



Lewis - Mason - Thurston Area Agency on Aging

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Area Agency on Aging

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Advisory Council Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, June 7, 2023 9:30 – 12:00 p.m. Via ZOOM

Members Present

Lewis County: Tim Wood, Carolyn (Carol) Brock, Heidi Buswell, Liz Hicker; Debbie Aust

Mason County: Glenn Harper, Vice-Chair, Cynthia Stang, Becky Cronquist

Thurston County: Eileen McKenzie Sullivan, Chair; Cat McGaffigan; Michele Horaney; Anna Schlecht; Angela Hock

Members Absent

Lewis County:

Mason County: Tamra Ingwaldson

Thurston County: Ellen Wendt

Staff Present

Jessica Hodges, Senior Executive Assistant, Donna Feddern Community Supports Director

Guests:

Welcome & Introductions

Eileen McKenzie Sullivan, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:31 AM, followed by introductions.

Approval of Minutes and Agenda

Motion to accept the Draft Agenda for June 2023 and Draft Meeting Minutes was made by Glenn Harper and seconded by Debbie Aust. A vote was taken and carried unanimously.

Guest Speaker: Cat McGaffigan, Panorama

Cat shared context around her role with Panorama including helping to bring supports and programs to independent living for those who are having memory changes as well as their care partners. With most residents wanting to stay in their homes, Panorama does what they can to help them live successfully and safely in their homes. Cat mentioned that on June 16th there is a rally to urge CMS to cover the cost of FDA approved Alzheimer's

treatments. There are not many FDA approved medications that help in some scenarios, not to reverse but reduce the rate or speed of acceleration of the disease. June features the longest day of the year, June 21st. Alzheimer's Association uses this day to fight Alzheimer's as it's the hardest day for those with Alzheimer's; using that as a day to bring awareness to the disease and caregiver struggles. Each year the Alzheimer's association puts out stats with where we are at with the disease. In 2020 120k Washingtonians over 65 years of age were diagnosed with Alzheimer's – in 2025, its expected to be at 140k. These statistics do not include those undiagnosed, those with mild cognitive impairment, or those under 65 years of age.

In 2021 the National Institute of Aging talked about different ethnicities and their reluctance in getting treatment or testing – Those who identify as black are 35% less likely to be diagnosed and tested and are twice as likely to be diagnosed when they are tested. Hispanic adults are even less likely than all adults to seek medical care. In Lewis Mason and Thurston counties, Thurston, 27% of residents identify as non-white, Mason at 21% and Lewis at 18%.

In 2021 the Washington workforce had 126 geriatricians. The state will need a 260% increase by 2050 to meet demands, which comes out to 400. Becky Cronquist asked if this is due to people living longer, or more being diagnosed. Additional questions around links to metabolic syndromes were asked. Cat responded that a link between heart disease, diabetes and diet relations have been identified. Question on dementia and HIPPA laws with caregivers asking doctors to test them for Dementia. Cat responded that the ultimate decision is that of the patient as to whether they want to be tested and diagnosed with memory impairment. Cat encouraged family participation to navigate doctor appointments to help get to a diagnosis as it is better to know early to get interventions in place than to wait and see what happens. There is a stigma around competency related diseases in our culture as we value achievement and independence as a society. When your independence is tested because of your cognition, there is shame to that. We all know the impact shame can have on us. That's when you start to isolate and withdraw from those that could provide support for you. Cynthia asked what we are doing to help people around preventative and signs of early onset. Cat answered that reduction of that stigma that a diagnosis can have a positive impact – many feel they can't share with a neighbor fearing embarrassment.

In 2020 we had 63k home health and personal care aids with a lot of attrition taking place during COVID. Providence neurology is closing – will not part of providence anymore and is going to a different medical group.

In 2022, there were a reported 300K unpaid caregivers in WA resulting in 434M hours of unpaid care valued at almost 11 billion dollars. There is no correlation to education level and dementia or Alzheimer's. Liz Hicker added that Alzheimer's is one division of dementia as there are many. A lot of times it is genetically passed on, and there are ways to teach people to understand and realize they are entering a state of dementia. It is important that you are aware of those signs. There is a program through LMTAAA, John McBride is the contact, hosting a seminar helping families.

