



MILWAUKEE COUNTY
Department on Aging

**Milwaukee County Commission on Aging
Wellness Committee Meeting
November 18, 2020**

The Wellness Committee held its monthly meeting on November 18, 2020 at 1:30pm virtually through MS Teams.

Members Present:

Marilyn Lange
Jim Piontek
Pat Steliga
Judith Troestler

Staff Present:

Jennifer Lefebber
Bekki Schmitt

Attendees from the Public

Betsy Abramson

Commissioners Present:

Gloria Miller

MINUTES

I. Meeting called to order at 1:35pm

Gloria welcomed the group and asked for someone to approve minutes. Jim Piontek approved them. Judith Troestler seconded the motion.

II. Informational Item: Wellness Workshop Highlight –Power Tools for Caregivers (Jennifer Lefebber)

Jennifer told the group about the Power Tools for Caregivers workshops which is designed to help caregivers cope with the challenges that come up while they are providing care. Individuals who attend the workshop learn to reduce stress, guilt, anger and depression; manage their time, set goals and solve problems; make tough decisions; communicate more effectively; and master care-giving transitions. The workshop meets once a week for six weeks for 2-1/2 hours each session. Powerful Tools has not grown to its full potential in Milwaukee County mainly due to a lack of facilitators. We would like to expand this in the future as there are many caregivers in our community who could use support and tools for the hard work that they do.

Gloria share that St. Ann recently held a caregiver program targeting African American women. Ramona Dicks-Williams planned this event and Ramona recently joined the WIHA board. Gloria asked that we connect with Ramon to explore how to expand this program. Jennifer will reach out.

Jim shared that in AARP's 2021 position paper they listed that they would like to introduce caregiver tax credit of \$1,000 for any caregivers for Wisconsin budget.

III. Discussion Items:

a. WIHA and Statewide EBPP Efforts (Betsy Abramson)

Bekki introduced Betsy Abramson, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging. Betsy shared the background of WIHA and their function to disseminate proven evidence-based programs, as well as research and develop new evidence-based programs through CAARN (Community Academic and Aging Research Network). She talked about how they started in 2011 with just Living Well with Chronic Conditions and Stepping On. WIHA's goal is work "upstream", to help people with prevention, rather than waiting until they need emergency help. WIHA is the clearinghouse that provides leader trainings, ongoing support for leaders, toolkits, etc. for 11 evidence-based programs, with more programs coming from CAARN or other universities. There are about 220 program providers across the state and over 400 program leaders. In 2019, 425 workshops were provided across the state. WIHA's partners include academic researchers, Public Health & Aging Agencies, Community organizations and Healthcare organizations. The pandemic caused WIHA to look at offering the programs virtually. They are also offering other opportunities including a flu shot campaign and others. WIHA's future includes more emphasis on prevention, continuing and expanding virtual programs, more in-person programs to include more issues/topics (ie. hearing loss, isolation & loneliness, dementia, physical activity & reducing sedentary behavior, more programs on falls & chronic conditions). Challenges to address include: focus on working upstream, reaching more men, more rural offerings, communities of color, people without technology access and obtaining more funding to pivot systems focus to "prevention".

b. Wellness Resource Guide (Gloria Miller/Bekki Schmitt)

At the previous meeting, we talked about creating something (like a wellness calendar) to share events/happenings. As we consider feasibility and long term implementation, a calendar would be difficult to maintain since information is constantly evolving. Since then, Gloria, Bekki & Jennifer had a conversation to discuss what would be most beneficial for our committee members and others to connect people to resources and opportunities that are available in the community. The discussion included ideas such as: a pocket guide that lists resources, an online community calendar (utilize university students to create something). Create a one-pager to promote events through 50Plus Magazine, Senior Center activity guides, newsletters (Milwaukee County retiree newsletter, county board supervisor newsletters, local neighborhood publications). Bekki will send a follow up questionnaire to gather more thoughts from the group.

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

Jennifer shared that the Stepping On program received the go ahead to provide virtual workshops starting late January 2021.

Jim Piontek shared that AARP has cancelled all in-person workshops through May 31. Tax prep will be done virtually starting February 1, 2021.

WIHA's leader training schedule has been released for 2021. You can find the trainings here: <https://wihealthyaging.org/become-a-program-leader> or you can contact Jennifer Lefebber at Jennifer.Lefebber@milwaukeecountywi.gov

Gloria shared an announcement about the St. Ann Center Indaba African Ball on February 6. The proceeds from this virtual event will support the Indaba Band Shell and its upcoming summer season of family-friendly entertainment. Complete event information can be found at: <https://stanncenter.org/indababall/>

- V. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 3:10pm.
The next Wellness Committee meeting will be January 20 at 1:30pm and will be held virtually.

Wellness Committee Meeting Dates 2021

January 20, March 17, May 19, September 15, November 17

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Lefebber, Evidence Based Programs Coordinator
Bekki Schmitt, Community Programs Coordinator