AGING IN COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

OF THE

COMMISSION ON AGING

Date: June 8, 2021

9:30am-11:30 am

Meeting Topic "Using Technology to Improve the Lives of Older Adults"

In Attendance: Monica Schaeffer (co-chair, AIC), Wayne Berman (co-chair, AIC), Barbara Selter, Nanine Meiklejohn, Marsha Weber, Richard Jourdenais, Eddie Rivas, Joyce Dubow, Karon Phillips, Mary Sweeney, Art Williams, Barbara Selter

Staff: Pazit Aviv, Marcia Pruzan, Shawn Brennan

Guests: Barbara Brubeck (Friends House Retirement Community, Inc); Sara Fought, Jewish Council for the Aging; Mitsuko Herrera: ultraMontgomery Program Director, MoCo Office of Broadband Programs; Neil Tantingco: Founder / CEO Connected Home Living; Jim Bland, Connected Home Living; Dean Dana Bradley: Erickson School of Aging, UMBC

Opening Remarks from the Co-Chairs: Monica and Wayne welcomed everyone and Wayne reviewed the agenda and focus for the meeting. The focus of the meeting was on "Using Technology to Improve the Lives of Older Adults". The guest speakers for today include Mitsuko Herrera: ultraMontgomery Program Director, MoCo Office of Broadband Programs, Neil Tantingco: Founder / CEO Connected Home Living, Dean Dana Bradley: Erickson School of Aging, UMBC.

Approval of the Minutes: The minutes of the May 11th meeting were approved and seconded.

PRESENTATIONS AND QUESTIONS: "Using Technology to Improve the Lives of Older Adults"

Mitsuko Herrera: ultraMontgomery Program Director, MoCo Office of Broadband Programs,
      Ms. Herrera gave a presentation entitled "Using Technology to Improve the Lives of Older Adults". The first MC initiative she described is MoCoNet, which is a new broadband digital equity program. This program provides broadband service to low-income residents in affordable housing units. The first implementation of this program has occurred in Main Street Apartments and HOC Upton II in Rockville. This service also allows the implementation of Plume Smart Home Devices such as Smart WiFi which can support motion detectors as a method for health checks by family members and can also be connected to cameras and interior lights for security purposes.

      The second MC initiative Ms. Herrera described is Senior Planet Montgomery, which is a partner program with AARP and enables technology training of older adults aged 50 and over. Numerous technology courses, workshops and language courses are offered. This initiative is currently offered via Zoom but the intention is to offer it in the future in senior centers and libraries. Access to this initiative is via www. SeniorPlanet .org/ Montgomery.

      Ms. Herrera offered some MC statistics regarding broadband use:

21% of households have an income of less than $50,000. Among these households, 36% have no wireline home broadband access and 27% have no computer. In older (over 65 yrs. of age) households, 5% do not have home wireline broadband and 4% do not have a computer.

Next, Ms. Herrera described a new Federal Broadband Program which began in April 2021. This program is available to low-income families and people with COVID-related income loss. One can sign-up for the Emergency Broadband Benefit (EEB) at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DigitalEquity to obtain some temporary financial aid for acquiring broadband access. Aid includes payment for services, and/or buying a computer. One can qualify for the EEB financial assistance if one currently participates in Medicaid, housing assistance, SNAP, school lunches, head start and several other assistance programs.

Ms. Herrera closed her presentation by stating the MC Digital Equity Goal of 10 by 10: 10,000 more families with home broadband and 10,000 more families with a computer.

Some issues brought up by commissioners:
- Reliance on smart phones – not all seniors use smart phones.
- Use of tablets as a possible alternative to the use of a Smartphone may be a problem for an older adult who may not be savvy with their use.
- Access fees for EBB seem expensive for low-income users, subsidized at first but costly later on for continued use.
- Privacy concerns.

Neil Tantingco: Founder / CEO Connected Home Living

Mr. Tantingco spoke about his company, Connected Home Living (CHL) and the services they provide to keep older adults with illnesses in their homes and out of nursing facilities and return visits to the hospital. CHL provides the following;
- Turn-key telehealth monitoring solution to complement Agency Care
- Blended live 24/7 professional Remote Care Coordination with telehealth platform
- Integrated behavioral and safety online, real-time monitoring solutions
- Specialized care programs with timely intervention, bridges external care services, and addresses patient psychosocial needs within the patient's natural surroundings.

The majority of CHL patients utilize the service in the home environment, assigning each patient with a live 24/7 Remote Care Coordination (RCC) team member and the latest remote patient monitoring. The RCC team's duties include:
- Setting up, training and troubleshooting telehealth
- Responding to alerts 24/7
- Providing timely intervention by video calling LIVE to verify
- Serving as an extension to the Agency and Care Team
- Calling with medication reminders, set up transportation
- Socializing with the patient to provide companionship and build rapport
- Responding to any high alerts that are reported to our clients on-call staff.

In concert with the RCC and Clinicians, each Remote Patient Monitoring is personalized, based on medical condition, wellness plans, & vital parameters.

Neil stated that the key Connected Home Living Focus Areas include:
- Constant Monitoring
  - Utilizing the latest technologies for Remote Patient Monitoring
  - Proactive outreach
- Timely Intervention
  - Live 24/7 Remote Care Coordination

- - Video Triage/Picture
- Extension to Clinical and Care Professionals
  - Timely reminders
  - Follow up task monitoring between visits
- Bridge Basic Social Determinants
  - Coordinate needed transport
  - Assist with pharmacy refill, replenish and supplies
- Psycho-social Needs
  - Companion to lonely and socially isolated
  - Volunteer companion group
- Close Loop Reporting
  - Proactive reporting/update to entire Care Team
  - On Demand reporting via Portal

The services offered by CHL are scalable to the need and are purposely built to reduce hospital readmissions. Some of the services offered by CHL include;
- Hospital-To-Home services
- Community Transition
- Telehealth for Assisted Living
- Chronic Care Telehealth Program (Medicaid/Medicare)
- Virtual Caregiving
- Fall Safety Monitoring

As a result of all of these services, the Connected Home Living Program has been able to reduce readmission rate in two hospitals to around 3.12%
The CHL model is intended to improve in-home patient experiences and reduce avoidable readmission.

Dean Dana Bradley: Erickson School of Aging, UMBC
The Erickson School of Aging is one of 3 schools of aging in the US. As Dean, Dr Bradley's focus is on culturally appropriate technology for aging adults. She works with NIH, NIA and NSF on research. She is interested in creating a science/data-based environment to support adults as they age and empower them to become proficient with technology. In addition, she believes the older adult population should be part of the research team and/or the design aspects to ensure their perspective is incorporated.

Dean Bradley suggested that Montgomery County has the possibility to be a test bed for the state and country because of the diversity in the region as well as existing entities like the WHO/AARP Age-Friendly County Initiative and the Commission on Aging. Her Challenge to the COA: connect the population needing care with care workers. Work-place issues of staffing, low wages. How can COA and Erickson School work together going forward? The School is open to partnering. They have the research available. The County could identify NORCs and use the population to participate in research and assist in the design of devices/technology that can support them.

UPCOMING MEETING: The next AIC meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 14th at 9:30 am. The main meeting topic will be "Street Safety for Older Adults in Montgomery County". It will be facilitated by Wayne Berman.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 11:40 am