



## Illinois Council on Aging & Older Adult Services Advisory Committee Joint Meeting Minutes

**Date: June 16, 2020 9:30 – 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. (Approved by OASAC on 08.24.2020)  
(Approved by ICOA on 09.15.2020)**

**Call in:** Dial: #1-415-655-0002 Access code: 133 184 0415#, then press # again

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

#### **OASAC Committee Members**

Paula Basta, Director & OASAC Chair  
(Kim Barr for) Sherry Barter Hamlin

Paul Bennett

Amy S. Brown

Meghan Carter

Theresa Collins

Dr. Thomas Cornwell

Cindy Cunningham

Topaz Gunderson

Kelly Fischer

Lori Hendren

Linda Hubbartt

Susan Hughes

Michael Koronkowski

John Larson

Dave Lowitzki

Phyllis Mitzen

David Olsen

Sandra Pastore

Sara Ratcliffe

Susan Real

Gustavo Saberbein

Teva Shirley Jason

Speaks

Cathy Weightman-Moore

#### **ICoA Committee Members:**

Phyllis Mitzen— Chair

Jane Angelis

Anthony Frazier

Christie Goleman

Paulette Hamlin

Susan Lawler

Patricia Marton

Lee Moriarty

Mubarak Mirjat

Anna Oestreich

Steven Wolf

**OASAC Ex-Officio Committee Members:**

Gwen Diehl – Department of Veterans Affairs  
Mari Money (for Christopher Meister) – Department of Finance  
Kelly Richards – State Long Term Care Ombudsman  
Megan Spitz – Illinois Housing Development Authority  
Lyle VanDeventer – Department of Human Services

**Department on Aging staff:**

Rhonda Armstead, Mike Berkes, Becky Dragoo, Selma D’Souza, John Eckert, Kimberly Flesch, Sophia Gonzalez, Amy Lulich, Lora McCurdy, Mike Sutorius, LaRohnda Williams, Lisa Zurbier

**GUESTS:**

Donna Cruce, AARP

**OASAC COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE:**

Bill Bell  
Patricia Manning  
Jacqueline Rodriguez  
Ancy Zacharia  
Debra Bryars – Department of Public Health  
Kelly Cunningham – Department of Healthcare and Family Services

**Welcome, Roll Call & Staff Introduction:**

Everyone was welcomed to the joint meeting, OASAC and ICOA role call was completed. Director Paula Basta introduced new staff person, Mike Sartorius as the internal auditor. Director Basta shared that Mike joined the Department in May. Sartorius shared that he was most recently at Western Illinois University for the past 5 years and that he is anxious to learn more about the aging network in his new role.

**Approval of April 24, 2020 ICOA/OASAC Meeting Minutes:**

John Eckert asked everyone to review the draft minutes from April 24<sup>th</sup> and asked for a motion to approve the minutes. David Olsen made the motion, Anthony Frazier seconded. Dr. Mubarak Mirjat shared that he would like his name to be added to a comment he made regarding availability of PPE in Evergreen Park. Director asked Dr. Mirjat to submit the addition in writing and it will be added to the minutes prior to posted. No other additions were noted.

**Ombudsman Update:**

Kelly Richards, State Ombudsman shared that to access residents during the covid-19 pandemic, postcards have been sent out to NF residents either by dropping them off at the NF’s and/or mailing them to let residents know that the Ombudsman are available. In addition, each NF has been creative with the post cards. Some have decided to personalize these by adding a picture of the local Ombudsman or adding a color flower to the back of these cards. Ombudsman have also visited certain NF’s depending on what is allowed. Sometimes they complete window visits or outdoor visits depending on the location of the NF. In the City of Chicago, they have been unable to go in and do outdoor visits, but they have done continuous calls and have used facetime as appropriate. Richards shared that she has received positive feedback on these visits. In Southern Illinois window visits have been completed. Overall, the Ombudsman have tried to stay connected to the residents. Richards additionally shared that she is part of an IDPH work group that was formed to discuss the steps to be taken to reopen, this workgroup began meeting this week. There are also additional subgroups to this workgroup that will be meeting later that will work on guidance for outdoor visits and then move to visitation indoors. It was also shared that PPE from IDoA was received. Cathy Weightman-Moore added that the Ombudsman window visits have been really, great. Weightman-Moore additionally shared that most Ombudsman have reported that residents are happy to have someone to talk to. In PSA 01, the Ombudsman were able to distribute half of the postcards early in May and in one nursing home, facility staff went in room to room explaining to residents that Ombudsman were available to help. Richards stated that she had a webinar with staff from UIC Chicago to provide more education to Ombudsman. Phyllis Mitzen stated that this was great news and asked about tracking complaints. Richard responded that there is a system to keep track of complaints and shared that recently they have received complaints about the stimulus money. Weightman-Moore added that they have also received

