also accepted the WHO/AARP invitation to be an Age-Friendly County.

The COA's efforts in collaboration with the County Executive and the County Council, led to the County's support for and hiring of a Senior Fellow position to help implement the Age-Friendly Montgomery initiative. The COA is represented on the Age Friendly Montgomery County Advisory Group, and COA members participate in many of the domain workgroups.

Throughout 2017, the COA focused on activities supporting the Age-Friendly Montgomery County goals and recommendations from the 2017 Stakeholder Meeting "Age Friendly – What it Means for You" and the 2015 Summit on Aging. We continue to support and monitor implementation of the Senior Agenda and recommendations from our 2016 Summer Studies, "Commonalities and Differences in Local Government Approaches for Aging in Community" and "Long-Term Care and Supports: Nursing Home Quality" and our 2017 Summer Study on Affordable Housing....We engaged in substantial and effective advocacy during the FY 2018 budget cycle, with budget priorities informed by the Age Friendly certification and resident feedback during our 2017 Stakeholder Meeting.

In addition to activities described below in support of FY 2018 priorities, the COA identified priorities for the FY 2019 budget cycle. Key input for this process were the CoA Annual Meeting, held in May 2017 and the 2017 Affordable Housing Summer Study . The Summer Study included recommendations for collaborations and state legislative advocacy. We began state legislative advocacy with the Montgomery County delegation at our annual Legislative Breakfast in November.

FY 2019 Priorities

The Commission on Aging's overarching priorities for 2018 are preserving and expanding affordable housing for seniors and maintaining services for vulnerable seniors in light of anticipated deep cuts to federal safety net programs. FY 2019 budget priorities include: preserving and expanding affordable rental housing options including an increase in the Housing Initiative Fund; adding a staff position in the

long term care ombudsman program and in the public guardianship program; funding Senior Center Plus; increasing funding for respite services; and adding a position in the State's Attorney's Office Crimes Against Vulnerable Adults Unit.

FY 2018 Priorities

The COA's FY'18 recommendations will help strengthen 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.

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. Additionally, our budget priorities for FY18 are:

1. Adult Protective Services and Public Guardianship: increase staffing.
2. Adult Foster Care and Escorted Transportation: increase funding for AFC subsidies and for escorted transportation for AFC residents.
3. Senior Center Plus: create new program at Recreation Department Senior Centers.
4. Senior Nutrition: add one part-time staff position to help administer program.
5. Ride On: expand free travel hours for seniors and persons with disabilities.
6. Senior Centers: expand hours to evenings and weekends.
7. Money Management: reinstate discontinued program.
8. EMS frequent user wrap-around services: add full-time social worker position.

The Commission was pleased to support the County Executive's FY18 Senior Initiative budget enhancements including: staff funding for APS, increased subsidies for escorted transportation, expanded free travel hours on Ride On for seniors and persons with disabilities, and, most recently, supplemental funding for EMS frequent user wrap-around services.

1. Action Items completed since the last Quarterly Meeting that support your FY 2018 priorities

Health/Mental Health

The **Health & Wellness Committee (H&W)** 2018 goals continued exploration of dental health services for underserved seniors, exploring mental health outreach and education, and improving the quality of long term care. 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.

H&W members reviewed the 2015 Montgomery County Nursing Home Quality Summer Study and determined nursing home quality will be a focus for the committee in 2019.

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. In January, the Committee heard from Leslie Frey, DHHS liaison to BCC's, about the state legislative process and her role as liaison.

During the 4th Quarter the PPC prepared CoA Budget Testimony for the County Council meeting on October 18, 2017 and testified at the Annual Montgomery County Delegation Joint Priorities Hearing on November 13, 2017. The PPC also organized and implemented the CoA Annual Legislative Breakfast in November. Fourteen members of the Montgomery County delegation and/or staff attended the event, learned about CoA priorities for 2019, and identified opportunities to work together. The H&W Committee will follow up with Del. Bonnie Cullison to share more about the current quality of nursing home care in the County. The AIPC will follow up with Sen. Charles Barkley and Del. Ana Sol Gutierrez on how the County might better benefit from the federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit program.

Aging in Place and Community Planning Committee

The **Aging in Place Committee (AIPC)** continued to work with other CoA committees to identify issues and priorities related to the ability of older adults to age in place, including accessibility, property tax incentives, and transportation. This quarter, 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), aging in place with wrap-around services, and affordable assisted living. The Committee met with private rental property owners (Renters Alliance) 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 looks to further examine the current state of affordable, supportive housing in Montgomery County (both ownership and rental).

In our February 2017 meeting, we heard from Director of Montgomery County's Department of Housing and Community Services who underscored the challenges the County faces in attracting developers to build affordable housing for seniors, the growing need for affordable housing, the numbers of County's residents (1/3 of 65+) who are house burdened and that 61% of renters 65+ are house burdened.

The Committee developed a for-profit and non-profit developer/landlord roundtable in early April to further study the issue of building and sustaining affordable housing for seniors in Montgomery County.

In March the Committee heard from representatives from two local senior housing communities (Sandy Spring Friends and Homecrest House) who discussed their model for developing affordable assisted living.

The Committee sponsored the 2017 CoA Summer Study on Affordable Senior Rental Housing. The report is being finalized and will be shared with Staff and Council members shortly.

2019 priorities include following up on Summer Study recommendations and learning more about aging in place and wrap around services.

Members of the Committee met in early December 2017 with the consultant selected by the NMCPPC conducting a senior housing study for the Montgomery Planning Office to share their recommendations.

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.

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

The Seniors Today Monthly Cable show sponsored by the COA is planning its 150th show for February 2018.

2. 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.

The Senior Fellow for Age Friendly Montgomery a former COA member presented to the Commission on Health in November 2017.