



# Lewis - Mason - Thurston Area Agency on Aging

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Area Agency on Aging

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## **Advisory Council Wednesday, June 2, 2021 9:30 – 12:00 p.m. Via ZOOM**

<https://zoom.us/j/97034336885?pwd=cHc2V1EyRUpkakdLMWFITVMxVG52Zz09>

By phone: 253 215 8782; Meeting ID: 970 3433 6885; Passcode: 102525

### ***Members Present***

Lewis County: Elizabeth (Liz) Hicker; Cindy Clark; Amy Turnbull

Mason County: Glenn Harper (Chair); Janeen McLaughlin; Jamie Queen

Thurston County: Judy Stratton; Howard Burton; Eileen McKenzieSullivan (Vice-Chair); Michele Horaney; Angela Hock

### ***Members Absent***

Lewis County: Heidi Buswell

Mason County: Debra Jamerson; Bill Bezanson

Thurston County: N/A

### ***Staff Present***

Nicole Kiddoo, Executive Director; Dan Speigle, Chief Financial Officer; Valerie Aubertin, Contracts Manager; Carrie Petit, Contracts Manager; Alison Lord, Contracts Manager; Lisa Jolly, Contracts Manager; and Lisa Bachmann, Administrative Secretary

### ***Guests***

Lynn Ford, Chair SCoA; and Sheila Johnson-Teeter, Interim Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman; Bryan Hildebrand, Clients Service Director Senior Services for South Sound; Paul Taylor, Brighter Days Program Manager, Cheri Knighton, Alzheimer's Association Facilitator

### ***Welcome & Introductions***

Glenn Harper called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m. This was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Attendance was taken and introductions were made.

### ***Approval of Minutes and Agenda***

Glenn Harper, Chair, entertained a motion to approve both the May 5, 2021 draft meeting minutes, as well as the draft agenda for the June 2, 2021 meeting. Eileen McKenzieSullivan made a motion to approve both. Janeen McLaughlin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

***Comments from Council Chair – Glenn Harper***

Glenn Harper, Chair, Mason County, shared a link in the chat for information on a new program that will provide a \$50 per month subsidy for broadband internet for low-income seniors (<https://getemergencybroadband.org/do-i-qualify/>). He suggested the council members familiarize themselves with the information and share it with others.

***Community Updates & Announcements – Various Council Members***

Liz Hicker, Lewis County, shared that the senior centers in Lewis County have not opened yet and people are wondering why.

Amy Turnbull, Lewis County, commented that the vaccination rate in Lewis County is lower than in Thurston and Mason Counties and she wonders what can be done to help increase the numbers. Amy noted that when at a Lewis County memory care facility, one social worker mentioned they need updated Lewis-Mason-Thurston Area Agency on Aging (LMTAAA) Resource Directories. Valerie Aubertin, Contracts Manager, shared that the guide is available on our agency's website ([www.lmtaaa.org/media](http://www.lmtaaa.org/media)) or we can coordinate getting paper copies mailed. There is an updated version printed each year.

Glenn Harper, Chair, Mason County, shared that the Mason County Senior Center is now open five days per week with no masks required. They are still waiting for approval to resume the Friday Fun Nights with food, beverages, music and dancing.

Jamie Queen, Mason County, added that the Squaxin Island Tribe has 930 members who are vaccinated out of about 1400 total members. They delivered 100 gardening kits to tribal members. They are also serving about 100 meals per day. Their building is open, but with limited capacity and masks required.

Michelle Horaney, Thurston County, shared Senior Services of South Sound is still closed but there is a committee being formed that will work towards meeting all the requirements for re-opening. There was an online Meals on Wheels fundraiser last week, which was very well done.

Angela Hock, Thurston County shared that the Olympia Senior Center would like to have someone from LMTAAA come share information on what services we provide and what resources there are for family caregivers. There was discussion about having Executive Director, Nicole Kiddoo, share a Power Point presentation created for this type of event.

***Advocacy & Legislative Committee – Michele Horaney***

Michele Horaney, Thurston County, shared there is nothing new to report on the state level since the legislators are currently on break. The committee members are keeping an eye on what is going on at the Federal level and also looking for guidance from the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (N4A). Michele and Howard Burton have prepared a short script on how to have a good phone conversation with an aide, state or federal representative. They will share this at an upcoming meeting.

***Socialization & Engagement Committee update – Eileen McKenzieSullivan***

Eileen McKenzieSullivan, Thurston County, shared the Socialization and Engagement Committee will meet next Monday. Angela Hock has made calls to some participants from the GrandPad pilot program to gather feedback. The committee is looking at the White Paper the State Council on Aging created with the Washington Area Agencies on Aging (W4A) regarding socialization and engagement. Lynn Ford, shared the White Paper link: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/stakeholders/addressing-social-isolation-washington-state>

Glenn Harper, commented that some residents of Lewis County are incorrectly attributing the continued closure of the senior centers to directives from LMTAAA. Valerie Aubertin, Contracts Manager, explained that some of this misinformation came from an article in a Lewis County newspaper. She explained that LMTAAA does not approve or disapprove plans for the senior centers to open. We encourage them to follow the state guidelines, directives from the Department of Health (DOH), the Governor's website, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Department of Labor and Industries (L & I) for reopening.

***State Council on Aging (SCoA) - Lynn Ford***

Lynn Ford emailed her SCoA report to all the Advisory Council members prior to the meeting. She explained that the goals of the W4A for the upcoming legislative year is to increase the case management rate, increase caregivers' wages and increase the personal needs allowances for clients. She reminded everyone that her term on the State Council on Aging ends September 30, 2021 and hopes to have her replacement appointed in time to attend the September meeting with her. She has provided applications to all council members for the annual W4A awards. There is an organizational and individual award. She believes that our Socialization and Engagement Committee deserves the organization award for all the work they have accomplished. Lynn is also gathering information from other counties whose senior centers have re-opened regarding the practices they are following so the information can be shared with other counties.

