



**AGING ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING  
JUNE 12, 2024**

The Milwaukee County Aging Advisory Council convened virtually on Wednesday, June 12, 2024. Members and attendees joined the meeting by video and teleconference.

**Members Present:**

Commissioner Denise Callaway, *Chair*  
Commissioner Mark P. Behar  
Commissioner Eugene Guskowski  
John Griffith  
James Kimble  
Anne Laatsch  
George Schneider  
Nancy Simuel  
Barbara Wyatt-Sibley

**Milwaukee County Staff**

Daniel Idzikowski, *DHHS*  
Jill Knight, *DHHS*  
Carrie Koss Vallejo, *DHHS*  
Vonda Nyang, *DHHS*  
*Nina Yang, DHHS*

**Attendees from the Public**

Eric Grosso *DHHS*  
Zachary Wilks-Metrou

**Members Excused:**

Commissioner Paula Penebaker  
Patricia Dunn  
Sandra Janzer  
Debrah Lewis  
Sally Lindner  
Martin Matson  
Kent Mayfield  
Jim McLaughlin  
Gail Morgan  
Suzanne Ryer

## MINUTES

### I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Denise Callaway called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m. Vice Chair, Paula Pennebaker took the roll call; A quorum was not present at the beginning of the meeting.

### II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 10, 2024, ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

**MOTION:** To accept the April 10, 2024, Advisory Council meeting minutes.

**ACTION:** Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Griffith Moved, Guskowski Second).

### III. 2025-2027 AREA AGING PLAN SURVEY UPDATE

AAA Program and Planning Coordinator Koss Vallejo gave an update on the 2025-2027 Area Aging Plan survey, emphasizing efforts to enhance participation among diverse demographics. With over 300 responses received, she discussed strategies including outreach to vendors serving clients in various languages and proposing a sampling approach to target underrepresented groups. She acknowledged the predictable skew towards white, educated respondents in online surveys and notes ongoing efforts to distribute paper surveys and engage community vendors for broader representation.

Director Idzikowski provided an update on the Area Aging Plans survey distribution strategies, focusing on expanding outreach to diverse populations. The initiative includes partnering with Empower, a minority-based marketing firm, for a door-to-door campaign targeting City of Milwaukee residents aged 50 and older. They've distributed 6,000 surveys through this. Additionally, paper surveys will be distributed to senior housing complexes in suburban Milwaukee County to address gaps in survey responses. Further strategies discussed include reaching out to long-term care participants through the ADRC, aiming to ensure representation from lower-income and functionally challenged older adults.

Commissioner Mark Behar asked about challenges she faced with tabulating paper surveys using the new software being used. Carrie expressed satisfaction with the tabulation process and confidence in handling large volumes of paper responses.

They discussed setting closing dates for the online survey, aiming for late July to allow adequate time for analysis and integration with focus groups.

Ms. Vallejo also provided preliminary data insights, cautioning about the demographic skew towards white, highly educated respondents from specific zip codes. Despite this limitation, initial feedback indicated high satisfaction with Milwaukee County as a place to grow old, with concerns raised about transportation safety and accessibility to health care.

Eric Grosso, demographer from Wisconsin Department of Health and Human Services presented data on Milwaukee County's aging population, emphasizing demographic trends and projections. He highlighted the significant growth in the population aged 60 and older, driven primarily by the aging Baby Boomer generation. He then detailed current demographics, noting that Milwaukee County's older adult population is growing, although with variations across different regions of the county.

Regarding economic indicators, Grosso discussed poverty rates and SNAP utilization among older adults, indicating a rise in economic need, possibly exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. He also addressed housing patterns, specifically the high percentage of elderly women living alone in Milwaukee County compared to other demographics. He also highlighted that approximately one-third report having at least one disability, underscoring the challenges faced by this demographic.

In terms of future projections, Grosso touched on population forecasts, noting that while data sets are being updated, he anticipates minimal overall population growth in Milwaukee County. He also acknowledged emerging data on LGBT seniors returning to Wisconsin, suggesting a potential area for future study and policy consideration. Throughout his presentation, Grosso emphasized the importance of these demographic insights for planning and policymaking, encouraging stakeholders to use the data to inform decisions on aging services and community support initiatives.