concerns about PPE and questions from family members about testing and isolation of residents; and that the Public Health guidance has been helpful because at the beginning there were many unknowns. The concerns regarding the stimulus checks for residents were about how these funds had to be handled. Currently, the issues have been visits, families want to see residents outside. Lee Moriarty asked about the re-opening plans and how it would address how many staff will work at multiple communities. Would staff need to make a choice of which facilities they would work in. Richards responded that there was no agenda yet for the workgroup but that she would make sure that question is addressed. Weightman-Moore responded that some NFs told staff they can only work in one NF or in one wing, and that some places have been able to look at that and some have had no COVID cases. Lee Moriarty stated that limited staff do much better but many it is tough for employees that need the money. Sue Hughes thanked Richards for distributing the postcards and flyers. Hughes stated that going forward she hopes everyone works on learning what happened and asked about communication between IDoA and IDPH; asked if IDPH identified hotspots on cases and mortality rates. If there is a way to develop an early system, hopefully it will not repeat, and we can be more proactive. Richards stated that communication is the key and she has been trying to stay in touch with IDPH; and added that the National Guard and IEMA created a dashboard with real time information. Perhaps the Ombudsman can tap into the system and see hotspots to track and sustain this system. Director Basta shared that IDoA and IDPH will work on the guidance but there is a lot of work to be done due to years of IDPH not being given resources. IDoA will be meeting with IDPH for one of the 7 workgroups on reopening.

#### **ACL ADRC- IT/Social Isolation grant Update:**

Amy Lulich shared that the Department applied for the ACL ADRC IT grant for emergency funding during the pandemic. The Department and DHS received 1.7 million dollars for the Social Isolation grant to provide devices (tablets) to those who have been isolated due to COVID-19. Providers must complete an online referral for individuals in need of these devices. In addition, technical assistance to those who receive these devices will be provided. Funds will be shared between IDoA, DRS, and DDD. The Illinois Assistive Technology Program will coordinate purchases and distribution. Currently, the Department is getting close to launching the program.

