

Commission on Aging Health and Wellness Committee
November 2, 2021 9:30 – 11:00 am via Zoom
Attendees:

First name	Last name	
Wayne	Berman	Commissioner
Neal	Brown	Commissioner
Virginia	Cain	Commissioner
Betsy	Carrier	Commissioner
Joyce	Dubow	Commissioner
David	Engel	Commissioner
Nikki	Ezeani	Commissioner
Seda	Gelenian	Commissioner
Mona	Grieser	Commissioner
Kendell	Matthews	Commissioner
Laurie	Pross	Commissioner
Edgar	Rivas	Commissioner
Barbara	Selter	Commissioner
Marsha	Weber	Commissioner
Arthur	Williams	Commissioner
Robin	Henoch	Guest
Marcia	Pruzan	Guest
Rev	Vikram	Guest
Shawn	Brennan	Staff
Tina	Purser Langley	Staff

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Minutes: Kendell Matthews corrected the spelling of her name in the October 5th committee meeting minutes. Otherwise, Edgar Rivas moved for approval and Joyce Dubow seconded. Minutes approved.

3. Joyce Dubow provided descriptive information about Medicare Special Needs Plans (SNP) in Maryland. A SNP is a Medicare Advantage coordinated care plan specifically designed to provide targeted care and limit enrollment to special needs individuals. A special needs individual could be any one of the following: 1. An institutionalized individual, 2. A dual eligible, or 3. An individual with a severe or disabling chronic condition, as specified by CMS. In Montgomery County there are @ 1,800 SNPs who are dual eligibles. These individuals are mainly enrolled in United Health Plan. Some of the extra benefits provided include home care, home making, and transportation.

4. Tina Purser Langley shared a brief power point presentation about the history and aim of Health Partners. Health Partners is a loose coalition of @ 20 health

care providers who came together in 2011 and they usually meet monthly. They originally looked at the root cause of repeat 911 calls from several HOC buildings. Since then, they also have reviewed data about Medicare hospitalized patients, worked to implement post-discharge protocols to improve care transitions and prevent hospital re-admission, and tested different strategies to improve outcomes. Tina will provide Art Williams with a copy of the power point presentation and share Medicare data that has been reviewed by the group.

5. IHAS Contractors Information Follow-up. David Engel presented a very detailed and comprehensive report on Home Care / In Home Aide Services (IHAS). This County funded program provides self-care services (such as bathing, dressing, meal preparation assistance, etc.) to frail seniors and adults with disabilities to help them remain in their own homes. The goal is to prevent or reduce the length of institutionalization, and help relieve caregivers of some of their responsibilities of care for disabled family members.

David reviewed the County budget and identified for FY2022 \$2.4 million in County funds and \$824,000 in State funds for IHAS services.

An individual can be eligible for these home care services if he/she is receiving case management and requires service as part of a treatment plan to prevent or reduce the length of institutional placement; prevent or reduce the length of out-of-home placement of children; prevent or remedy abuse, neglect, self-neglect, or exploitation; or promote self-sufficiency; and is unable to obtain the necessary paraprofessional services. Financial eligibility for these services is less than \$20,000 in assets, excluding car and home.

David surveyed four vendors: Home Care Partners, Advanced Nursing, Visiting Angels, and Specialty Care Services (he has spoken to three to date). Since the COVID pandemic the number of clients served by these four agencies declined by @50% from @ 400 clients (pre-COVID) to 200 clients.

He asked these agencies about:

- How they could expand;
- How they can provide more services; and
- How they can provide more gap services.

The vendor responses included:

Problems with providing more services:

- Main barrier to increasing services is lack of case managers to make appropriate referrals. Long waiting list for screening clients resulting in bottleneck at intake.
- Need more appropriate referrals. This program is not designed for clients who need 24-hour care.
- Shortage of CNAs to provide services caused by low wages for health workers, IHAS wages are set and are lower than other workers providing similar care. Also, in general, CNA salaries are no longer competitive with salaries in other industries.
- Patients and families need better information to know how to navigate the system.
- Challenge of providing services to clients who speak many different languages.
- Requirements for staff training and retraining.
- Need additional clarity about all budget lines that support these services.

Possible Solutions:

- More County case managers to address long waiting list for screening.
- Families, independent living facilities and Villages should be able to make referrals.
- Salary subsidies or incentives.
- Triage patients to appropriate types of care including: flex care, short visits, day care.
- Make the program more flexible, one example is relaxing the requirement for length of visit.
- Use Community Grant Awards for dollars to pay for supplement services.

Discussion: Several attendees recommended we use this information to take action. COA should consider making regulatory, procedural and funding recommendations that could result in an increase in IHAS services.

5. Regarding workforce issues, Marcia Pruzan mentioned this is a problem throughout the DMV areas, both salaries and inconsistent licensure requirements. These issues will be discussed in an upcoming Age Friendly Workshop.
6. Marsha Weber shared information about the resident services coordinators in HOC buildings. They provide a range of services to assist the residents. They faced challenges of providing services during COVID. Residents speak a large number of languages making it difficult to provide some services.

7. Marsha Weber spoke with a representative of the Meals on Wheels program of Central Maryland. She shared information about the *More than Meals* program. In addition to providing food this program can identify additional client needs and assist in helping clients get needed services or referrals.

8. Next meeting- December 7, 2021 9:30 am- Virtual meeting.
Agenda items to include:
 - Speaker from Maryland's *More Than Meals* program.
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 - Discussion of regulatory, procedural and funding recommendations to expand IHAS.
 - Follow-up to discussion of wages for home care workers.