

Minutes for Health and Wellness Committee 12/7/21

COA Members Present: Neal Brown, Co-Chair, Marsha Weber, Co-Chair

Wayne Berman, Virginia Cain, Betsy Carrier, Joyce Dubow, David Engel, Mona Grieser, Kendell Matthews, Laurie Pross, Edgar Rivas, Barbara Selter

Liaison: Marcia Pruzan, Age-Friendly MC

Staff: Tina Purser Langley, DHHS

Guests: Mashaal Munir, Marcia LeFevre, Lori Simon-Rusinowitz, Mona Negm, Andrea Kepner-Wintz, Stephanie Archer Smith

Items Discussed:

- 1) Welcome and introductions
- 2) There will be a COA sponsored forum on in-home care on May 5, 2022. It will focus on organizations providing in-home care, caregivers and the workforce. A particular area of interest is the gap population, those with too many resources to receive Medicaid but with too few resources to pay for private care. How can sufficient support be provided for those who can and want to remain home to be able to do so? The task force planning it should have representatives from each committee as it is relevant to all.
- 3) Stephanie Archer Smith Executive Director for Meals on Wheels of Central MD More than a Meal Program presented information on her program. The purpose of the program is to help the aging and disabled sustain their optimum health, maintain economic stability, and improve their overall quality of life. In addition to providing meals, the program collaborates with other organizations to improve and maintain participant's physical and mental health, reduce isolation and improve safety and well-being. Drivers are trained to assess changes that may occur in the condition or circumstances of program participants. Efforts are made to avoid duplication of services through collaborations and participation in affinity groups on aging. A Commissioner raised the issue of providing culturally appropriate meals. At this time the organization provides kosher and

Korean meals as requested by the community. Funding is complicated; payment is based on a sliding scale. Suggestions were made to explore collaborations with other organizations to expand the reach of the programs.

- 4) Marci LeFevre of Age Friendly Hyattsville shared that Hyattsville saw needs for home care and medical assistance increase during the Covid epidemic but that many of these needs extend well beyond those due to the epidemic. Age-Friendly Hyattsville has partnered with the University of Maryland School of Public Health (SPH) to provide opportunities for graduate students to complete relevant internships and capstone projects required as part of their educational program. SPH Professor Lori Simon-Rusinowitz described the programs. SPH student Mashaal Munir is currently working on a project with Age-Friendly Hyattsville. Reports from the project will become available in the coming months. Commissioners raised the Greenbelt needs assessment project as possibly of interest to the SPH. They also thought the SPH activities might be relevant for Montgomery County.
- 5) David Engel updated the committee on his exploration of In Home-Aide Services (IHAS) in Montgomery County. Community Reach of Montgomery County (formerly Community Ministries of Rockville) is an organization whose mission is “improve the quality of life for the most vulnerable Montgomery County residents by providing them with basic health and human services and advocating on their behalf, with the goal of helping them achieve and maintain self-sufficiency.” Several of their programs address both the emergency and ongoing needs of older adults. They operate primarily within Rockville because they have yet to cover all those in need within Rockville. However, they would consider expanding beyond Rockville. The organization works in several HOC buildings and is interactive with the Rockville Village Exchange composed of 5 Rockville villages.
- 6) The discussion moved on to the continuing problem of adequate compensation for workers providing the services including family members who provide services. The Age-Friendly Workforce Task Force has been

looking at this issue. Recommendations from the Task Force roundtables will be presented at the January COA meeting.

- 7) A suggestion was made to establish a library of presentations made to the COA and the subcommittees. The Communications Committee is addressing this issue.
- 8) Montgomery County will receive funds from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) . This requires a rapid turnaround from the County on requests for funds for projects. These funds will end in 2024 so projects must have an appropriate timeline. Staff will provide additional information in the future as it become available.
- 9) Where does the Health and Wellness Committee go from here? Members would like to have a discussion at the next meeting to summarize what we have heard and discussed during the fall. This will facilitate the development of a course of action.
- 10) Next meeting : Tuesday, Jan. 4, 2022, 9:30-11:00, ZOOM