



ADVOCACY COMMITTEE MEETING SEPTEMBER 6, 2024

The Milwaukee County Aging Advocacy Committee convened in person at the Clinton Rose Senior Center on Friday, September 6, 2024. Members and attendees also joined the meeting virtually and by conference call.

Members Present:

Commissioner Brian Peters, *Chair*
Harold Oemig, *Vice-Chair*
Commissioner George Banda
Maureen Conrad
Sopheya Farrell
John Griffith
Trina Koch

Members Excused:

William Meunier
Gary Mikolajczyk
County Supervisor Sequanna Taylor
Commissioner Janice Wilberg, Ph.D.

Milwaukee County Staff

Michelle Allison, *DHHS*
Claire Enders, *DHHS*

Milwaukee County Staff Continued...

Carrie Koss Vallejo, *DHHS*
Vonda Nyang, *DHHS*
Emily Petersen, *DHHS*
Keshawn Williams,
Nina Yang, *DHHS*

Attendees from the Public

Commissioner Behar
Joseph Crivello
Thomas Gossett
Tiffany Henry, *Senator Baldwin's Office*
Jill Kenehan-Krey, *ASL Interpreter*
Baily Knutson
Paulette Maclin
Rene Smith
Tom Suchecki
Stephanie Zito, *ASL Interpreter*

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Brian Peters called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. Emily Petersen, AAA Advocacy and Policy Manager, took the roll call. A quorum was present.

II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 2, 2024, ADVOCACY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: To approve the August 2, 2024, Advocacy Committee meeting minutes

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

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES

- **October In-District Advocacy Event:** The second in-district advocacy event will be at McGovern Park Senior Center on October 17, 2024. The time of the

event is yet to be determined. The first part of the event, a crucial legislative panel, will be where staff will ask questions (Q&A), and then the discussion will open to the public. Ms. Petersen will create and distribute a flyer for the event to committee members.

- **Public Hearings in October:** There will be three public hearings on the Area Plan Goals in October, providing a significant opportunity for all the Commission on Aging's (COA's) Committees and Councils to contribute. One of the hearings will be at Washington Park Senior Center, the second at another location, and one virtual option.

IV. UPDATE ON ACTION ITEMS

- a) **Update on Action Item, Drafted Communication on the Strategic Framework for a National Plan on Aging:** At the August Advocacy Committee meeting, the Committee took action to draft a response to the Strategic Framework for the National Plan on Aging. At the Commission on Aging meeting in August, they voted to approve the correspondence. Staff is making significant progress in finalizing the draft, which is not due until September 15, 2024. This progress should reassure the Committee members of its commitment to the task at hand. A copy of this draft is included in today's meeting packet.

V. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICE UPDATES

A. Federal Aging Policy

I. Federal Budget and Issues

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services FY25 Physician Fee Schedule: Due to time constraints, this item was not covered in the meeting.

- a. **Hospital Stability and Health Services Act of 2024, Tiffany Henry, Office Director, Senator Tammy Baldwin's Office:** Earlier this year, the Hospital Sisters Health System (HSBS) announced the abrupt closure of two hospitals and over a dozen clinics in western Wisconsin. In response, Senator Baldwin proposed legislation to prevent sudden hospital closures, protect communities from interruptions in care, and ensure continued access to essential services for staying healthy. The proposed bill also mandates that hospitals notify the US Department of Health and Human Services at least 90 days before discontinuing services or fully closing.

This legislation is part of a broader package of bills introduced by the senator, including the Health Over Wealth Act. The bill aims to increase transparency among private equity firms and for-profit companies that own healthcare entities and establish safeguards to protect workers and patients.

Capping Prescription Costs Act of 2024, Tiffany Henry, Office Director, Senator Tammy Baldwin's Office: Senator Baldwin is also co-sponsoring the Capping Prescription Costs Act, which would lower prescription costs for millions of Americans and Wisconsin residents. The proposed annual cap on out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs is set at \$2,000 for individuals and \$4,000 for families. This bill is not just a standalone initiative, but a continuation of the Inflation Reduction Act. This act, which has already proven its effectiveness by capping prescription drug cost-sharing for Medicare Part D beneficiaries, extends savings to commercial healthcare markets. Senator Baldwin has also supported addressing the high cost of insulin.

II. Federal Regulations and Executive Orders

No report.

