



MILWAUKEE COUNTY
Department on Aging

**Milwaukee County Commission on Aging
Wellness Committee Meeting
September 15, 2021**

The Wellness Committee held its meeting on September 15, 2021 at 1:30pm virtually through MS Teams.

Members Present:

Brianne Burke-Leonard
Martha Collins
Alice Kowalski
Willie Mitchell
Jessica Saler
Christy Sanhuber
Carol Sibilski
Pat Steliga
Song Xiong-Buck
Andrew Warren

Commissioners Present:

John Griffith
Gloria Miller
Cherie Swenson

Staff Present:

Jennifer Lefeber
Bekki Schmitt

MINUTES

I. Meeting called to order at 1:31pm

Gloria welcomed the group and invited each person present to introduce themselves with their name and agency or affiliation. Gloria also provided a reflection on the importance of each and everyone of us and the work that we do, she thanked everyone present for their participation in this work.

There was a motion to approve the May 19 minutes by Christy Sanhuber and a second by Alice Kowalski.

II. Informational Item: Wellness Workshop Highlight –Stepping On for Fall Prevention (Jennifer Lefeber)

Jennifer gave an overview on the Stepping On program. Stepping On is a program proven to reduce falls and build confidence in older people. Participants gain specific knowledge and skills to prevent falls in community settings. It is designed specifically for people who are: at risk of falling, have a fear of falling, or who have fallen one or more times. Workshops are facilitated by trained leaders as well as professional guest speakers including: physical therapists, pharmacists, vision specialists and safety specialists. Stepping On workshops meet for two hours a week for seven weeks.

She also provided data on the number and impact of falls nationwide and in Wisconsin (see attached PowerPoint).

In addition to participants, we are looking for additional trained facilitators to lead this workshop in Milwaukee County. The next facilitator training for Stepping On will be held virtually November 3, 4, 10, and 11. Contact Jennifer at Jennifer.lefeber@milwaukeecountywi.gov for more information on becoming a trained facilitator.

III. Informational Item: Milwaukee County Falls Prevention Coalition (Suzie Ryer)

Suzie Ryer was introduced, she is the Senior Project Coordinator in Senior Services at Advocate Aurora Health and Co-Chair for the Milwaukee County Falls Prevention Coalition. Suzie discussed the high rate of falls in Wisconsin and Milwaukee County and the impact of these falls on individuals.

She shared that the Milwaukee County Falls Prevention Coalition (MCFPC) is a collaborative of over 50 members and 13 steering committee members. The MCFPC aims to connect the community programs and services to prevent falls, trying to take more of a public health approach-working in the area of advocacy and marketing, working with health systems and getting tools into the hands of community members, monitoring data as it becomes available. In addition to the ongoing work that the coalition does throughout the year – we are approaching National Fall Prevention Week. Fall Prevention Week is September 20-24 and we will be holding a lineup of events including both in-person at local senior centers as well as virtual events for the community and for providers. (See attached flyer)

Some other major initiatives of the MCFPC: Falls Prevention Toolkits were developed and over 3,000 have been distributed throughout community. If you have a location or participants that would benefit we can provide toolkits. In addition, over 1,100 EMS providers were educated on fall prevention through the OEM training system. Also, communications done through quarterly printed newsletters, social media posts, which can be shared by your organizations. If you have an office or agency who reach older adults and you want printed newsletters to share, please contact the coalition at ASMC-MCFPC@aah.org

Join MCFPC by emailing ASMC-MCFPC@aah.org or go to the website: www.mcfpc.net

IV. Discussion Item: Report on MKE Wellness Symposium (Bekki Schmitt)

On May 26, the Division on Aging together with AARP Wisconsin hosted the MKE Wellness Symposium, a virtual event focused on building connections and strengthening the network of agencies and individuals working towards better health for older adults. The theme was Reconnecting for a Healthier Community and 138 attendees joined us for this event. We were honored to have Carrie Molke, Director of the Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources in the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) as the keynote speaker with a presentation on how isolation effects our aging population and strategies to reconnect with them. Breakout sessions on Mental, Physical and Social Wellness were led by local experts.

Feedback from attendees praised the quality of speakers, topics, and the opportunity for networking. People suggested a longer event with more content. This is a great opportunity for expansion in the future. We have already seen results from the event including a number of people who attended have joined the Wellness Committee and partners who have shown interest in hosting evidence-based programs, etc. (See attached document for Wellness Symposium Takeaways)

V. Discussion Item: Milwaukee County Area Plan 2022-2024

At the last few Wellness Committee meetings we have discussed the process the county goes through to write its Aging Area Plan every 3 years. This plan will define our priorities and focus areas. On July 19, this committee held a special meeting in July to talk specifically about the Healthy Aging Goals. During that meeting we reviewed the public input from the Area Plan Survey, shared past healthy aging goals from the previous Area plans and discussed the priorities and focus areas for this next set of Area Plan goals.

From that discussion we formed the following goals:

Goal 1: MCDA will work with community partners to host the second annual MKE Wellness Symposium in 2022. The symposium will focus on building connections and strengthening the network of agencies and individuals working towards better health for older adults. During the event information will be shared about the evidence-based prevention programs and how partner agencies can host or become trained leaders.

Goal 2: To rebuild the network of trained facilitators for the Stepping On Falls Prevention program, MCDA will partner with the Milwaukee County Falls Prevention Coalition, to reach past and new partners from organizations including: health systems, health departments, senior housing facilities, or other community-based partners.

- There will be a special focus on expanding the reach of Stepping On within communities of color. In 2023, we will develop specific marketing tools to draw interest towards the program from communities of color.
- And by the end of 2024, we will identify at least 3 new partners to train a minimum of 6 people as Stepping On facilitators who will host a minimum of 3 workshops.

Goal 3: In order to attract new and hard to reach audiences, MCDA will expand offerings in virtual and mailed toolkit workshop options. In 2022 and 2023, MCDA will expand marketing and promotion efforts among community networks and partners. By the end of 2024, MCDA will complete an evaluation of these new formats and their effectiveness in reaching new audiences.

Bekki shared the strategies that will be used to reach these goals including: 1. Expanding networks through the Symposium event, health departments, senior centers, senior housing and apartment buildings, 2. Focusing on target areas, particularly underserved communities by using workshop participant data, analyzing zip code, race & ethnicity and mapping workshop host locations, and 3. Leveraging internal and existing partners such as: Milwaukee County Retirement Program, Milwaukee County Elder Benefits Specialists, Eras Senior Network and DHHS.

Bekki explained the Area Plan Process and Next Steps which will include:

- Public outreach through online, listening sessions, printed sheets and feedback postcards
- Make revisions to goal language as necessary
- Approval by Advisory Council, Commission On Aging, County Board and then submission to the state
- We will then begin work on these new goals during 2022-2024.

Complete details can be found at: county.milwaukee.gov/aging/areaplan

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

Jennifer shared the MCDA website with the group, showing all of the upcoming evidence-based workshops. Scroll halfway down the main page to see a listing, which includes registration information. [County.milwaukee.gov/aging](https://county.milwaukee.gov/aging)

Gloria shared that the final concert of the summer series of live music at St. Ann Center, Indaba Nights is this week. More details are at: <https://stanncenter.org/community/indaba-band-shell/>

VII. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 2:53pm.

The next Wellness Committee meeting will be November 17 at 1:30pm and will be held virtually.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Lefeber, Evidence Based Programs Coordinator
Bekki Schmitt, Community Programs Coordinator