#### **Reopening of Network/Resuming Face to Face Visits/PPE Distribution:**

Lora McCurdy shared that the Department has formed 7 workgroups to discuss reopening of the network and resuming face to face visits. The workgroups include Adult Day Services, Congregate dining sites. Senior Centers, Adult Protective Services (APS) assessment (investigations), Care Coordination Unit (CCU) initial assessments and redeterminations, Long-Term Care facilities – resumption of onsite visits by Ombudsman and HC Ombudsman, Emergency Home Response Service (EHRS) and Automatic Medication Dispenser (AMD) installation, and In-home services. McCurdy shared that the workgroups are an open process, and anyone could join these workgroups. The Department will also be working with DHS- DD Division, IDPH, HFS and the Governor's office on this guidance. McCurdy shared that there are a lot of questions for the Department of Public Health and there is a call on Friday. ADS is a respite service and a lot of people are anxious to have the ADS reopen. She added that the FY21 budget does include PPE offset payments for providers. There is also a screening tool to be used for staff and participants to be safe that has been shared with the in-home provider network and we are looking at tweaking that tool. This tool can be shared, and we welcome feedback. In addition, Amy Lulich is looking at other states, Federal ACL, and Federal CMS. We are looking at all that is being done and what is best for Illinois. Director Basta stated that everyone is anxious to reopen and now bars and restaurants are reopening. However, she wants to assure that services to our vulnerable population open safely and implemented properly. Director stated that until June 28, we are still in Phase 3 in the Governor's phases of reopening. Director also shared that Department has provided along with IEMA & FEMA, 465,000+ PPE as a State agency. In addition, 660,000 shelf stable meals and all these things continue to be provided and sure that our network have what they need. The Senior HelpLine has never stopped fielding calls, and staff have done a great job. Director Basta stated that we appreciate everyone on the phone because you are our voices and we want to be transparent. John Eckert added that if anyone wants to be part of the reopening workgroups please mail Sophia. Kelly Fischer shared that she accepted a position in an Assisted Living facility and every person she called at IDPH has been outstanding and very transparent. Fischer added that is great to be able to ask questions in times of crisis and you don't always have the positive. Sue Hughes asked for the names of the workgroups to be sent to everyone in writing.

**Emergency Senior Services (ESS) grant Update:**

Mike Berkes provided an ESS update, he stated that these funds were intended to meet any need of any individual 60 years and over or individuals between the ages of 18 -59 with an APS case. Berkes added that ESS funds are not reserved for CCP participants and the Department has been very flexible and have been able to help those affected by COVID-19. In addition, these funds have helped individuals that were affected one week and a half ago with the social unrest. Berkes additionally stated that the Department shared a list of things that this grant can purchase the third week of March. The Financial Reporting was due yesterday from CCUs and the data that will be shared may be a little outdated. One month ago, \$300,000 total had been spent in a 6-week period. There is a nutritional need and \$145,000 has been spent on home delivered meals. Other items purchased with these funds were personal hygiene items, PPE, assistive technology and transportations services. ESS allows for Care Coordinators to make bulk purchases to help individuals. Referral forms were given to all core service providers, including AAA's and APS. All referrals go back to the CCU. A total of 200,000 individual purchases were made and 200,000 bulk purchases. Other examples of purchases include thermal bags to keep food warm/cold. Transportation costs that include delivery for food and prescription deliveries. Berkes was pleased to announce that 5 million dollars in ESS funds will be carried into FY21. Berkes shared that managing ESS has been a full-time job and ESS will continue to deliver knowing that this pandemic is not over. John Eckert added that one of the services that ESS funds have provided that were quick and innovative were ethnic meals. The Department worked with a couple of CCUs in Chicago to provide ethnic meals to make sure that people got the nutrition they needed. Eckert additionally shared that some of the CCUs outreached to other providers during the time that grocery stores were non-existence because the buildings were damaged, or some seniors watched the news and did not want to go out. Other ESS requests have included rent and mortgage assistance, which ESS was not intended for and asked Meghan Spitz from IHDA to provide information regarding funds for rent and mortgage assistance in her Department and IDoA wants to make sure that they are on the radar for these funds. Spitz shared that 396 million dollars in funds will be available for emergency funds and to finance affordable housing during COVID-19 issues. She shared that 79 million dollars will go to the North/East. The emergency rental assistance process of developing the program will help the Department connect with sister agencies. Spitz hopes to have more information in the future. Director Basta stated that aging will help and forward all rent and mortgage requests. Eckert shared that once there is something in place, we can share how funds will be distributed.

### **Virtual Conferences-**

Mike Berkes stated that a face to face conference in September will not be possible, but the training staff is planning a virtual conference. The staff is planning a platform and once a platform is settled additional information can be shared. He shared that the plan is to have virtual everything and this will be part of our new normal. Berkes asked that if anyone has ideas for presenters to let the Department know once we reach out; and also added that training is trying to work much closer with APS and Ombudsman. Mike Koronkowski stated that the concept of virtual learning is essential moving forward and education will never be the same.

