



## **Advisory Council Meeting August 9, 2023**

Milwaukee County Commission on Aging Advisory Council convened virtually on Wednesday, August 9, 2023. Members and attendees joined the virtual meeting by video conference and conference call.

### **Members Present:**

Denise Callaway, *Chair*  
Patricia Dunn  
John Griffith  
Eugene Guskowski  
James Kimble  
Anne Laatsch  
Gail Morgan

### **Members Excused:**

Sally Lindner  
Kent Mayfield  
Paula Penebaker  
Cherie Rumler  
Suzanne Ryer  
Cherie Swenson  
Amanda Weiler  
Barbara Wyatt-Sibley

### **Staff Present:**

Christel Colorado, *DHHS*  
Daniel Idzikowski, *DHHS*  
Carrie Koss Vallejo, *DHHS*  
Emily Petersen, *DHHS*  
Bekki Schmitt, *DHHS*  
Kayla Steinke, *DHHS*  
Nina Yang, *DHHS*

### **Attendees from the Public:**

Anne Gargano Ahmed, *WI-DHS*  
Yvonne Greer  
Timothy Wellens, *WI-DHS*  
Zachary Wilks-Metrou, *AHA*  
Cathy Wood, *SOA*

## **I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL:**

Executive Assistant Christel Colorado called roll call at 3:10 p.m.

## **II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF JUNE 14, 2023 MEETING MINUTES:**

Quorum was not met. Minutes will be reviewed and approved September 13, 2023.

## **III. AREA AGING PLAN PERFORMANCE UPDATES:**

Carrie Koss Vallejo, AAA Program and Planning Coordinator provided an update regarding the 2022-23 Area Aging Plan. The Advisory Council requested quarterly updates on the goals that have had progress. Carrie provided the Area Aging Plan 2023 2nd Quarter Progress Report (see attachment). Progress on the goals has been helped by returning to in-person programming.

Social Support goals: Serving Older Adults of Southeastern Wisconsin (SOA) received ARPA funds to expand their "Tech-Connect" program to City of Milwaukee Housing Authority sites. The program helps older adults gain computer skills and access new devices.

Nutrition goals: Many meal sites have been transitioned from take-out to serving congregate meals. At the same time the popular “Dine Out” program has continued to grow with minority-based restaurants now offering in person dining and two new restaurants – Pass da Peas and Rise and Grind – added to the mix.

Two main challenges on meeting these goals are volunteer recruitment and the ARPA funding soon ending. Gene Guskowski asked if there was any progress on the Senior Center goals which have their own topic in the Area Aging Plan. Carrie did not have any updates to give at this time.

#### **IV. NEW OAA ARPA FUNDING REQUESTS:**

Chair Denise Callaway questioned Idzikowski on the timeline needed for the Advisory Council’s approved recommendations to move forward to the full Commission on Aging. Idzikowski shared that the Advisory Council would make recommendations to the Commission on Aging, which has the authority to approve the spending requests. As they are just recommendations a quorum is not needed.

Kayla Steinke Caregiver Support Coordinator presented the four proposed projects utilizing the ARPA funds through the National Family Support Program (See Attachment):

- Caregiver Support Outreach and Support Services to LGBT individuals;
- Caregiver Support Outreach and Support Services to Relative Caregivers;
- Caregiver Support Outreach and Support Services to Refugee and Immigrant Caregivers; and
- Caregiver Training and Education Materials for Caregivers.

Commissioner Gene Guskowski questioned when these goals would commence and if the funding is available. Kayla shared that these initiatives would begin in 2024, however some were already in progress. The funding request would be for the 2024 federal fiscal year, to be utilized by September 22, 2024.

Idzikowski shared that the funds are available through the Older Americans Act ARPA grant but would need approval from the Commission on Aging to move forward to spend on these particular projects. Guskowski suggested metrics for all of the proposed programs to evaluate the outcomes and success. Chair Callaway confirmed that they will move forward with the recommendations and will report to the Commission on Aging.

#### **V. AGING NETWORK SUMMIT FOLLOW-UP:**

Bekki Schmitt gave a quick update on the Aging Network Summit. They compiled the findings and feedback from the Summit respondents, particularly opportunities for collaboration. The next step is to create and foster ongoing collaborations among the Aging Network. The Milwaukee County Aging Network Summit Takeaway PowerPoint attachment contains a link to an online Padlet.

