

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: October 1, 2021

To: 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

File Type: Informational Report

REQUEST

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.

POLICY

2021 DHHS Adopted Budget Amendment 1A037

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 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 the Disabilities Services Division (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.

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

Area Plan (2022-2025) Development

Development of the Area Plan for the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is on track. A community-wide survey was conducted online this past summer, and over 7,500 paper surveys were also distributed or mailed to various locations. In addition, several public listening sessions were held to solicit additional feedback from seniors and their families. The survey closed in mid-June with over 1,000 surveys collected. The Commission on Aging Advisory Council and MCDA staff reviewed and analyzed the survey data, and in September the Advisory Council presented Area Plan goals to the Commission on Aging.

The Advisory Council and MCDA staff coordinated four public listening sessions in September and early October to solicit feedback on the proposed Area Plan goals, and additional feedback was collected via an online comment form on MCDA's website. It is anticipated that the Commission on Aging will review and approve the entire Area Plan at its November meeting. The Area Plan then needs County Board and County Executive review and approval before the document is submitted to the State Department of Health Services for final approval. DHHS anticipates requesting County Board approval in the January/February 2022 cycle.

ADRC State Application

The formal application to combine the Aging Resource Center (ARC) and Disability Resource Center (DRC) into an Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) was submitted on September 30, 2021 to the State Department of Health Services. Prior to the submittal, a draft application was reviewed by the ADRC Governing Board earlier in September. In addition, in June, the County Board approved File 21-501 authorizing DHHS to prepare an application for submission to DHS for certification of the Milwaukee County ADRC.

ADRC staff has been participating in monthly trainings to become familiar with serving adults of all ages and abilities. Information and Assistance staff from the ARC and DRC have been paired to begin cross-training and shadowing opportunities. Leaders are working on the development of combined ADRC processes.

As part of this application, an organizational chart has been prepared and reflects a total of 87 full-time equivalent positions. The combined ADRC is reflected in the 2022 Recommended

Budget and would be effective starting January 1, 2022.

APS Program Update

The Adult Protective Services (APS) team serves Milwaukee County residents in various capacities to ensure safety, well-being, and stability for individuals with differing abilities, ages 18-59, and older adults, age 60 and over. This program was originally operated separately by DSD and Aging and in the 2021 Budget, the two separate programs merged into one. Since January of this year, the adult protective services team has assisted over 1,800 families impacted by abuse, neglect, financial exploitation or needed guardianship. The team works to ensure safety as a primary intervention but often provides preventative support by connecting families to resources that can support them in long-term stability.

We have a triage team which consists of two full-time team members and two back-up supports to receive calls on the referral line with a current 40% live answer rate and 75% return call within 48 business hours for those leaving messages. They also receive online referrals from the county website and respond to those within 48 hours. Please note that the decrease in live answer rate and returned calls have been significantly impacted by technical challenges with the phone system being down for several weeks, several staff retirements, worker transfers to other areas, and worker resignations. At the time of this writing, staff is being hired and trained to properly handle the triage line. It is anticipated the live answer rate and return calls will increase when new staff is trained.

Communications

The following activities are being conducted by our staff around communication:

- Department leadership provides regular integration updates to all staff.
- DHHS Rebranding—DHHS worked closely with the Department of Administrative Services to rebrand DHHS to align with the County's vision logo. The new DHHS visual identity reflects the No Wrong Door vision and our collective work as one department.
- Website--Incorporated the Division on Aging and Veterans' Services sites into the DHHS site.
- Training Communication--Developed a new email marketing product to promote integration-related trainings.

Cross Training

To ensure staff from different program areas who have touchpoints with older adults is cross trained, a team has been charged with identifying, developing, and implementing trainings for staff in the ARC and DRC, AAA, and Veterans' Services.

2021 Training Schedule:

We have coordinated a training schedule for 2021 and will add additional trainings as topics

come up as we work toward the ARC/DRC merger.

- May Topics: Hear Wisconsin and Vision Forward
- June Topic: Trauma Informed Care with Leanne Delsart of BHD
- July Topic: CARS and CART/Crisis Services with Jim Feagle, Pauline Young, and Lisa Kacamarek
- August Topic: Dementia Care Specialist Services with Candice LeGros and Cristina Huitron
- September Topic: Youth Transition with Hazel Miller
- October Topic: Senior Dining, Meals on Wheels, and MCDA Transportation (and application/referral process) with Kayla Steinke and MCDA staff
- November Topic: Open. Aging and Ageism with Helen Bader School of Social Welfare staff (confirmed) and Disability and Ableism with Center for Independence Staff (tentative)
- December Topic: Open. Left open intentionally for training needs which may arise.

Related File No's:	20-733 , 21-107 , 21-366 , 21-501
Associated File No's (Including Transfer Packets):	
Previous Action Date(s):	

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

This item is aligned to the strategic plan because it focuses on breaking down silos across County government to maximize access to and quality of services offered.

FISCAL EFFECT

This item is informational and has no fiscal effect.

TERMS

N/A

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

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