



Minutes from
Aging in Community Committee
March 11, 2025
9:30 am-11:30 am

Attendees:

CoA: Joyce Dubow, Laurie Pross, Linda Bergofsky, Mary Sweeney, Mona Greiser, Sibon Ncube, Vernell DeWitty, Wayne Berman, Betsy Carrier

Staff: Shawn Brennan, Kimberly Johnson, Peter Illig

Minutes were reviewed and approved

Presentation: Dr. Kimberly Johnson and Shawn Brennan reviewed and discussed with the Committee new data that describes the older adult population in Montgomery County. The data is drawn from many sources and tells a story about the demographics, economic status, and participation in government programs by older adults. The data set stimulated questions and observations about the changing habits and needs of older adults in Montgomery County.

Some initial information that the data identified included:

- The proportion of older adults who are financially secure versus those at risk of poverty.
- Disparities in financial security based on race.
- How many older adults live alone versus with family or in assisted living facilities.
- What parts of the County do the older adult population live in.

The AIC Committee spent around an hour reviewing the deck of 32 slides that was developed by Aging and Disability. The focus of the slides was "Older Adults in MoCo--A Data Snapshot." The general data categories in the presentation included information on:

- Growth of older adult pop
- Where older adults live
- Diversity: age and race
- Income/poverty rates of older adults
- Health insurance
- Disability
- Renters/vs homeowners
- Transportation
- Statistics re. various aging and disability programs

Many questions and comments were raised about data definitions, how the data was displayed, its implications, and what to do with it next.

Comments on various sections of the slides:

1. Section on the growth of older adult pop
 - To the extent the population is aging we must prepare for that
 - There is a big bulge in the 35–59-year-olds who are aging, which creates an argument for intergenerational programs and for Health and Human Services to be a department for a lifetime.
 - People are living much longer and there is a need to prepare for that. The Longevity Ready activities will be very important to help a growing number of old adults.
 - Given what is happening in the Federal Government, it is crucial that accurate forecasts be made of whether the population in Montgomery County will decline in the next 5 to 10 years. Need accurate estimates of what may happen to the tax base over the next 10+ years and demand for services.
2. Section on where older adults live
 - If older adults live in a facility, such as a CCRC how are their income and expense data treated?
 - Need detailed data that provides an overlay of different parts of the County, where there is poverty and where there are service gaps; for example, in Damascus, there is poor access to transportation.

- Slide 19- The percentage of older adults living alone looks low; also, on this slide, different arrangements don't add up to 100%.
- 3. Diversity: age and race
 - Race data is changing; by 2045, 66% of the 55-plus population will be non-white.
 - Slide 10- 5% Hispanic looks low
 - Slide 14- What is Indo-European? Need to define that term.
- 4. Income/poverty rates of older adults
 - Are older adults leaving the County? Going to places that have lower or no taxes? Less expensive housing? Impact on tax base?
 - Need to have income and poverty rates by race.
 - Considerable conversation about whether various services are income-based only or income and asset-based. Need definitions and data on this topic, some people who have very modest incomes own property that has appreciated a significant amount. What is the impact of this scenario on access to various County services?
 - Data should include a clear definition of the poverty level and what that means in Montgomery County. Along with defining the poverty level, there should be a description of the basket of items and expenses needed to meet the needs of older adults.
- 5. Health insurance
 - Need to look at adequacy of health insurance. For example, Medicaid does not guarantee access.
 - For health insurance need clear definition of what non-citizens are eligible for. For those not eligible is there a description of services available?
- 6. Disability
 - Slide 19-Rates of Disability- labeling unclear
 - Slide 20- Living arrangements- data is a percent of a percent. Unclear what the numbers are.
- 7. Renters/vs homeowners
 - Considerable discussion on the affordability of housing as it determines whether people can initially locate in the County and then stay. Need some good projections. What percent of the senior population is housing burdened?
 - Need additional data that tells whether people are stuck in place or aging in place.
 - Rental assistance- do individuals get assistance from the ADR Unit on qualifying for rental assistance?
- 8. Transportation

9. Statistics re. various aging and disability programs

- The last four slides on County programs would be clearer if they included a definition of eligibility for various services.
- Slide 24- transportation numbers need to be updated
- Slide 26- SNAP Benefits: should more people be getting benefits? Too hard to apply
- Slide 27- Nurse aides: Several questions are raised about the benefit the people are getting, how many visits? How much are the aides being paid? What is the eligibility for this program?

Possible uses of data:

1. The data can used for policy making; however, we will need to be able to defend whether and what income and asset are needed. For example, some people have a lot of assets and low income, and some of the programs protect the assets. When we have confined and restricted revenues, we need to think about whether that's the best policy to pursue. When people have assets, you know, there's a difference between having no assets and low income and having low income and larger assets, you know, that represents a different set of issues and is a policy question.
2. for a lot of commissioners who may not be quite familiar with County programs and policies and demographics, part of this presentation would provide an update.

Additional updates to slides:

- Color of some slides was dark and difficult to read
- Each slide should have source of data, specifically the American Community Survey
- To the extent feasible on the slide or in an appendix there should be data definitions.
- Slide with homecare information might be helpful for the Forum
- Aging and disability will need around two months to make any updates to this presentation.

Updates & New Business:

1. We have scheduled a meeting with the Housing Opportunity Commission's board chair for April 3 from 1 to 2. The goal of the meeting is to begin developing a relationship with HOC.

2. Update on the DFL Program. The DFL has made some changes that should make the program more widely used. David plans to write a letter acknowledging the progress and commitment to change. In the letter, he will request regular reporting of utilization to track the efficacy of the improvements to the utilization of the program with the changes.
3. On March 10, Linna Zhu of the Urban Institute approached me about the possibility of the Department collaborating with them to receive technical assistance to help the County update its 2018 housing report.
4. Future meetings: We will discuss conducting an AIC session to help us develop a fact sheet and resources to help an older adult consider a move. At the April 8 AIC meeting, we will have presentations from Fire & Rescue on various programs that help older adults age in place.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15.