



**Milwaukee County Commission on Aging
Wellness Committee Meeting
March 20, 2024**

The Wellness Committee convened virtually on Wednesday, March 20, 2024. Members and attendees joined the virtual meeting with video conference and or conference call options (computer or telephone).

Members Present:

Gloria Miller-*Chair*
Maureen Conrad
Christy Sanhuber
Cathy Trecek
Tom Suchecki

Members Excused:

Eric Pampuch
John Griffith
Carmen Pangilinan

Staff Present:

Domonique Klett *DHHS*
Bekki Schmitt *DHHS*
Jennifer Lefeber *DHHS*

Attendees from the Public

Commissioner Mark P. Behar
Aziz Abdullah, *INPOWER*
Jill Renken, *Wisconsin Institute for
Healthy Aging*

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Gloria Miller called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. Roll call was taken. Everyone gave a quick introduction of their titles and roles.

II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 15, 2023, & JANUARY 17, 2024, WELLNESS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES:

MOTION: To accept the November 15, 2023, and January 17, 2024, Wellness Committee meeting minutes.

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Conrad Moved, Sanhuber Second).

III. INFORMATION ITEM WELLNESS WORKSHOPS UPDATE (Jennifer Lefeber)

A. Gente Fuerte (Strong Bodies)

Evidence-Based Prevention Programs Coordinator, Jennifer Lefeber, gave a brief introduction to a program in which she is collaborating with UW Madison Division of Extension. The Strong Bodies program is an evidence-based program that has been implemented by UW Extension & the FoodWise

program around Milwaukee County. This program is a progressive strength training program for men and women aimed at increasing muscle mass, strength, improvement of bone density, while helping decrease falls. This program was created for older adults to help address other health conditions. This is a community-based class and can be hosted at churches, senior centers and senior living communities. Each class is designed to hold between 8-12 people per session. The program will run year-round 2 times a week for a 10-12 week series. There may be breaks during a certain season, dependent on the program location. The program meets for 1 hour per session over the course of 20-24 sessions. Lefebvre mentioned Volunteers are needed to help facilitate this program due to the number of participants for each class. Lefebvre announced that UW Madison Division of Extension, Strong Body program, will be hosted by Sixteenth Street Health Clinic starting on May 8th, 2024. They will host the Spanish version of this program, Gente Fuerte. Per Lefebvre, she will distribute a flyer with additional details about the event. Lefebvre announced facilitator opportunities and requirements, which includes the following: one 8-hour Strong Bodies Leader Training. 2024 dates are listed below. Facilitators must also be trained in C.P.R. Lefebvre noted that the program will be treated like the other programs with Volunteer Facilitator, where if the facilitator is a volunteer and not compensated by their employer to provide the program, the County will pay a stipend of \$20 per session over the course of 20-24 sessions. Attendees must be committed to the program. Lefebvre is sending out a flyer for any volunteers who would like to be a facilitator.

- April 10th, Madison WI
- May 8th, Milwaukee, WI (Strong Bodies for Spanish-speaking Leaders)
- August 7th Eau Claire, WI
- November 13th, Appleton, WI

More information on the Strong Bodies program can be found here:

[StrongBodies – Healthy Eating & Active Living \(wisc.edu\)](https://www.wisc.edu/strongbodies)

IV. INFORMATION ITEM: STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING AFRICAN AMERICANS IN EBPP

Bekki Schmitt invited Aziz Abdullah of INPower to present on a project that was funded by ARPA, with a focus on African Americans engaging with some of the wellness workshops.

Abdullah gave a summary of himself and his life here in Milwaukee County. Abdullah gave an outline of goals for the project, which are to identify barriers and benefits to African American older adults participating in wellness programs, developing strategies, tailoring approaches and improving program outcomes. Abdullah mentioned a project approach, which includes one-on-one interviews, reviewing existing data, and publishing learnings and findings to increase participant and facilitator engagement.

