

COA Executive Committee Meeting Minutes- January 15, 2015

COA Attendees: Noelle Heyman, Chuck Kauffman, Judy Levy, DaCosta Mason, Barbara Multz, Rudy Oswald, Reuben Rosenfeld, Isabelle Schoenfeld

HHS Staff: Odile Brunetto,

Guests: Gail Kohn, Leslie Marks

Chair's Report: Judy Levy

- Debrief on County Council HHS Committee Hearing that morning (George Leventhal, Craig Rice, Roger Berliner) went very well. Chuck and Judy briefed the Committee on the Planning Process Summer Study, and specifically the recommendations related to the WHO Age-Friendly Cities. The Councilmembers were positive about exploring this option for the County and will be sending a letter to Uma Ahluwalia and Jay Kenney requesting that HHS provide staff support to a Task Force investigating the Age-Friendly Cities process for Montgomery County.
 - Gail Kohn, Director, Washington DC Age-Friendly Cities initiative described the Age-Friendly Cities (AFC) program as a “life journey.” The entire DC budget is focused on AFC because it crosses all departments and generations. AFC is coordinating with 55 agencies who are mobilized on this effort.
 - No fee to participate. All types of jurisdictions are involved in WHO including a state (Arizona).
 - All taxis in DC will be handicap accessible in 5yrs. AFC has businesses certified thru AARP as AFC businesses and Yelp will ID them as senior-friendly.
- At her quarterly meeting on December 15, 2015, Uma Ahluwalia, ceded time for the Mental Health Advisory Committee (MHAC) to facilitate a discussion with the BCC's to identify mental health issues that were of common concern with the purpose of establishing shared advocacy for those issues
 - Although many issues were discussed, two issues emerged as major, shared concerns during the joint discussion. The first is the need for better-coordinated care. The second is the need for more “specialized” mental health providers (psychiatrists and therapists), such as those who are bilingual (including sign language) and are culturally competent, and those having specialization with specific populations, e.g., seniors, young children, veterans, and those with co-occurring disorders.

Judy asked for a vote regarding COA sending a letter of support for MHAC's advocacy efforts for better coordinated care and for specialized mental health providers. The vote was affirmative.
- Judy and Rudy met with Councilmember Roger Berliner regarding Berliner's proposal to have taxi regulations extended to include Uber and Lyft and other similar transportation providers.
 - Some of the issues regarding Uber and Lyft participation in programs for seniors are: The taxi company/MC Call and Ride program targeted to low

income seniors and the disabled, will Uber and Lyft need to participate; wheelchair accessibility; (taxi companies are expected to have 8% of their fleet be wheelchair accessible); disabled who have service dogs; Uber and Lyft don't provide information on their pricing and there are instances of different prices for different times of the day.

- Benefits of these new services include: can use Uber app. anywhere in the world; can check the cars location on the app.; they will tell you how long they will take to reach you.
- Issues with these new services: Currently, if there is a complaint about Uber et al., not clear who to complain to; no one in County has oversight. Hence, no oversight and no enforcement.
- Berliner may have a council work session on this on January 26th.

ACTION: COA will write a letter expressing concerns with Uber/Lyft and request more information. This proposed letter will be discussed at the next COA meeting. There was a suggestion that we invite an Uber representative (they're located in Bethesda) and perhaps a representative from Barwood, to meet with COA.

Update: Odile Brunetto

- Two COG (Council of Governments) grants were funded over 2 years, one for almost 200k for MC for public outreach re: transportation and a JCA grant.
- \$3-4million needs to be cut from the County's HHS budget in addition to there being a hiring freeze in this current FY15.
- In FY 2016- there will be a 3% reduction in the HHS budget and a hiring freeze
 - Part of the anticipated budget shortfall is due to an expected reduction of taxes based on the county's probably losing the Wynne court case. Also, reduction in real estate and income taxes.
- New Directors in the Departments of Housing and Transportation. Also, the Economic Department Director stepped down and there is now an acting director.
- Emily Rosenberg of the staff is leaving at end of month and her position is frozen currently.
- 401 Hungerford will have building repairs. Some offices will need to be temporarily relocated to a facility on Seven Locks Rd. Aging and Disabilities will need to relocate to another floor in 401 Hungerford this Spring.
- The new State Department of Aging Director is Rhona Kramer. May wish to invite her to COA annual meeting.

ACTION: COA should arrange to meet with the new Directors of Housing and Transportation.

Public Policy Committee Report: Rudy/DaCosta

- The legislative session started yesterday. There are three bills related to elder abuse which will be reported on at the COA meeting next week.

- Ike Leggett is holding 2016 budget forums on 1/20, 1/22, and 1/26. A budget forum was held on January 14. COA representatives' talking points were revised and distributed.
- January 21: COA testimony on sick leave at County Council.
- January 27: United Seniors of Maryland (USM) Forum, Annapolis. COA members will have the Legislative Breakfast packets including the three priorities. Please contact Tremayne for pick up.

Stakeholder Forum- Legislation and Caregiving: Noelle Heyman, Health and Wellness

Topics:

- Sick leave for caregivers
- Economic effect of caregiving on income, esp. for Women

Communication and Community Outreach Committee Report: Barbara Mulitz and Reuben Rosenfeld:

- Establish a COA Alumni group
- Plan for an Alumni lunch
- Invite COA alumni to forums
- Develop "Stepping-up-letters of recognition" for folks who step up to help seniors when there are questionable activities. Ex. Leisure World bank employee questioning requesters when they suspect potential scams. Have an award.
- COA in the news: E- newsletters include COA news. Need link on internet to Seniors Today, use Beacon. Use social media and advertising.

COA Meeting, January 22, 2015:

Guest Speakers:

Deborah Zuckerman, Adult Guardianship Liaison, Montgomery County Circuit Court, Family Division Services, and,

Tovah Kasdin, Executive Director of ElderSafe, at the Hebrew Home