***National Alzheimer's Month – Cheri Knighton, Alzheimer's Assoc. Facilitator; Paul Taylor, Brighter Days Program Manager. Senior Services for South Sound; and Bryan Hildebrand, Client Services Director, Senior Services for South Sound***

Cheri Knighton, Alzheimer's Association Facilitator, shared her background with Senior Services for South Sound and LMTAAA. She explained family caregivers have been very isolated during COVID-19 and are excited the state is starting to re-open. Cheri facilitates two support groups through the Alzheimer's Association. Due to the pandemic, the groups meet virtually on a weekly basis to provide support and flexibility for families who are trying to cope with the isolation. Unfortunately, attendance has declined during this time. Members of the support group appreciate the 24-hour Alzheimer's Hotline. Cheri shared other issues faced by families during the pandemic, including finding respite and skilled care. Isolation and lack of activity can cause faster cognitive decline, loneliness and depression. The Alzheimer's Association would like to provide more outreach in the rural and southwest part of the state, which is underserved. Cheri also

reported that Maggie Christofferson is the new Caregiver Support Coordinator for the seven southwest counties and looks forward to her working with LMTAAA.

Paul Taylor, Brighter Days Adult Day Care Program Manager, shared that before the pandemic Brighter Days provided adult day care at the Lacey Senior Center and Faith Lutheran Church in Shelton. They now provide remote/distanced programming, which includes scheduled Zoom Activities such as: seated exercise; games like hangman and bingo; happy hour with guest musicians; and a discussion hour with questions that allow participants to share about themselves. These programs help provide some respite for family caregivers. They hope to re-open with in-person services, at a reduced schedule by mid-July. Some families of seniors who are now homebound have expressed a desire for the distance programming to continue after the pandemic. Brighter Days hopes to make the distance programming easier to access through funding by a program similar to the GrandPad program. Paul also explained that Brighter Days tries to take a very individualized approach with all their programming, which includes crafts, music therapy, games, and pet therapy. They want participants to feel valued and make safety a priority.

Carrie Petit, Contracts Manager, explained that LMTAAA funds the Brighter Days program through the Older American's Act (OAA), the Family Support Caregiver Program, Medicaid and some emergency COVID-19 funding. She has sat in on some of the distance programming and has found them very well-done.

Bryan Hildebrand, Clients Service Director at Senior Services for South Sound, thanked Carrie Petit, Contracts Manager, for her support, Cheri Knighton for her deep knowledge on Alzheimer's and Paul Taylor for his hard work overseeing the program. He mentioned the Senior Services for South Sounds' Inclusion Program which focuses on seniors with developmental disabilities. Bryan also shared about their pet program which helps provide low-income seniors in Thurston and Mason Counties with assistance to cover the cost for veterinary visits, including prescriptions and pet food needed for special diets.

***Congregate Meals - Valerie Aubertin, Contracts Manager***

Valerie Aubertin, Contracts Manager, explained that when the Senior Centers closed due to the pandemic, they lost many of their volunteers and some staff. To re-open they need to recruit and train new volunteers and fill open staff positions; clean spaces that have been closed for over a year; and make sure the space and processes meet new standards. The Department of Health and Social Services (DSHS) developed guidance for the congregate meal programs called the Senior Nutrition Program Re-Opening Document. DSHS worked with DOH and L & I, using guidance from the CDC on how to safely reopen. LMTAAA shared this information with our subcontracted senior nutrition providers. Valerie reiterated that LMTAAA does not approve or disapprove their plans or decide when they can re-open. According to DSHS guidance, the congregate meal program must comply with the same guidelines as restaurants and bars with a written plan that is posted and implemented at each site. The senior nutrition providers are working on creating their plans.

***Executive Director Report – Nicole Kiddoo***

Nicole Kiddoo, Executive Director, shared LMTAAA has made some organization structural changes. We are currently in phase four of our plan, which was approved by our Council of Governments. This will add a Case Management Training Supervisor and a Deputy Executive Director who will help with day to day operations and our emergency response planning. There are a few positions that are being reclassified and we are also looking forward to filling a new Human Resources Director position, which was delayed due to the pandemic. These added positions will take our staff up to about 76 positions. The agency has hired a Community Supports Director, Donna Feddern, who we look forward to welcoming at the end of June. Donna has previous experience working for the public library system.

Nicole also shared her temporary position as the W4A Board Chair has been extended through September. She explained that the agency has extended our remote work agreement through the end of September. We will also continue to have our Advisory Council meetings via Zoom through at least September. We are using this time to make some upgrades to our large conference room, so that once in-person meetings can be resumed, we can accommodate members who feel comfortable to attend in person and also those who want to join remotely.

***Additional Comments – Various Council Members and Staff***

Eileen McKenzieSullivan commented she is glad the agency created an H.R. position to assist with the growth at the agency. Glenn Harper added he has heard some great things about Donna Feddern's work and looks forward to see what she will bring to the agency. Valerie Aubertin reminded the council members about the Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program. There is information and applications on our website. The program runs from June 1 through October 31 and is available to lower income seniors above the age of 60. Each senior receives ten - \$4.00 vouchers, which can be used at participating farmers markets or area farm stores. Many locations match the amount, which doubles the amount of produce the senior can purchase.

***Next Advisory Council Meeting***

Advisory Council Meetings will continue via teleconferencing until further notice. The next scheduled meeting will be on Wednesday, July 7, 2021, at 9:30 a.m., via Zoom.

***Adjournment***

Glen Harper called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Eileen McKenzieSullivan made the motion to adjourn and Howard Burton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 pm.