

Minutes from The Health and Wellness Committee on February 1, 2022:

Attendees: Marsha Weber, Joyce Dubow, Wayne Berman, David Engel, Niki Ezeani, Eddie Rivas, Barbara Selter, Virginia Cain, Kendell Mathews, Tina Purser-Langley, Laurie Pross

Guests: Marcia Pruzan, Monique Gardner

Focus of meeting was to discuss presented ideas for the 2022 committee work.

Topic Number 1: In Home Assistance for Older Adults- Wayne

Discussion regarding in home services and how best to promote them throughout the county began the meeting. Villages and Communities for Life , as well as the resources obtainable by calling 240-777-3000 are in position to provide many needed services but the system is fragmented and inadequate to the need.

A fact sheet is proposed; certain states apparently have registries for in-home services

A concept paper is suggested and Wayne suggests a request for funding in keeping with the May forum.

Age Friendly has a work group that addresses this issue- opportunity to coordinate efforts?

Suggested model for such a program= MD State Health Insurance Assistance Program ( SHIP)

Marketing is key

Topic Number 2: Prescription Drugs- Kendell

Prescription drugs present an economic hardship for many older adults due to their cost, the quantity of medications taken by this population, and because the US has very high pharmaceutical prices as compared with other developed nations. Their high cost is attributable to the following factors:

- no price controls
- lengthy patents
- limited competition
- small markets for cancer, heart and genetic drugs
- too few generics

Drug costs vary enormously from one insurance plan to another so the notion of creating a solitary Fact sheet on drug costs is not realistic. Information about discount programs such as Good RX might be beneficial.

This is a very large issue, a national issue one that involves changing the way Medicare deals with pharmaceutical companies. Ideally, Medicare would be able to negotiate prices which could lower prices..... This is a task somewhat beyond the scope of the COA but heightening awareness of these issues remains a critical matter that should be addressed.

Topic Number 3: Linking Senior ( Older Adult ) Gap With Zip Codes- Rev

Suggestion of linking older adults in the Gap income range to certain zip codes as this model has been successfully used by hospitals and physician practices for case management. This method has been found to help identify the most urgent needs; further it is suggested that Recovery monies be tapped for this purpose.

Topic from Laurie:

Number 1: Aging Life Care Managers- Debra Levy and Associates- Director and owner, Susy Murphy has agreed to give a presentation to the COA on April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 9:45 am.

Number 2: Palliative Medicine- what is it and why you might want it? The George Washington University Medical Center has an amazing group of physicians who have been at the forefront of this field for many years- among them Joanne Lynn whom the COA has invited to speak at the Forum. At GW there is an entire division of physician/educators who are the embodiment of what Palliative Medicine should be and how it can be practiced in today's world. I have known 2 of them for over 20 years and the third for about 15 years. Each is very special. One is Elizabeth Cobbs who is the Director of Geriatrics, Hospice and Extended Care at the VAH in Washington, DC and serves as the Medical Director of Residences at Thomas Circle, a retirement community in DC. The second is her second in command at the VAH, Karen Blackstone. The third is Christina Puchalski, world-renowned for her work in health and Spirituality.

Number 3: End of Life- Compassion and Choices; Laurie will serve as liaison to End of Life Coalition. Tina will contact Laurie with further information.

Topic Number 5: Health and Finances- Virginia

Necessary Conversations about Financial matters and Health related issues. These are sometimes difficult but very important to have and not just once, but repeatedly, as circumstances change ,opinions change. A time of crisis is the worst time at which to try to make decisions or to try to guess what someone's wishes might be.

Promotion of planning via the webpage, 50+ MC show , perhaps a fact sheet and a Forum.

Health Care Decision Day is in April- could tie in with that day

Mental Health was raised as an issue as well.

Topic will be summarized, distributed to the committee and a vote will be taken to determine direction.

Next Meeting is March 1, 2022 at 9:30 am

