

Meeting notes
Health and Wellness Committee
July 2, 2024

In attendance: Virginia Cain, Barbara Selter, Marsha Weber, David Engel, Laurie Pross, Linda Bergofsky, Joyce Dubow, Betsy Carrier, Lynn Dusenberry, Don Resnikoff, Tina Purser-Langley

The minutes of the June meeting were approved.

The meeting's purpose was for the committee to identify 1 proposed FY26 Budget Priorities position for consideration by the full Commission at its July 25th meeting and 2 Advocacy/Policy priorities. Ideas previously considered or proposed had been distributed before the meeting.

Possible Budget Priorities

- **Support continued funding for Access Hears-** The County has received AARPA Funds, but the funding is coming to an end. *Note: Should we propose an extension or an evaluation of this program?*
- **In-Home Care**
 - **Two directions were discussed under this heading:**
 - **Additional funding for IHAS**
 - As of 6/7/2022, 113 people were on the waiting list to apply for services
 - Hire Full-time personnel for IHAS (Case manager, Intake Coordinator/Assessment Work)
 - Increase Care Partners and Community Reach budgets for FY24. These are contractors for IHAS.

Note: If this is chosen as a priority, we will consult with IHAS on their suggestion for where money and personnel are most needed. David will update data and craft proposed priority

- **Support funding for In-home Counseling** (Affiliated Sante)
- **Create and fund a full-time 50+ Communications and Outreach Coordinator -proposed last year.** There was agreement that the committee would support the communications committee on this issue.

- **Support additional funding for Kensington Club**, an Early-Stage Memory Loss Program: Budget Request: \$120,000 for expanding services for people with early-stage dementia. Programs in White Oak and Germantown require additional funding. Tina will obtain additional information
- **Recommend an Implementation Manager for overseeing the implementation of the Workforce Task Force recommendations.**

There was general agreement that the County is unlikely to create or fund new positions. It was suggested that Montgomery College or a private foundation might be alternative sources of funding to create the recommended position.

Notwithstanding the challenge of identifying a realistic source of funding, there was agreement that the position should be created to pursue the recommendations of the Workforce Task Force. Barbara and Joyce will draft proposed budget priority on this issue.

- **Support for Senior Fellow Program**

There is a workgroup working on this issue- further information needed to clarify its status and possible funding opportunities.

- **Increase funding for Respite Care.** David to follow up with Jules

Policy/Advocacy Issues- There was discussion and general agreement that advocacy/policy priorities should be presented in broad categories, such as "Services to Reduce or Eliminate Social Isolation" under which multiple policy/advocacy priorities would be listed. The present discussion identified potential policy and advocacy priorities:

1. Addressing lack of adequate monitoring and inspection of nursing homes and assisted living facilities. CoA is currently involved in monitoring the county's loss of ability to monitor care provided and/or complaints. Continued advocacy is required and perhaps expanded to include work force training, evaluation, and standards. Strengthen oversight and regulatory requirements re training and staffing.

2. From our past forum, *Home, and Community-Based Care -We Can Do Better*, JoAnne Lynn provided a road map on a range of issues to address the challenges of providing affordable and accessible long-term care and in-home social supports. It was recognized that this is a multi-dimensional, long-range issue that needs to be kept in front of county and state legislative representatives
3. Work with other mental health groups and create resources to make seniors more aware of mental health resources available in the County.
4. Pursue Dying with Dignity legislation (note- the commission has previously supported this issue.)

Virginia proposed that there be an in-person meeting in September to further discuss the policy and advocacy priorities.

Other Business

- Virginia presented a slide on access to mental health services that was designed for inclusion in a slide deck for the Ambassador Program. Two suggestions were made: Correct telephone numbers listed on the slide; remove reference to adolescent referrals. Virginia will prepare talking points to accompany the slide. It was suggested that one of these should address the importance of cultural sensitivity and language access.
- Marsha proposed that the committee prepare a fact sheet on access to mental health services. It was agreed that the committee would pursue this idea in September