



MILWAUKEE COUNTY  
**Department on Aging**

**Milwaukee County Commission on Aging  
Wellness Committee Meeting  
November 17, 2021**

The Wellness Committee held its meeting on November 17, 2021 at 1:30pm virtually through MS Teams.

**Members Present:**

Brianne Burke-Leonard  
Alex Forsythe  
Kim Lombard  
Willie Mitchell  
Carmen Pangilinan  
Jim Piontek  
Loren Rendino  
Pat Steliga  
Cathy Trecek  
Song Xiong-Buck

**Commissioners Present:**

Gloria Miller  
Cherie Swenson

**Staff Present:**

Dan Idzikowski  
Jennifer Lefebber  
Bekki Schmitt

**MINUTES**

**I. Meeting called to order at 1:33pm**

Gloria welcomed the group and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. She invited each person present to introduce themselves with their name and agency or affiliation.

There was a motion to approve the September 15 minutes by Pat Steliga and a second by Jim Piontek.

**II. Informational Item: Wellness Workshop Highlight –Mailed Toolkits (Jennifer Lefebber)**

Jennifer gave an overview of the Mailed Toolkit option for eligible workshops. Mailed Toolkits are new to EBPP all programs historically have been in-person and then COVID happened. We had to bring everything to a halt – because programs were not research based for other delivery options. Now some workshops are certified to be offered virtually or via mailed tool kit. With the mailed tool kits, we keep groups small to improve discussion and relationships. They are designed for those who are isolated, do not have computer access and cannot or will not use a computer or attend face-to-face classes. Participants receive the same textbook, a relaxation CD, and exercise CD with booklet, self-test, and tip sheets. Facilitators do not need separate training or orientation. This also helps fulfill the requirement for facilitators or leading one workshop per year. The toolkits cost \$38-46 each and MCDA will cover the cost of toolkits in 2022.

Carmen shared that she really enjoyed leading the mailed toolkit workshop this year. People developed a similar dynamic even over the phone – the facilitator does need to keep discussion

going in the right direction, but participants sustained their relationships and learned from one another. Being under time constraints working in the health department – this was a nice format to connect and lead a workshop.

**III. Informational Item: Gerald L. Ignace Indian Health Center (Loren Rendino and Alex Forsythe)**

Alex gave a brief overview on the history of GLIHC. They were established in 1999 and are a non-profit that operates as an FQHC and Patient Centered Medical Home. They have a team of health care professionals who work together to coordinate the needs of their patients. Alex & Loren work on their Health Promotion & Disease Prevention team. Some of the programs they offer include a healthy elder meal program, native wellness garden, heart health program, breastfeeding support, health coaching, smoking cessation, cancer prevention and evidence-based programs (Living Well with Chronic Conditions and Healthy Living with Diabetes).

They are in the planning and training stages to begin offering the Diabetes Prevention Program. They currently have four staff members who are trained in the Living Well with Chronic Conditions program. They offered their first workshop this past summer and are in the middle of their second workshop. For recruitment they have used “CareMessage” which is a program to reach people via text messages, community outreach and cross referrals utilizing their community health worker. Loren gave an overview on the Healthy Living with Diabetes program. GLIHC has hosted about five workshops in the past. They have four staff trained in this program. They use their healthcare providers who specialize in type 2 diabetes to recruit participants.

Challenges they have encountered are mostly around technology with the virtual workshops. A lot of people don’t have access to computers or Wi-Fi. The staff help guide people through the use of these platforms so they can participate in the program virtually. They also face challenges when it comes to retention. Keeping people coming back week after week for 6 weeks, they continue to reach out to them to keep in touch.

They also offer incentives (snacks and beverages for in person workshops). For all platforms, they offered a backpack with items like exercise bands, pedometers, measuring cups, “My Plate”. At the end of the workshop, they provided vouchers to the Fondy Farmers Market. When taking culture into consideration, they change some of the language to help their participants connect better to the information. Successes they’ve seen their participants experience include: “Connectedness”, decreases in their hemoglobin A1C, long-term engagement, and incorporating culture. They use the “My Native Plate” and some culturally relevant experiences into the guided imagery and relaxation portions of the programs to keep the culture in mind during their workshops. They’ve had participants referred to and from the Veggie Rx program. They have partnerships with Pete’s Fresh Fruit Market and Fondy Farmers Market that have been further strengthened through their evidence-based programs. They are always looking at fun ways to engage their community and strengthen partnerships.

For more information, you can contact them at [healthpromotion@gliihc.net](mailto:healthpromotion@gliihc.net).

Jennifer Lefeber asked what the average decrease was in A1C for those who participated in the Healthy Living with Diabetes program. Loren shared that they saw an average decrease of 0.3.

Pat asked if they have plans to offer Stepping On. They had a PT trained to do the program before COVID hit. They have since started working with Marquette School of Physical Therapy, so they will have to revisit this in the future.

**IV. Discussion Item: Milwaukee County Area Plan 2022-2024**

Bekki provided an update on Area Plan Process. The process started with public input, then came to this group to guide the goal setting within the Healthy Aging goals. Once all of the Area Plan goals were formulated, they went to the Advisory Council for review. The Advisory Council has approved them and they now move onto the Commission on Aging for approval. The goals will guide the work we do in the coming years. Bekki shared the goals with the group (see attached). These goals will be embedded into the agendas for our 2022 meetings so we can provide updates and get suggestions and support from this committee.

Further details can be found at: [county.milwaukee.gov/aging/areaplan](https://county.milwaukee.gov/aging/areaplan)

Gloria asked us to remember the idea of putting together a resource guide and continue to look for ways to do this in the future. The Takeaways Report from this year's MKE Wellness Symposium was a first step in this effort. It included a complete listing of the attendees from the symposium and links to their agencies which represent the network of organizations working in wellness and healthy aging in our community.

**V. Discussion Item: MKE Wellness Symposium 2022**

AARP will partner with the Division on Aging again in 2022 to host another Wellness Symposium. We are hoping that we can offer it in person. As one of the Area Plan goals, we will look to hosting it in May or June. Bekki asked the group for someone to represent this committee on the Wellness Symposium Planning Committee. Song, Carmen and Jim all offered to represent this committee. Bekki will follow up with each of them. If you would like to learn more about it, reach out to Bekki for more information on how you can be involved. The Planning Committee will start meeting in December.

**VI. Wellness Committee Members & Guests – Update on Resources and Opportunities for Older Adults**

Jim Piontek shared that AARP is entering into a partnership with Lowe's home improvement stores to help older adults make home modifications. This may be a good opportunity to look into for supporting older adults. He also shared that he had planned to lead an AARP HomeFit workshop when COVID restrictions will allow.

Gloria wished everyone a safe, healthy and enjoyable holiday season.

**VII. Wellness Committee Meeting Dates 2022**

January 19, March 16, May 18, September 21, November 16

*Meetings take place at 1:30pm and will be virtual until further notice*

**VIII. Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 2:58 pm.

The next Wellness Committee meeting will be January 19 at 1:30pm and will be held virtually.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Lefeber, Evidence Based Programs Coordinator

Bekki Schmitt, Community Programs Coordinator