



Minutes of the Montgomery County Commission on Aging
April 24, 2025
9:30 am to 12 pm

Attendance:

COA: Wayne Berman, Linda Bergofsky, Yvette Monroe, David Engel, Laurie Pross, Betsy Carrier, Morris Klein, Vernell De Witty, Joyce Dubow, Mona Grieser, Kathleen McGuinness, Marie Sloan, Kate Stein, Janice Zalen, Marcia Pruzan (A), Virginia Cain, Marsha Weber (A), Jean Dinwiddie (A), Kendell Matthews, Eleanor Tanno.

Staff: Peter Illig, Dr. Patrice McGhee, Dr. Kimberly Y. Johnson, Tremayne Jones, Shawn Brennan

Liaisons: Ama Lee, Denise Isreal, Sara Swarr, Kara Pokras, Michele Higgs, Shane Rock, Ingrid Lizama, Ikenna Meyers, Stacy Siglar, April Stup, Serena, and Stephanie Moore.

Mayors: Jud Ashman, Gaithersburg, Talisha Searcy, Takoma Park, Monique Ashton, Rockville

Agenda Items

- Welcome – Wayne Berman and Linda Bergofsky, Co-Chairs
- Roll Call
- AAA Director, A&D Chief updates – Dr. Kimberly Johnson, Dr. Patrice McGhee
- Liaison Reports
- How local municipalities are serving older residents: A dialogue with Mayor Ashman (Gaithersburg), Mayor Ashton (Rockville), and Mayor Searcy (Takoma Park) on opportunities for collaboration
- Commission on Aging Old Business
 - Approval of March CoA minutes, discuss action items

- COA Co-Chairs Report
 - Review of calls with County Council Members and budget testimony
 - Public Forum Update
- Committee Reports
 - Aging in Community
 - Health and Wellness
 - Communications
 - Public Policy
 - Update on 2025 General Assembly
- New Business
 - Planning for priority setting
 - Action Items

Meeting Minutes

- The meeting was called to order by Co-Chairs Linda Bergofsky and Wayne Berman.
- Dr. Kimberly Johnson and Dr. Patrice McGee provided updates.
 - Dr. Johnson made an urgent request for help to reauthorize the Older American Act, currently funded only through September 30, 2025.
 - Advocacy efforts have resulted in the Senior Care Program and the long-term care dementia navigation program receiving full funding.
 - Legislation has passed to consolidate the Senior Care Program, the senior assisted living subsidy program and the comrade housing program, with a potential effective date of 2027.
 - Updates on the fiscal year 26 area plan were provided.
 - The Ombudsman Program Manager position has been advertised.
 - Progress is being made with branding, including upcoming commercials to advertise Aging and Disability Services programs.
 - The Older American Month celebration is scheduled for May 30th at White Oak Senior Center.
- A discussion ensued regarding the Older Americans Act reauthorization, with concerns raised about sharing information with individuals in other areas of the country.
 - The Maryland Department of Aging has a one-page document regarding the reauthorization that can be shared.
 - Individual letters to representatives were encouraged to emphasize the importance of the Act.

- There is a concerted effort by various organizations to advocate for the Act's reauthorization.
- Proposed funding cuts to the Act were discussed, with clarification provided that the information was a leak and not solidified.

Reports from Liaison Programs

- Stacey from Recreation provides updates on May events, including the Older American Month celebration, Senior Olympics, and the Active Aging Expo.
- Stacey mentions the registration opening for 55+ programs and SOAR trips on May 13 and a presentation with JSSA on May 20.
- Kara Pokras from JSSA discusses various programs and services offered to seniors, including Meals on Wheels, transportation, and socialization programs.
- Michelle Higgs from Housing Initiative Partnership talks about the Home Sharing Program and the Room Ready Fund, which helps homeowners improve their properties for renting.
- Ingrid from the Latin Health Initiative introduces the "Los Anos" program, a series of workshops for older adults focusing on mental health, diabetes prevention, and community building.
- Dr. Ikenna Myers from the African American Health Program provides updates on bone health talks, Alzheimer's awareness events, and collaborations with Howard University on social isolation.
- Dr. Myers mentions the creation of toolkits for caregivers and the upcoming Alzheimer's awareness event on June 9.
- Linda encourages Dr. Myers and Ama Lee to attend the caregiving forum in May.
- A dialogue was held with Mayor Ashman (Gaithersburg), Mayor Ashton (Rockville), and Mayor Searcy (Tacoma Park) to discuss services for older adults in their cities and opportunities for collaboration.
 - Mayor Ashton (Rockville) discussed the city's support for seniors, including addressing social isolation, food insecurity, affordability, and transportation.
 - The importance of promoting senior services was discussed, including potential collaboration between the Commission and local municipalities.

