

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-Office Communication

**DATE:** March 19, 2021

**TO:** Supervisor Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director, Department of Health and Human Services

**SUBJECT:** **An informational report from the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, providing an update on the status of the integration between DHHS and Aging**

**Issue**

An amendment to the 2021 Budget for the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) requests that the department provide quarterly reports on the status of the integration of the Department on Aging as a division within DHHS. The reports are to include updates on the merging of the Aging and Disability Resource Center and the Adult Protective Services and the Elder Abuse Units, as well as any other program and administrative changes, along with community feedback that has been received due to the integration of the two departments.

**Background**

Over the past few years, DHHS has been implementing a “No Wrong Door” customer service approach meaning that anyone, regardless of age, disability, race, gender, or socio-economic status can and will be served no matter a person’s entry point into the system. A fully integrated human service model will not only align Milwaukee County with the rest of the state and country in terms of how people are served across the lifespan, it will also provide greater access to a wider array of services for people of all ages and abilities. A major advancement toward this vision is the integration of the Department on Aging as a division within DHHS authorized in the 2021 Adopted Budget by the County Executive and Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors. This integration plan was also approved by the Commission on Aging, the body that oversees the Milwaukee County Aging Division, on November 2, 2020.

The scope of the integration also includes a combined Adult Protective Services and Elder Abuse Program to serve all Milwaukee County adults-at-risk, regardless of age or ability. Previously, these services were performed by two separate units based on age – customers ages 18 to 59 were served by DSD and those aged 60 and older were served by Aging. By combining both units and establishing a centralized intake process, services will be easier to access, seamless to operate and most importantly, connect people to additional resources such as legal support, other county programs and community-based services more quickly.

## Discussion

DHHS has made significant progress toward the full integration of Aging. The work undertaken and completed since the last report to the County Board in January is identified below:

- **Launch of DHHS Work Team**: A DHHS work team continues its efforts to tackle several action items identified as part of the integration. The work team includes not only leadership but also management and direct program staff. Based on their expertise, all members have been assigned to a specific work stream with key deliverables. Some of these include development of performance measures and reporting structure, stakeholder communication, and development of the upcoming three-year Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Plan.
- **ADRC Planning Effort**: Planning has begun for the merger of the Aging Resource Center and Disability Resource Center into one combined Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC). The State application for a merged ADRC is due to DHS by September 2021.
- **ADRC Stakeholder Feedback Sessions**: Listening sessions are currently being planned by a subcommittee of the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) Board. In addition, staff continues to update the ADRC Board on the progress of the ADRC application at each monthly meeting.
- **AAA Amendment Submitted**: In February, DHHS received approval from the State Department of Health Services (DHS) for its amendment to the current AAA Plan. The Area Plan Amendment identified the integration of Aging into DHHS and summarized all of the public input collected during the 2021 budget process.
- **AAA Plan (2022-2025) Development**: The Department is required to develop a draft three-year AAA Plan for the State Department of Health Services by November 15, 2021, and the final Area Plan is due to DHS by January 15, 2022. Development of this plan is on track and the next steps include the release of a community survey to solicit input on the needs of older adults followed by public input sessions to discuss the results of that survey.
- **Aging Division Website & Marketing Materials**: A staff workgroup is leading this process. To date, the Division on Aging website and Facebook page have been updated. Staff email signatures have also been updated. The workgroup is partnering with Department of Administrative Services (DAS) staff on a logo redesign for DHHS. Once the ADRC is fully integrated, all DHHS outreach materials such as flyers and brochures will be updated with the new logo and brand.

**Next Steps**

Although significant progress has been made toward achieving the full vision of the DHHS and Aging integration, considerable work remains. DHHS staff will continue to meet and address action items as part of the project plan. The next big steps for the AAA Plan are releasing the survey to the community, which should occur within the next week or so, to be followed by a public listening session or two in April and/or May. Another big step is development of a future state organizational chart for DHHS that considers the integration effort.

DHHS will provide another project update to the County Board in the third quarter.

**Recommendation**

This report is informational and no action is required.



Shakita LaGrant-McClain, Director  
Department of Health and Human Services

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