

COMMISSION ON AGING
HEALTH AND WELLNESS Committee
FEBRUARY 4, 2025

ATTENDANCE:

Linda Bergofsky
Marcia Pruzan
Kendell Mathews
Peter Illig
Virginia Cain
Tina Purser-Langley
Wayne Berman
Laurie Pross
Lam Tran (Community guest)
K. Wang (Community guest)
April Stup (Partners in Care)
Khoi Le (Access Hears)
Marsha Weber
Joyce Dubow

Welcome

Laurie led the Health and Wellness Committee meeting beginning at 9:32a.m. Linda moved to approve the minutes, and the motion was seconded. The committee then welcomed everyone, including some community guests: April from Partners in Care and Lam from the University of Maryland Nursing School. April introduced her organization's mission to help older adults remain independent and in their own homes, offering transportation and handyman services. Linda also mentioned her previous work with Partners in Care through the FedEx Veterans Advisory Council. The conversation ended with Lam's introduction as part of an assignment to explore healthcare issues in the community.

Fact Sheet Review

Laurie led a final review of the fact sheets produced by the committee last year, one each focusing on mental health, social isolation, hearing loss, and loss of a partner or spouse. The team identified several corrections: removing the word "the" before "any" in the call-out section and inserting "call" before two of the three numbers. Virginia noted a discrepancy in the printed version of the document, which appeared to have an extra box and a different logo placement. The team agreed to proceed with these corrections.

Laurie suggested changing "aging" to "normal aging process" in the document for clarity in the hearing loss document. Tina agreed to make this change and to update links. The group reviewed the social isolation fact sheet and identified minor formatting and content issues to be addressed. Marcia will make corrections to the loss of spouse/partner fact sheet and send it to Laurie and Tina. The group concluded their review of fact sheets.

PRESENTATION: ACCESS HEARS, Khoi Le, Director

In the meeting, Khoi Le the Director of Access Hears, a Johns Hopkins Social Innovation Lab site discussed the success of the Montgomery County project, which aimed to provide hearing solutions to low-income older adults. The project, which was completed ahead of schedule, saw 482 participants enroll and 451 complete the one-month and baseline surveys. The results showed significant improvements in communication and social connectedness among older adults with hearing loss. However, challenges faced during the project included a longer ramp-up period, a growing waitlist, and rejections from some participants. Khoi Le also noted that the project's outcomes closely matched those from the literature, proving the effectiveness of the HEARS intervention.

In the meeting, Khoi Le discussed the challenges and successes of their hearing aid program, including the use of larger, rechargeable devices and the need for partnerships with organizations that repurpose hearing aids. He also mentioned that approximately 10% of their interactions were in-person due to technological limitations. Joyce shared her experience of donating hearing aids to a charity in Kansas City, and Khoi Le expressed interest in partnering with similar organizations.

Exploring Future Meeting Topics and Speakers

The committee discussed potential topics for future meetings and speakers. They considered care navigation, palliative care, spirituality in medicine, and integrative medicine. Laurie offered to provide a definition of care navigation. Linda suggested: adult daycare as a potential topic. and Laurie offered to invite Becky Donahue of Winter Growth as a speaker on the topic of respite; Linda offered to invite her daughter, a Palliative Care physician as a speaker; Virginia expressed interest in topics where the Commission on Aging could have a practical impact. The committee conducted a poll to gauge interest in different topics, with adult daycare, palliative care, and integrative medicine receiving equal votes. Linda reminded the group that the County Executive's budget will be released on March 15th, which may influence future topic choices.

The next meeting of the Health & Wellness Committee will occur on March 4, 2025 at 9:30 am