

ILLINOIS COUNCIL ON AGING

WEBEX MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2025

10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

ILLINOIS COUNCIL ON AGING (ICoA) MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kim Hunt, Julie Bobitt, Britta Larson, Donya Flohr, Anthany Frazier, Paulette Hamlin, Talat Khan, Susan Lawler, Steven Lord, Sylvia Mahle, Phyllis Mitzen, Kate Schwartz, Sherry Sparks, Meijan Linda Yu, Representative Rita Mayfield represented by Wandreeka McBride, Representative Maura Hirschauer represented by Kenia Murrieta, Representative Tom Weber

ICoA MEMBERS ABSENT:

Sue Vega, Christina Hardin-Weiss, Crystal Odom-McKinney, Edgar Ramirez, Senator Laura Fine, Senator Mattie Hunter, Senator Dave Syverson, Representative Jason Bunting

VISITORS and GUESTS:

Amy Brennan, Executive Director of the Illinois Family Caregiver Coalition
Lori Hendren, Senior Associate State Director of Advocacy and Outreach of AARP Illinois

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT ON AGING (IDoA) STAFF PRESENT:

Mary Killough, IDoA Director
Becky Dragoo, Deputy Director
Rhonda Armstead, General Counsel
Michelle Hoersch, Chief Planning Officer for the Multi-Sector Plan on Aging
Sandy Pastore, Senior Policy Advisor
Amy Wiatr-Rodriguez, Division Manager of Home & Community Services
T'Kira Siler-Wilkerson, Deputy Division Manager of Home & Community Services
Derek Hedges, Division Manager of Planning, Research, Development & Training
Adrienne Grover, Deputy Division Manager of Advocacy & Prevention Services
Jeanice McDade, APS Program Administrator
Kelly Richards, State Long Term Care Ombudsman
Lee Moriarty, Deputy State Long Term Care Ombudsman
Glenda Love, Deputy State Home Care Ombudsman
Bresha Brewer, Legislative Liaison
Iris Huber, Public Information Officer
Emily Howerton, Budget & Finance Manager
Jennifer Hebel, Special Research Assistant for the Executive Office
Roberta Vojas, Legislative Administrative Assistant
Desire Bernard, Special Assistant on Community Engagement & Equity
Lisa Zuurbier, Division Manager of Community Relations & Outreach
Lisa Dupoy, Administrative Assistant, Division of Community Relations & Outreach

SUMMARY

OPENING:

The meeting was called to order at 10:32 a.m. by Council Vice Chair Kim Hunt. Roll call was taken by Secretary Julie Bobitt and it was determined that a quorum was established.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Vice Chair Kim Hunt asked Council members for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 29, 2025 meeting. Susan Lawler entered a motion and Britta Larson seconded the motion; the motion passed and the minutes were approved.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Budget and Finance Manager, Emily Howerton, reported on the Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) budget. She shared that the Department was in the initial phases of budget development. Emily will update ICoA in the future with more specific information regarding the budget and share any anticipated changes for FY27.

Bresha Brewer, Legislative Liaison, updated ICoA on several new laws. Public Act 104-0172 requires all nursing facilities to have automated external defibrillators (AED) available. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is charged with oversight and nursing facilities have five years to comply with the Act. Public Act 104-0057 allows municipalities or fire districts to charge reasonable fees to assisted living or nursing homes for non-emergency assistance. Public Act 104-0088 adds a physical therapist to the list of individuals who can submit documentation for a person applying for a disability placard from the Secretary of State (SoS). Public Act 104-0169 allows delaying the mandatory behind the wheel driving test for drivers licenses from age 79 to age 87 starting July 1, 2026. There is a provision allowing an immediate family member to submit information to SoS if there is a condition that interferes with the person's ability to operate a motor vehicle safely.

Bresha shared that the Spring legislative session begins in January and the Governor's budget address is scheduled for February 18. Bresha will provide more information on future legislative and budget proposals as they become available.

Becky Dragoo, Deputy Director, updated the Council on the Statewide Vaccine Access Initiative. Earlier this year, Governor Pritzker signed an Executive Order launching a statewide effort to protect vaccine access. The initiative is led by the IDPH in partnership with multiple state agencies. IDPH has secured mobile clinics to provide vaccinations for hard-to-reach populations, including home-bound seniors and disabled persons. Becky encouraged the Council to think about where these mobile clinics may be beneficial and reach out for more information or to schedule a visit. Becky also shared information regarding a new IDPH vaccine toolkit that includes outreach advice for reaching key populations and information regarding funding opportunities.

