



## Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services

### Director's Quarterly Leadership Meeting with Boards, Commissions and Committees (BCC)

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**Date: September \_\_\_\_ (FY19 First Quarter Report)**

**BCC: Commission on Aging (COA)**

**BCC Representative: Isabelle Schoenfeld, Chair, COA**

The Commission on Aging (COA) acknowledges that Montgomery County continues to make progress as a Community for a Lifetime for all its residents. This is evidenced by provision of critical services and programs for both vital and vulnerable older adults in the County; by the County Executive's Senior Initiative budget; by the development and implementation of Age-Friendly Montgomery action plan activities; by programs and policies in support of COA's Senior Agenda; and by other initiatives.

#### **FY18 Fourth Quarter Activities Update**

The June 28, 2018 COA Meeting featured a panel discussion with representatives from selected minority groups in the County. The panelists and the communities they represented were:

Amoke Alakoye, African-American; Anna Maria Izquierdo-Porrera, Salvadoran; Rebekah Martin, Ethiopian; Jessica Sol, Korean; Tho Tran, Vietnamese. In addition, Mona Negm, Muslim community and Vivien Hsueh, Chinese community described their experience organizing programs and services for older adults in their communities.

Commissioner Revathi Vikram was the Diversity Program Planning Team lead. Bruce Adams, Director, Office of Community Partnerships, moderated the discussion.

Language barriers and/or trust were two key challenges identified by all the panelists. Some suggested recommendations were: County create a new position, a Senior Fellow for Older Adults in Diverse Communities, and, create a Coordinating Council of Representatives of Older Adults in Diverse Communities.

Also, at COA's June 28, 2018 monthly meeting, the Commissioners discussed criteria to be applied for determining COA's priorities for the FY20 County budget.

#### **FY19 First Quarter Activities**

Although, there were no COA monthly meetings in July and August, a number of activities were

conducted:

- COA's Executive Committee met on July 19<sup>th</sup>.
- The Health and Wellness Committee met on July 10<sup>th</sup>.
- COA's Briefing Book development team met in July and August.
  - The COA Briefing Book is intended to be an informative document for County and State newly and re-elected officials, department directors, and other interested parties. It will provide information about COA and about significant issues facing older adults in the County.
  - Committee Co-Chairs are identifying key issues and working with members to draft succinct descriptions of those issues for inclusion in the Briefing Book.
- The Diversity Program Planning Team is doing follow-up work including writing a report about what was learned at the June 28<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- The Ageism Study Group is continuing to work on their exploration of Ageism.
- Committees resume meetings in September 2018.

### **Aging in Community Committee (AICC)**

No formal Committee meetings were held during July and August 2018. However, during the summer break, AICC did review high priority senior issues for inclusion in the COA Briefing Book for newly and re-elected County officials and others. These issues include affordable and accessible housing, social isolation and loneliness and transportation and pedestrian safety.

At the September 11, 2018 meeting, the Committee continued to inquire about how to increase the number of accessory dwelling units in the County and to gather additional information regarding existing intergenerational and multigenerational living in the County.

### **Health and Wellness Committee (HWC)**

At the July meeting, HWC continued to discuss their Focus Study topic, the affordability and quality of assisted living facilities, especially, the "gap", i.e., seniors too rich to qualify for Medicaid, yet too poor to fully support their long-term care/retirement needs.

Some other points of discussion were:

1. Learning from model programs such as Homecrest House.
2. How COA can advocate for more money for the County from the State's Assisted Living Subsidy program.
3. Expanding supportive housing in the County.
4. Investigating the possibility of a model/demonstration program.
5. Looking at affordable housing options with wrap around services.
6. How the County can provide more services rather than beds.

### **Public Policy Committee (PPC)**

The Public Policy Committee (PPC) advocates on budget, program, and policy issues at the County, State, and Federal levels in consultation with other COA Committees and in accordance with COA priorities.

PPC did not meet in July or August.

The following items are continuing:

- **Developing a set of statistics for COA Talking Points** –One of the Co-Chairs of the Committee met with Erin Smith, AAA/HHS, to discuss statistics COA might use for talking points. Ideally, the list would be short and would include statistics about the older adult population within the county, including housing, transportation, recreation, demographics, etc. The document would be an internal COA document that members could use for drafting letters, meetings with elected officials, etc. County staff would be involved in maintaining and updating the document. A sub-group of the PPC will work on the document.
- **Working with other County Commissions on Aging** –The PPC drafted a letter to the State Department of Aging requesting contact information for other county Commissions on Aging.
- **Communication with the State’s Attorney’s Office** – The PPC reached out to the State’s Attorney’s Office to ask about their priorities for the 2019 General Assembly. To date, the Montgomery County State’s Attorney’s Office has yet to hear from the statewide association of state’s attorneys about legislative priorities.

### **September Activities**

**Transportation Services Improvement Fund (TSIF) and Expedited Bill 13-18** – The Committee discussed the TSIF and Expedited Bill 13-18, a hearing for which is scheduled on September 27, 2018.

In 2015, the General Assembly passed legislation authorizing the county to impose a surcharge of up to \$0.25 per ride on ride hailing services such as Lyft and Uber. The money would be used to improve taxi service for older people and the disabled. In the FY 2018 budget, money in the fund was moved out to be spent for other purposes. The committee also discussed taking a new look at the TSIF’s purpose and identifying possible changes to the regulations and additional options.

**Preparations for the 2019 General Assembly Legislative Session** – The Committee discussed the schedule for the 2019 legislative session of the General Assembly. The Committee also discussed being proactive and looking for issues to work on for legislation. Two issues seemed to offer possibilities: dental care as part of Medicaid and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit to finance the building of additional housing in the county.

### **FY 19 Second Quarter - Upcoming Activities**

- FY20 County budget priorities will be identified, discussed and finalized at COA’s September 27<sup>th</sup> monthly meeting.
- Planning for and convening COA’s Annual Legislative Breakfast

- Final preparation of COA's Briefing Book

### **Collaboration with other Boards, Commissions, and Committees**

COA collaborates with other boards, commissions, and committees, as appropriate. COA also welcomes representatives of other Boards, Commissions and Committees at its Standing Committee meetings. These representatives are invited to report on their B/C/or C's activities at COA's monthly meetings.