**VI. COMMENTS ON ACL'S PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT REGULATION:**

Emily Petersen, Advocacy and Policy Manager, shared a quick overview of the new proposed Older Americans Act federal regulations and background on why the AAA wished to submit comments to the Administration for Community Living on the proposed regulations. The Advocacy Committee has reviewed the comments which are due by August 15<sup>th</sup>. Once the Advisory Council reviews the comments, they will be forwarded to the Executive Committee for confirmation by the Commission on Aging.

The regulations provide detail on the Older American's Act, the federal law which governs the work of state Aging Agencies and local Area Agencies on Aging. It provides funding for all programs and services that are developed by the Area Agencies on Aging. The Older American's Act governs the activity of Aging Advisory Councils and there are some recommended changes to the advisory councils and the Area Planning process. The regulations have not been updated since 1988. The Older American's Act has been reauthorized seven times since then which include new programs and services, but the rules have not been updated. Emily shared she has included the full proposed comments along with a presentation in the attachments.

Emily focused on the proposed revisions to the required membership of the advisory council and an increase of responsibilities for advisory councils in the area planning process. She shared a strong concern that requiring service providers to sit on the advisory council could cause a conflict of interest. Another change was made to the definition of "greatest social and economic need." Greater flexibility was given to states to define this term as it can vary from community to community. The Advocacy Committee responded to this section, to enforce the current definition to stay strong and stable. Comments were also made to the Family Caregiving section as it is an entirely new section and supporting increased flexibility in the delivery of nutrition services.

Emily asked the council if they had any feedback to share, to please reach out to her quickly as comments need to be submitted soon.

**VII. FOCUS AREA BREAKOUT SESSIONS: ISOLATION, LONELINESS & MENTAL HEALTH CHRONIC HEALTH DISEASE**

Chair Denise Calloway informed the committee members and attendees will enter a breakout room to discuss key issues of Isolation, Loneliness and Mental Health and Chronic Health Disease.

**VIII. FOCUS AREA REPORT OUT & NEXT STEPS:**

Idzikowski shared an overview of the Chronic Health Disease breakout room discussion. He shared that the Coordinator of Statewide Health Heart Wellness

Initiative, Department of Health Services is pursuing a federal grant focusing on Milwaukee County. He shares that the American Heart Association has many initiatives, including a self-monitoring blood pressure initiative through the libraries. Dr. Greer is partnering with Madison & Milwaukee focusing on delivering services in a culturally sensitive way to older adults/adults of color, creating a unique way to provide heart health programs from home.

Chair Calloway shared the overview discussion of Isolation, Loneliness & Mental Health. Tim Wallen was present to share about the Statewide Coalition and the work that is currently being done at a state level. Chair Calloway shared regarding a three question UCLA survey that measures loneliness. With so much information available there is a need to have a deeper understanding of those programs so the Commission on Aging can help connect these programs with older adults. Dr. Greer commented there is an interconnectedness between the two workgroups. Overcoming isolation and loneliness depend on how socially connected and motivated one is. Older adults who are more socially connected tend to better care for their wellbeing to be able prevent and control chronic diseases.

Tim Wallen informed the committee if they are interested in joining the state coalition to end loneliness and isolation to reach out to him. Anyone is able to join and there are three levels of memberships. Members can just be informed; they'll receive information from the coalition, members can provide feedback and advice on particular topics, and members who would like to be more active can become part of the four work groups. Organizations can also become members.

#### **IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Kayla highlighted a few of the announcements; an upcoming in-person Savvy Caregiver program October 4<sup>th</sup>- November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Fall Prevention Week starting September 18, 2023 with events at the Milwaukee County senior centers.

Nina Yang shared she will have a Medicare series in the fall with ten dates. She will also have three sessions for one-on-one consultations.

#### **X. ADJOURNMENT: MOTION TO ADJOURN**

Meeting adjourned at 4:42 p.m.

The next Advisory Council meeting will be October 11, 2023, a virtual meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christel Colorado  
Executive Assistant