



WELLNESS COMMITTEE MEETING March 19, 2025

The Wellness Committee members convened in person at Marcia Coggs Human Services Center, 1220 W, Vliet St, Conference Rm 104, with a hybrid option on March 19, 2025.

Members Present:

Commissioner Jacqueline Smith, *Chair*
Maureen Conrad, *Vice-Chair*
Gloria Miller
Christy Sanhuber
Jim Sampson
Commissioner Mark Behar
Tom Suchecki
Commissioner Cindy Van Vreede

Members Excused:

Eric Pampuch
Catherine Trecek
Carol Sibilski
Cherie Swenson
John Griffith

Staff Present

Jennifer Lefeber-DHHS
Ortrialla Paris-DHHS

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Jennifer Lefeber, the Coordinator of Evidence-Based Prevention Programs, called the meeting to order at 1:38 p.m. Everyone was asked to introduce themselves and briefly state their roles. A quorum of members was present.

II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 15, 2025, WELLNESS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: To accept the January 15, 2025, Wellness Committee meeting minutes.
ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Behar Moved, Samson Second)

III. ACTION / INFORMATIONAL / DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Informational Item, Wellness Program Highlight, Evidence-Based Programs 2024 Numbers and Report on 2022-2024 Area Plan Goals, Jennifer Lefeber:** Jennifer Lefeber, the AAA Evidence-Based Health Promotion Coordinator, discussed the performance of the AAA's evidence-based programs in 2024. She highlighted a significant increase in the number of workshops and the introduction of new programs. Additionally, she presented the 2022-2024 Area Agency Plan, which outlines goals such as expanding the Stepping On program into communities of color, strengthening the network of facilitators, and

developing virtual and mail toolkits. The Committee discussed various marketing campaigns and partnerships, including a postcard mailing, resource fairs, and a project with the marketing firm In Power. The Wellness Committee expressed interest in obtaining a copy of the In Power report and its findings.

Ms. Lefebvre also discussed the possibility of reviving the Wellness Symposium and suggested reviewing past events to assess their potential benefits. Furthermore, she noted the continuation of virtual workshops, including a well-received telephone version. The Committee agreed to consider offering more in-person seminars, as those were the original intent.

The Wellness Committee explored the use of social media platforms for various programs and expressed interest in integrating these platforms into their initiatives, recognizing the potential benefits for older adults. They emphasized the importance of social interaction within their programs, highlighting the advantages of group work and problem-solving. There is also a need for training facilitators and exploring the potential for self-directed options.

B. Informational Item, WI Coalition for Social Connection, Suzanne Morley, Health Promotion Program Coordinator, Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging: Ms. Morley provided an overview of social isolation, loneliness, and social connection, focusing on their definitions and impacts on health. The Wisconsin Coalition for Social Connection is a statewide initiative addressing social isolation and loneliness. Its goal is to improve social connections for older adults and individuals with disabilities.

The presentation included data showing decreased social engagement over time and highlighted the health risks associated with a lack of social connection. Suggestions for increasing social connection were offered, including volunteer opportunities, intergenerational activities, and health promotion programs. The coalition employs a collective impact approach, bringing together organizations and individuals to tackle these issues collaboratively.

Ms. Morley also presented an overview of the Wisconsin Coalition to End Social Isolation and Loneliness. This coalition comprises over 600 members and fosters social connections for older adults and individuals with disabilities. It has several committees, including policy champions, awareness, and engagement. The coalition's activities include bi-monthly network meetings, pilot screening programs, data collection, annual awareness weeks, and policy advocacy. They maintain a website containing resources for consumers and professionals and monthly

newsletters. Ms. Morley encourages people to join the coalition, develop local initiatives, or reach out to neighbors and friends to promote social connection.

The committee members shared their experiences with Alzheimer's, dementia, and loneliness, especially as it relates to their friends. They expressed gratitude for the presentation and mentioned their intention to continue utilizing the resources provided. Ms. Lefebvre will share today's presentation with the committee members for future reference.

IV. 2025 WELLNESS COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

- May 21, 2025, at 1:30-3:00pm In-Person, Juniper Court, 3209 S Lake Dr, St Francis, WI 53235
- September 17, 2025, at 1:30-3:00pm In-Person, location TBD
- November 19, 2025, at 1:30-3:00pm In-Person, LGBT Community Center 315 W Court St, Milwaukee, WI 53212

A committee member proposed the Greater Milwaukee Foundation as a potential meeting location. The foundation is available for free and provides tech support.

V. WELLNESS COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND GUEST UPDATES ON RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER ADULTS

- The Wisconsin Alzheimer's Institute is hosting a "Breaking the Silence" breakfast event titled "Know Your Numbers" **on April 11, 2025, from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.** The event will occur at the Grand Ballroom of the Italian Community Center, 631 E. Chicago St., Milwaukee, WI. Attendees should register in advance to ensure an adequate amount of food is provided.
- During the organizing committee meeting, a member discussed Becca Levy's book on ageism, "Breaking the Age Code," which claims that maintaining a positive attitude can add 7.5 years to one's life. Another member mentioned a related book, "Ageism Unmasked," by Tracy Gendron.
- A blood pressure check event is scheduled for April 5, 2025.
- Every Friday morning from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., the Board of Persons with Developmental Disabilities will host virtual updates on Medicaid. Participation is limited to 500 people, so interested individuals should visit their website to register.

- The Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging is hosting the 2025 Healthy Aging Summit, themed "Aging Is Living," **on Thursday, May 15, 2025**, at Sentry World in Stevens Point. The cost is \$165, and the summit is primarily aimed at professionals.
- Moreover, Independence First will hold a forum on Medicare as an informational session with Tammy Baldwin **on March 27, 2025**. Currently, Medicaid is considered a greater threat than Medicare.

VI. ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: Meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Action: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Suchecky moved, Piontek second)

Respectfully submitted,

Vonda Nyang
AAA Executive Assistant