Abdullah stated that they have interviewed 4 facilitators and another 4 scheduled, interviewed 8 current participants and other 12 scheduled. Also, they have interviewed 6 community members and another 8 scheduled. He will be reviewing existing data and publishing interviews learnings. Abdullah stated that they will be at the Stepping On class at Barack Obama High School, 5075 N. Sherman. He stated that he also has interviews coming up with people from the General Baptist State Convention. Abdullah expressed satisfaction with the attendance and engagement with the project.

Maureen Conrad asked a question, wondering if there is financial compensation for completing an interview. Abdullah clarified for the committee that interview participants can receive a stipend for their time, but they can decline it.

Abdullah highlighted that other programs that people might be interested in are related to physical activity programs, walking programs and nutrition. A full report is coming on April 15th. Abdullah added that at the next meeting there will be a full presentation on this program.

Conrad asks if she could get a copy of the data sheet from Abdullah. She will post it in her building. Conrad believes that it will encourage and motivate people.

Behar asked a question about the Evidence-Based Prevention Programs. Schmitt responded that the Evidence-Based Prevention Programs consists of workshops and facilitators. The funding comes from the federal level. This project with INPower was created to engage diverse community-based groups. The focus is to engage the community while allowing access to programs. The Evidence Based Prevention Programs continue to build relationships within the community, while also looking at its partnership within the LGBT community.

Schmitt added that Abdullah is invited back to the Wellness Committee to present the final report. Schmitt added that this will be a great opportunity and of importance to ask for space in an upcoming Commission on Aging meeting so that this is visible at a higher level.

V. INFORMATION ITEM: WISCONSIN INSTITUTE FOR HEALTHY AGING

Jill Renken provided an overview of the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging, its current initiatives, and potential support around evidence-based programs for the great work in Milwaukee County. Renken noted that this is a non-profit agency based out of Madison but serves all counties in the state of Wisconsin. Recently, they expanded their mission to include working on public health initiatives that are important to older adults. They are focusing on ageism,

social isolation and loneliness, social connections, as well fall prevention efforts. Renken stated that these are their big initiatives that are beyond their regular programming.

Renken highlighted the social connections and Falls Free Wisconsin initiative. They have formed a coalition with partners including Department of Health Services, some Public Health Departments, and UW Extension. Renken stated that there are over 150 organizations that are involved in the coalition.

Renken stated they are working on increasing awareness on fall prevention. Renken stated that they are working with the Green Bay Packers Foundation and Great Lakes Tribal Council focusing in on Tribal Elders. Thirty four percent of tribal elders fall stated Renken. The focus for 2024 is working with caregivers, as well as the tribes stated Renken. Renken stated that they are providing some help throughout the state, which includes discussion with older adults on their health issues that they are facing as well as virtual events. There will be a virtual event on April 15, 2024, stated Renken.

VI. UPCOMING WELLNESS COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

- a. May 22 at 1:30-3:00 (Greendale Public Library)
- b. September 18 at 1:30-3:00 (Virtual)
- c. November 20 at 1:30-3:00 (West Allis Senior Center)

VII. WELLNESS COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND GUESTS- UPDATES ON RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER ADULTS

Bekki Schmitt informed the Wellness Committee she will be transitioning in April. She will be stepping down from the Wellness Committee. Jennifer Lefeber will staff the Wellness Committee.

Maureen stated that she is involved with a Resource Fair on October 4th, 2024, from 1pm -4pm.

Christy asked the question about the Bill for funding regarding the Health Aging Grant SB 407 and AB418. These bills did not pass because time had run out.

Bekki shared two agency announcements. On April 10th the ADRC is hosting a Brain Health Resource Fair. It will be at Wilson Park. Area on Agency is starting their process for the next area plan which is every 3

years. This is when they gather public input from older adults throughout the community and that public input feeds the goals for the next 3 years. They are holding 4 public hearings in April.

VII. ADJOURNMENT: Chair Miller Adjourn the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

Ortrialla Paris
Clerical Assistant