



**Commission on Aging
Advisory Council Meeting
March 9, 2022**

The **Advisory Council** convened virtually on Wednesday, March 9, 2022.

Members Present:

Commissioner Janice Wilberg, *Chair*
Gene Guskowski, *Vice Chair*
Commissioner John Griffith
Commissioner Cherie Swenson
County Supervisor Jason Haas
Deb Jupka
Patricia Dunn
Ann Laatsch
Sally Lindner
Amanda Weiler
Sally Lindner

Patti Pagel
Bettie Rodgers, Commissioner
Barbara Wyatt Sibley

Staff Present:

Daniel Idzikowski, *DHHS*
Pam Matthews, *DAS*
Andy Bethke, *DHHS*
Bekki Schmidt, *DHHS*
Carrie Koss Vallejo, *DHHS*
Michelle Allison, *DHHS*
Christel Colorado, *DHHS*

Members Absent:

Ruth Bevenue
Barbara Bechtel
James Kimble
Nia Norris

Attendees from the Public

None

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairwoman Wilberg called the meeting to order at 2:39 p.m. Daniel Idzikowski, Program and Policy Coordinator for DHHS called the roll. A quorum was present. Chair Wilberg welcomed new member Ann Laatsch, who introduced herself as an attorney with the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life. Wilberg invited others to recruit new members. The Chair voiced her concerns about the quorum requirement. She suggested each member be contacted next month to touch base to confirm their continued interest in participating and being present.

II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FOR February 9, 2022.

MOTION: To accept the February 9, 2022, Advisory Council meeting minutes.

ACTION: Motion prevailed unanimously (Jupka Moved, Dunn Second).

Wilberg set the context for today's meeting. She reminded the Council of their work in creating a three year Area Aging Plan its Vision Statement. She noted that the Council had decided to focus this year on communication and how to better share information about the Aging Network with a diverse audience. This year the Council will look at best practices and how community concerns of equity and outreach interface. We start with a presentation on current communication strategies used by DHHS Aging Services.

III. CURRENT OUTREACH & COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Community Programs Coordinator Bekki Schmitt presented a Power Point to explain current outreach and communication strategies. The target audiences are:

- Active Older Adults
- Transitioning Older Adults
- Vulnerable Older Adults
- Caregivers and Family Members
- Community Partners

Schmitt explained how outreach and information is given to targeted audiences through virtual and public events, advertising and promotional campaigns. Schmitt stated that the idea is to connect people upstream with preventative services. Schmitt noted that national data shows that most people learn about aging services through a family member or friend, followed closely by a referral from another professional or agency. Schmitt introduced the various staff involved in communication and outreach. She listed some of the outreach efforts being made and noted that more than 18,000 contacts had been made in 2021, primarily by shifting to more virtual and hybrid presentations.

Schmitt shared that of social media outlets, Facebook was the most popular by far among older adults, and most other platforms had very poor use by the 65+ age group. Thus the agency does promote aging programming on Facebook. Paid promotion and tagging partners has the best effect in extending social media reach. DHHS also uses other traditional methods of e-mail, brochures, and promotional item give-aways. Always looking for ways to improve.

Jupka mentioned that Bekki and the ADRC are collaborating to reach all groups in the disability and Aging. There is also a focus to reach Transitioning Students with disabilities and that there are currently five ADRC focus groups meeting this month to focus on bridging some of the gaps and connecting people to services.

Swenson asked which ads or communications are most effective. Schmitt notes that in person is most effective, but more data may be available from the call center. Wilberg emphasized. Griffith mentioned the 60-70 percent of people that do not have computers or social media literacy and how can they be reached.

Schmitt said that they were lucky to still be reaching a lot of people in person who were coming out to the senior centers or other events. But they were missing the people who are not computer literate and who don't venture out to in person events or activities. We could use information distributed at Stock Box sites and paid mailings so the message could reach those people who do not have a computer and are homebound. Griffith asks about TV. Schmitt notes that earned media when we have a story to tell is great, but paid advertising is very expensive. Guskowski noted that need to look at what media outlets reach people of color.

Flyers at events and a presence of information at doctor's clinics, and advertising in community newspapers was suggested so that people could learn about services available to them. Inclusion of the Faith Community was also mentioned including requests for presence of staff at church events. The concept of developing a contact list for faith communities to spread the word about programs and resources.

Dunn notes that community newspapers are popular in communities of color. She asked how do people know where to start? On call, people can get shuffled around. She suggested having a "Start" button online that can direct people to the right place for help. Also need enough I&A workers to be responsive on a wide variety of issues, so they don't pass people around and more caseworkers that can directly help people need to be at events.

IV. USING AGING DATA TO INFORM COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Program & Planning Coordinator Koss Vallejo spoke to the group about the demographics of people served from 2021. Specific focus is on racial demographics and notes that some services were drastically reduced because of the pandemic. Several senior centers were open for programming only.

Koss Vallejo presented a chart showing the percentages of the 7,767 older adults served by Older Americans Act funded programs in 2021 in Milwaukee County by race against the total percentage of older adults in the County in each category:

- American Indian (1.6% served v. 0.4% in the population)
- Asian (2.7% served v. 2.1% in the population)
- Black/African American (28.7% served v. 19% in the population)
- Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (0.1% served = 0.1% in population)
- White (66.1% served v. 75.5% in the older adult population)
- Hispanic/Latino (7.3% served v. 5.9% in the population)

63% of the service recipients (age 60+) were female and 37% male, 57.9% lived alone, and 41.5% lived in poverty. Most participants (5,556) received meals through the take-out or meals on wheels home delivered meals program.

Percentage of participants by race & ethnicity about the same. More difficult to analyze this data by race for the smaller programs because of data input. Guzkowski interested in knowing who is using the senior centers by race/ethnicity. Also questions whether there are demographic markers to indicate who are the participants in the aging programs – are we only reaching a specific demographic of the 160,000+ older adults in the County? Koss Vallejo notes AARP may have some data on that. Dunn notes that these programs are geared toward increasing socialization versus just providing specific programming. Wilberg notes that each population may not be starting in the same place in terms of service awareness.

Commissioner Griffith also asked if there could be provided a percentage of total 60+ population and a breakdown of total poverty population of 60 and older people. Idzikowski reminded everyone that it is only people captured through the Title III Older Americans Act.

Recommendations for next meeting:

Wilberg notes that for the next meeting the Council will review the answers to the Aging Plan Survey broken down by race/ethnicity. She asks for volunteers to dive into the survey before the meeting to talk about what the data is telling them. Laatsch, Swenson, and Guszkowski volunteer.

Also wants the opportunity to talk directly to service providers about their outreach and promotion efforts.

Dunn appreciates of the intent and extent of the Council's efforts to be involved and make a difference. Griffith mentioned the Commission on Aging members themselves need to send the message of what the Commission does and how we represent the older adult community in Milwaukee County. Jupka mentioned the importance of being present in the community and building emotional equity.

V. ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at **3:28** p.m.

MOTION: To Adjourn.

ACTION: Prevailed by Unanimous Consent (Jupka, Dunn seconds).

The next Advisory Council meeting will be a virtual meeting on May 11, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Vincenza Doyne,
Office Support Assistant II