The stigma with dementia is a huge barrier we need to overcome; we need to celebrate and support those with Dementia. Tim asked if there is a correlation between cancer treatments and cures and dementia. We need to decrease stigmas to talk to healthcare provider early when you have a few symptoms as measures can be taken to slow the progression. It is important to develop a support system, to fully live life. Social isolation impacts are profound and the need to ensure plans are in place for financial matters and advanced directives are put in place when you can cognitively do so. Michele recommended the exploration of "the village" concept and offered to recruit a guest speaker for our next meeting.

Donna added a link to the chat as a dementia resource for attorneys that do pro-bono paperwork.

There is a concept at Panorama, building a dementia friendly America which includes making communities dementia friendly. The hope is that we could roll this out to more of the Lacey-Olympia area to include education around interacting with someone with memory loss and what the support services they'd need for things like public transport, banks, public spaces and design.

Reports

Community Updates & Announcements – Glenn Harper, Vice Chair

Liz mentioned a dementia workshop between SAN and LMTAAA. Cat reported on the Dementia conference identifying different stages of dementia and demonstrating care tips. She mentioned the conference speaker, Adria Thompson with belightcare.com, had a card stating “Companion may need assistance, please be patient” to present to anyone – waiters etc. to help understand this person may need extra time and assistance.

Glenn reported Friday fun night Shelton Senior Center – second Friday of the month; Death Café on the 22nd 2pm at Lacey Senior Center, then at the Olympia Center on the 28th 10AM.

Senior Services is celebrating 50th birthday with 2 celebrations.

State Council on Aging (SCoA) – Michele Horaney

June meeting will be the second in person meeting at a hotel near the airport and the group has a lot of work to do. RCW identifies what the SCOA is, and the bylaws in the membership book do not match the RCW. There are not materials coming to the group to advise the governor as per the RCW. In June, Bea Rector with DSHS will be coming to talk to SCOA on mission of the group. The group is made up of people with energy and ideas, operating as activists that most of us are in this era. Tim Wood asked if the SCOA should be a 2-way street with the governor coming to the council for recommendation; Michele confirmed this is not the case.

Housing Committee & Charter – Anna Schlecht

Glenn reported as the Vice-Chair of the committee. The committee held discussions on USDA housing development grants which resulted in triggering thoughts around an outline of inventory of affordable sustainable housing like tiny homes managed by a resident owned cooperative. 70% older or disabilities and 30% younger that can provide services. \$300-\$500/month with a democratically run sustainable community. Glenn reported the Committee had a great meeting, warmly welcoming Becky onboard.

Socialization & Engagement Committee – Glenn Harper, Vice-Chair / Angela Hock

Angela reported in this meeting Donna usually carries the meeting and touched on a number of topics. The MonaMe program with security design review undergoing. Still looking into the IN2L. The committee is not excited to be in the hardware business because of the recurring maintenance issues. Outreach efforts are being made in rural areas. Hopefully by fall we will be ready to launch the MonaMe program. YMCA wants to partner with LMTAAA as well. Living well and Living Long conference reimplementing was brought up by Eileen with the implementation in Mason and Lewis counties to reach more rural populations.

Advocacy & Legislative Committee – Michele Horaney

State legislature session has concluded, and news was shared last month. Extra funding we received during the pandemic is being rolled back. Many programs will be dealing with smaller disbursements. Changes were made to the income threshold for older persons concerning property taxes so in some counties you can earn more and still benefit from the tax cut for property taxes. King county is around \$72K – and lower in other counties. Kathy Knight didn't have much big news from W4A on the federal front. Social security and Medicare continue to roll on. Michele will check with 3 counties to learn how they are educating, and what the income threshold is and what state law says.

Adjournment

Tim Wood motioned to adjourn the meeting; Glenn Harper seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously at 11:33 AM

Submitted by: Jessica Hodges, Senior Executive Assist