- Suggestions were made to collaborate on websites, community forums, and meetings to spread awareness of services.
 - The City of Takoma Park distributes a monthly newsletter that includes senior services information.
 - It was suggested that staff from the municipalities that work with older residents attend Commission meetings to share updates and best practices.
- Old business was addressed, including the approval of the March CoA minutes.
 - Action items from the previous meeting were reviewed, which included commissioners having discussions with county council members.

Committee reports

Aging in Community:

- Avital Graves Manager with the Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) Program discussed how patients with frequent calls to 911 have unfulfilled chronic needs. MHI helps to address the growing disparity between the volume of emergency 911 calls and the limited availability of EMS resources. They have developed partnerships with local hospitals, the health department, and various community groups, to pair these patients with existing community-based medical and social programs.
- Beth Anne Nesselt and Jim Resnick from Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Community Risk Reduction described the safety and community risk reduction programs that help older adults age in place. These educational and outreach programs provide resources, education, training, and leadership to enhance public awareness about fire and life safety issues.

Health and Wellness:

- Laurie Pross reported on a vigorous presentation from Chris Palmer on end-of-life care, which was well-received by attendees.
- The health and wellness committee is working on formatting fact sheets on social isolation, mental health, loss of partner, and hearing loss.
- The next meeting will feature Patricia Dubroof, who will discuss caregiving.

- Laurie emphasized the importance of moving beyond death and dying topics in future presentations.

Communications Committee Report:

- Kathleen and Marie provided an update on the ambassador presentations, including the establishment of a format and the scheduling of presentations through September.
- The communications committee is reviewing FAQs gathered over the past two years to create a new FAQ sheet.
- An update on the 50+ program was given and details on upcoming shows and tapings.
- The next communications committee meeting is on May 19 and attendance is encouraged.

Public Policy and Legislative Updates

- Kate reports on recent county council actions, including a homeowners' tax credit and a zoning text amendment to expedite office to residential space conversions.
- The proposed county budget includes level funding for services for seniors.
- Kate highlights the success of advocacy efforts around nursing home legislation, including the re-establishment of a MOU with the state for regular inspections.
- The need for additional funding to support county-led inspections and the importance of the long-term care ombudsman office are emphasized.
- Participation encouraged in the public policy committee meetings to discuss ongoing advocacy efforts around nursing homes, the Older Americans Act, and caregiving.
- The importance of reconnecting with the state to ensure effective partnership in long-term care inspections is highlighted.
- New business included planning for priority setting.
- The meeting was adjourned.

Supplemental Reports

AAHP Aging Subcommittee – Community Outreach Programming Update

We are pleased to share an update on behalf of the African American Health Program (AAHP) Aging Subcommittee regarding our recent and upcoming Community Outreach initiatives.

Our continued focus is on increasing access to health education and preventive services for older African American adults throughout Montgomery County. We've been actively offering Health Screenings and Bone Health Talks at various community locations to ensure our seniors are equipped with the knowledge and tools needed to support their wellness—particularly in areas such as bone health, which disproportionately affects our community.

A key partner in this effort is the Silver Spring Recreation Center, where we now host monthly Bone Health Talks. These sessions are engaging and culturally relevant, covering essential topics such as osteoporosis prevention, fall risk reduction, strength-building exercises, and the importance of movement and staying active.

On March 22, 2025, we held a successful Social Isolation Awareness event, addressing the growing concern of loneliness and disconnection among older adults. Due to the positive response, we are planning a Part 2 of this programming for May 2025.