#### **IV. 2025-2027 AREA AGING PLAN PUBLIC OUTREACH**

Emily Petersen, AAA Project Manager Policy Advocacy provided an update on a variety of upcoming activities related to the aging plan, specifically the organization of various focus groups, which include sessions for caregivers, a focus group with Native American older adults, a focus group with the LGBT community next Tuesday, an older adult with disabilities focus group July 1<sup>st</sup> held at Independence First, and other specific groups. There is an emphasis on ensuring diverse representation and engagement from various community partnerships. Paper surveys will be available at each focus group. Discussion followed about leveraging community partnerships, such as engaging with local churches to promote survey completion. Chair Calloway mentions Barbara Wyatt-Sibley has willingly offered to facilitate survey completion at her church. She will use her position to encourage church members to participate in completing the surveys.

The discussion moves to structuring the focus groups to gather meaningful insights on issues like transportation, nutrition, and social isolation. Consistency in the questions across groups will facilitate data analysis and comparison. Commissioner Guskowski advocates for including questions related to senior centers.

Director Idzikowski commented on paying adequate attention to engaging religious congregations in their outreach efforts. Despite the decline in attendance due to COVID-19, older adults remain actively involved in congregational activities. Idzikowski sees this as a significant opportunity to connect with older adults who may not participate in public senior centers or other community programs but are deeply engaged within their congregations.

## **V. AREA AGING PLAN GOAL**

Director Idzikowski outlined the process for developing new goals based on data collected from public engagement efforts and other relevant reports. He emphasized the importance of integrating demographic trends and community feedback into the goal-setting process. The approach includes revisiting and potentially refining existing broad goals related to equity, communication, collaboration, and wellness identified in previous plans. He highlights the necessity of setting specific goals for service areas such as advocacy, social support services, transportation, nutrition, and caregiver support, informed by input from respective committees and councils. He also highlights the requirement to align with state mandates concerning Title III areas, ensuring at least one goal addresses service access, equity barriers, and advocacy. Director Idzikowski concludes by acknowledging challenges posed by post-pandemic funding adjustments and the need for strategic programming decisions to sustain successful initiatives like the financial counseling program.

Member John Griffith, commented on the missed opportunities for Aging Services at Pride Fest and questioned if they had plans for engagement at Juneteenth. Director Idzikowski & Ms. Peterson confirm there was a booth at PrideFest. She highlighted the presence of LGBT-specific materials at the booth, noting positive feedback received. She also expressed a commitment to outreach for upcoming events like Juneteenth, aiming to distribute informational materials and surveys effectively.

## **VI. NEXT STEPS & MEETING SCHEDULE**

Chair Calloway focused on the urgency and organization needed to meet upcoming deadlines for the Area Agency plans and submissions. She initiated the discussion by emphasizing the importance of the timeline and schedule, highlighting changes in meeting from bi-monthly to monthly to ensure a timely progress. This adjustment was proposed to align with the tight deadline of December 2nd for plan submission to the state, highlighting the need for continuous updates and efficient decision-making to avoid last-minute rushes. She addressed the need for clarity and coordination among various committees regarding their goals and timelines.

Chair Calloway stressed the importance of finalizing survey completion by mid-to-late July and refining goal-setting processes across committees. She advocated for a structured approach where committees would review progress reports, demographic data, and recommendations to align on overarching goals by August, despite acknowledging potential delays.

Director Idzikowski commented that once the preliminary draft comes back to the council, it is crucial to gather feedback from at least one or two public hearings. Chair Calloway shares that step may put them in late September. Chair Calloway's shared they will be holding a public hearing in September and possibly a virtual option as well. She acknowledges the need for full board meetings in September and October, anticipating the complexity of reviewing and incorporating all necessary elements into the department's plans before November. Member Barbara Wyatt-Sibley requested schedule to be sent out as soon as possible, to determine who will be assisting.

## **VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Director Idzikowski shared two announcements. First, Ms. Petersen has organized a local advocacy opportunity on Monday at Wilson Senior Center, starting at 4:30 PM. This event invites attendees to engage with both state and federal representatives and their staff to advocate for older adults' concerns in policymaking. The call is for active participation from the community to voice the significance of seniors in policy decisions. Secondly, there will be an Aging Summit scheduled for early September, aiming to bring together various stakeholders from long-term care facilities, healthcare providers, senior living communities, and social services. This event will provide a platform to gather feedback on service gaps and potentially present preliminary goals from the area plan for discussion and refinement. The exact venue is yet to be finalized between Alverno and the Zoofari Center.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION:** To adjourn.

**ACTION:** Motion prevailed unanimously, (Wyatt-Sibley Moved, Behar Second)

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 4:50 P.M.

The next Commission on Aging meeting will be Wednesday, July 10, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,  
Christel Colorado  
Executive Assistant