B. State Legislative Issues

- I. **Wisconsin ADA Transition Plan:** Claire Enders, AAA Transportation Coordinator, provided a draft comment for the Committee to review and she appeared to discuss the Advocacy Committee's thoughts on the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's ADA Transition plan. The recommendations will help make Wisconsin's transportation system more compliant with ADA accessibility rules. The ADA Transition plan focuses heavily on curb ramps and pathways and pedestrian infrastructure on state highways. There was no mention of interchange projects.

There was a brief discussion about reconstructing the curb at Washington Park Senior Center, and it was recommended that that comment be forwarded to the Senior Center Committee. This recommendation was made because the Senior Center Committee is actively working on accessibility improvements at the center and is in the best position to address this issue.

MOTION: To provide comment on the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's ADA Transition Plan

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Griffith Moved, Banda Second)

II. Administrative Rules and Governor's Task Forces Issue

- a. **HOME and Community-based Services Minimum Fee Schedule enactment:** The Governor's office has issued a press release regarding the minimum fee schedule for Home and Community-based services. The Governor has approved the allocation of American Rescue Plan Act Funds to reimburse services and Medicaid items that are not reimbursable. This legislation will go into effect **on October 1, 2024**. However, it's important to

note that the funding will only be available for a limited time until the ARPA funds are depleted, creating a sense of urgency for stakeholders. The fee schedule must be included in the Governor's budget for future funding allocation.

The Advocacy Committee has decided to wait to see if the Governor includes the fee schedule in his proposed budget. The inclusion of the fee schedule in the budget will significantly impact future funding allocation. If the fee schedule is included in his budget, the committee will evaluate it and decide whether to take a position as part of their advocacy priorities.

- b. [Governor's Task Force on Healthcare Workforce](#) meets for the final time on August 8, 2024, in Madison. Feedback relative to the work of this group should be submitted directly to ltgovernor@wisconsin.gov.

The meeting packet included a two-page summary of the task force's recommendations. Ms. Petersen highlighted that these recommendations, if endorsed by the Advocacy Committee, could have a significant impact. The Committee could write a letter, or include in its policy portfolio, advocacy on these recommendations during the state biennial budget proceedings. The fee schedule discussed earlier is included in the recommendations.

The Advocacy Committee discussed a few of the recommendations. Specifically, there were concerns about the roles of Caregivers/CNAs and Home Health Care Companions, particularly in terms of their responsibilities and training, that need to be clarified.

MOTION: To send a letter supporting the recommendations of the Governor's Task Force on the Healthcare Workforce, with a specific recommendation clarifying the distinction between CNA's and Home Health Companions and increasing the standards for training and certifying caregivers.

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

Committee Member Griffith motioned that the committee include in the comment that healthcare organizations be required to disclose all of their shareholders.

MOTION: To reconsider the item to include the disclosure of shareholders as part of the letter. (Conrad Moved, Griffith Second). Motion didn't carry.

MOTION: To send a letter supporting the recommendations of the Governor's Task Force on the Healthcare Workforce, with a specific recommendation clarifying the distinction between CNA's and Home Health Companions and increasing the standards for training and certifying caregivers.

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

C. Milwaukee County Legislative Issues

I. Milwaukee County Budget and Legislation - No Report

II. Aging Items of Interest

- i. **Growing MKE Initiative:** The City of Milwaukee is rewriting the zoning ordinance to encourage more housing density, which will allow more affordability housing units in many neighborhoods. The City of Milwaukee is gathering letters of support for this initiative. The Chair recommended support of these efforts and that a letter be sent prior to the deadline. A flyer was included in the packet and members can visit the website for more information.

MOTION: To send a letter to the City of Milwaukee in support of the Growing MKE Initiative

ACTION: One abstained, Motion prevailed (Koch Moved, Conrad Second, Oemig abstained.)

VI. POTENTIAL ACTION ITEMS

- a) **2025-2027 Area Aging Plan Goals:** The Advocacy Committee meticulously reviewed and discussed their goals within the Area Agency Plan. They carefully considered which of the current eight goals to retain and which ones to exclude due to their time-consuming nature. The Committee then voted on each goal, resulting in a decision to retain all eight goals, except for goals five and eight, which were merged into a single goal.

The goals will be forwarded to the Advisory Council for consideration at their next meeting.

VII. ADJOURNMENT: MEETING ADJOURNED AT 10:38 a.m.

The next Advocacy Committee meeting will be at 9 a.m. on Friday, October 4, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Vonda Nyang
Executive Assistant