Looking ahead to May—which is both Older Americans Month and Osteoporosis Awareness Month—we're excited to launch our B.O.N.E.S. Series at Silver Spring Rec. This new program focuses on:

- Bones and Balance Awareness
- Osteoporosis Education
- Nutrition
- Exercise and Movement
- Self-Care Strategies

The series will feature interactive sessions, guest speakers, and resource-sharing, all

tailored to the specific needs of our aging community.

We're also proud to introduce two new culturally relevant toolkits:

- The Alzheimer's Awareness Toolkit, offering practical information on early detection, caregiving tips, and local support resources.
- The Self-Care for All Toolkit, promoting mental, physical, and emotional well-being for older adults and their caregivers.

AAHP Aging Subcommittee – Community Outreach Programming Update

Finally, we're gearing up for a major upcoming summit:

"Alzheimer's Awareness: Navigating the Journey" Monday, June 9, 2025, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Silver Spring Civic Center.

This summit will feature experts in aging and dementia care, interactive activities, engaging dialogue, and valuable community resources tailored to older adults, caregivers, and families. It's a meaningful opportunity for education, empowerment, and connection.

We're proud to be deepening our community connections through this work and look forward to expanding our impact in the months ahead.

DOT CoA Update- April 2025

Submitted by Denise Isreal

Provide Feedback on the US 29 Flash Bus Rapid Transit Improvements Through
Monday, May 26

MCDOT held an in-person public meeting on Tuesday, April 8, to discuss the Phase II improvements to the existing US 29 (Colesville Road/Old Columbia Pike) Flash Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service. Some improvements include the addition of dedicated bus lanes, bus priority at traffic signals and safety enhancements for pedestrian and bicycle connections.

Visit the project website and provide feedback via the online comment form or by email to US29BRT@montgomerycountymd.gov by Monday, May 26.

Learn more [here](#).

New Ride On User Guide Now Available in English, Spanish, and More Languages. Montgomery County is known for its vibrant and diverse population, with over 180 languages spoken in the area. Ensuring that Ride On's services are accessible to everyone is crucial. To better serve Montgomery County's diverse community,

Ride On is pleased to announce an update to our User Guide, now available on our website in multiple languages.

The User Guide contains essential information, including fares, transfers, how to ride the bus, trip planning tools like the Ride On Trip Planner App, SmarTrip instructions, locating the Ride On system map, accessibility compliance, routes, and schedule information, as well as a breakdown of Ride On services—Ride On Flex, Ride On Extra, and Ride On Flash. Available in eight languages—English, Spanish, French, Korean, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Hindi, and Amharic—the new Ride On User Guide allows even more riders to travel with confidence, knowledge, and ease. The User Guide is currently available online and will soon be offered in print. Please view the updated User Guide at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-Transit/user-guide.html>.

Ride On and Metro Service Changes Coming in June

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is adjusting seven Ride On bus routes on Sunday, June 29, to implement Year 1 of the Ride On Reimagined Study and maintain uninterrupted service during Metro's Better Bus Network changes. Routes 4, 10, 29, 34, 41, 42, and 43 will be affected, and a new Route 40 will be introduced. Stay tuned to RideOnBus.com or subscribe to our email alerts by visiting www.montgomerycountymd.gov/govdelivery. Text MONTGOMERY RIDEON to 468311 to receive text alerts.

Help Fight Hunger During Ride On's Annual Food Drive – May 25–31, 2025.

Montgomery County Ride On is proud to announce its annual Give and Ride Food Drive, taking place this year from Sunday, May 25, through Saturday, May 31, 2025. This community-focused event provides a simple and impactful way to give back while riding with us. What Is the Give and Ride Food Drive? During the food drive week, Ride On will collect non-perishable food donations on all Ride On buses throughout the county. Riders who donate nonperishable food items when boarding will be able to ride for free that day.

All donations will go to the Manna Food Center, Montgomery County's largest food bank, which distributes nutritious food to those experiencing food insecurity.

Of Note: Montgomery County is in discussions with Howard County to extend Flash US29 route into Howard County.