### **Quality Webinars-**

Mike Berkes shared that for the past 18 months the Department has been making Quality Webinars available for the network, member Mike Koronkowski provided the first one. Due to COVID-19 being the Department's priority these Quality Webinars have not continued but the Department plan on restarting these in May. The Quality Webinars to be presented in the future will have a COVID-19 focus and include anything that is related. The next webinar is on Social Isolation and the potential impact on Mental Health. Berkes added that individuals that never had a Mental Health issue may have one now, due to the difficulties of the stay at home order. The Department is also planning a future webinar with Dr. Judith Cook (UIC) on the topic of Re-engagement. The Department understands that it may be difficult for some seniors to have someone show up at their door with PPE. Re-engagement may include having to re-establish rapport since everything is changing and we don't know what the future will hold. Everyone was invited to search the new Department website that Mike Dropka worked on, it includes a section on Quality Webinars. Director Basta added that it was a new and improved website and a terrific resource. Berkes also asked if anyone would like to be a speaker to please let him know via email [Mike.Berkes@illinois.gov](mailto:Mike.Berkes@illinois.gov) and add Quality webinars on the subject line. Phyllis Mitzen asked if all the people who need access to this information have access, like people in rural areas. Mitzen stated that everyone does not have access to a computer and all libraries are currently closed. John Eckert stated that the ACL-ADRC IT grant is intended to purchase IPADs for up to 1,000 seniors. Berkes added that the ability to have internet access through hot spots is included. Amy Lulich identified that CCUs check with volunteers in certain areas to make sure that the people that need this access hear about this option. Director Basta shared that we are all concerned about the rural areas and the Aging network continues to be more resilient in human touch piece and understand

that it is an important part and will continue to do this. Director added that phone calls to the Senior HelpLine and APS hotline are ongoing. Seniors that do not have access to internet and need to get information through a human being can still call the Senior HelpLine. Susan Real stated there has been regular contact with seniors in rural areas. They have had new clients in rural areas and their network has been strong as ever. Berkes suggested compiling resources and sharing these resources. McCurdy shared that Amy Lulich has been looking at examples from other states and a Person-Centered approach template be can be shared with ICOA and OASAC.

**State Plan-**

Amy Lulich shared that work had started to be completed to draft the State Plan 2021/2013 draft plan prior to COVID-19. In April, ACL sent out a letter on requesting extensions of existing State Plans. The Draft is being reviewed and a request to extend the deadline for the State Plan 2021/2023 has been completed. On May 22 there was a Public Notice intent to delay the submission and questions until July 6. Additional information can be found on the website and any feedback can be submitted to the Aging feedback email or to Amy's email. Lulich also shared that AAAs develop their own area plans and have been given an extension to submit their area plans by December 1, 2020.

**Budget-**

Lora McCurdy stated that the Governor has signed the budget and a copy of the highlight document can be sent out to the members. She shared that there was an increase to the budget for CCP for COVID-19 related and the increase for in-home care. The Department continues to work with HFS to amend the waiver. Also included are PPE offset payments and ESS funds. Federal funding includes Cares Act funds which have been a huge support for AAA's and HDM providers.

**Issues/Announcements/Public Comments:**

Mike Koronkowski asked about how the census is going amid the crisis. Director Basta shared that the outreach for the Census continues and DHS is making statewide efforts to get the census completed. Director also shared that the State is doing a good job. AgeOptions is also continuing to do outreach for the Census. Selma D'Souza added that the State is doing a good job and the AAA's are doing the outreach and using the ACL administrative funding received. Director Basta thanked the AAA's and member Susan Real. Director added that May was Older American's Month and that Real's area has done a great job highlighting stories. These stories are posted on the website and social media. Director stated that all AAA's and CCUs have done a great job. Phyllis Mitzen suggested that a zoom platform be used for future meetings. Director Basta responded that she did not know what the State allows. John Eckert added that this was the last IOCA and OASAC combined meeting planned and that future meetings will resume separately.

**Motion to adjourn:**

Mike Koronkowski made a motion to adjourn, Teva Shirley seconded. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 11:36 a.m.