Amy Wiatr-Rodriguez, Division Manager of Home and Community Services, shared that Older Americans Act (OAA) funding will remain in place through the continuing resolution date of January 30, 2026, as the federal shutdown has ended. IDoA expects to receive a notice of funding shortly and will work to get service reimbursements out to agencies. Amy shared that

implementing a State Plan on Aging is a requirement for receiving federal OAA funds, noting that the State Plan is posted on the IDoA website. She added that IDoA is convening internal work groups to work on the goals of the plan and that there will be opportunities for external engagement in 2026.

Amy said that the Community Care Program Advisory Committee (CCPAC) is meeting on December 10 and is seeking new committee members, specifically members representing adult day service providers, trade or labor unions representing home care aides, direct care staff, research and policy advocates, and older adults over the age of 60 years. Self-nominations are allowed and encouraged. Amy invited anyone who may be interested to apply or nominate a candidate.

Amy also discussed the State of the Workforce Survey that is being conducted. In-home services caregivers and adult day service providers are requested to complete the survey by December 19. She said that the new year will bring programmatic changes for home and community-based services and participants including the transition from the Medicare Medicaid Alignment Initiative (MMAI) to Dual Eligible Special Needs Plans (D-SNPs). She added that changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid are expected soon.

Derek Hedges, Division Manager of Planning, Research, Development and Training, updated the Council on the renewal of the Persons Who Are Elderly Waiver. The waiver is a component of the CCP. It was approved for five years and is set to expire in September 2026. The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS), as the state Medicaid Agency, is responsible for administration and oversight of the waiver. Derek said that after proposed changes are approved by HFS, there will be a 30-day public comment period. Comments will be submitted to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Service (CMS) in April or May as part of the renewal process.

Derek also updated ICoA on the implementation of a rate study for CCP providers, Care Coordination Units (CCUs) and Adult Protective Services (APS). There will be opportunities for service providers to comment on any proposals before implementation. In addition, Derek updated members on electronic visit verification. He noted that IDoA's in-home service providers have been compliant regarding electronic visit verification for several years. However, all data from visits must now be aggregated with data from other agencies. The HHA Exchange is the statewide aggregator that HFS has contracted with to collect this information. Currently, they are setting up agency portals for electronic data interchange with an anticipated go live date in early March 2026.

The Director shared that the IDoA Annual Conference was held October 15-16, 2025, in Peoria. She said it was a highly successful meeting revitalizing the Aging Network and attended by approximately 700 people.

The Director noted that implementation of IDoA's three-year State Plan will soon begin. The Director also shared that the Multi-Sector Plan on Aging (MPA) is also coming together and will soon be finalized as well. The Director said that these efforts highlight what IDoA is doing to improve programs and processes for providers and participants.

ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES UPDATE:

IDoA Adult Protective Services (APS) Program Administrator Jeanice McDade provided an update to the Council. She shared that in FY25, there was a 5 percent increase in APS intakes from the previous year for a total of 23,898 intakes. Financial exploitation is the number one type of reported abuse representing approximately 25 percent of the intakes, followed closely by self-neglect. Currently, there is a legislative proposal to add bank tellers to the list of mandated reporters. Banks would be allowed to put transactional holds in place if there was a suspicion of financial exploitation which would allow APS to work with the bank to find out if it was a legitimate transaction.

ILLINOIS FAMILY CAREGIVER COALITION OVERVIEW & ADVOCACY:

Amy Brennan, Executive Director of the Illinois Family Caregiver Coalition (IFCC), provided an overview of IFCC which was started in 2021 by all 13 of the Illinois Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs). It now has more than 520 members and is still growing. Funding is through the Retirement Research Foundation (RRF) and IDoA, with additional funding from Blue Cross/ Blue Shield of Illinois, Google, TCARE, family foundations, and small donor contributions.

IFCC brings together a statewide group of advocates and stakeholder organizations that support and engage with caregivers and advocate for policy changes related to unpaid caregivers. Advocates identify gaps in current caregiver programs and explore potential policy and program areas that can support family caregivers. Amy noted the IFCC's support of the federal RAISE Act (Recognize, Assist, Include, Support, Engage Act) recommendations to address caregivers needs through the development and implementation of a coordinated strategy. She added that IFCC collaborates with caregivers, legislators and organizations across the state to help spread the word about available caregiver resources, as well as recommend additional resources. Efforts include increasing the awareness of the importance of unpaid family caregivers.

Lori Hendren, AARP Illinois Senior Associate State Director of Advocacy and Outreach, shared data about caregiving in Illinois. Data gathered through a 2024 survey conducted by AARP and the National Alliance for Caregiving found that there are more than 2.2 million family caregivers in Illinois. Of these caregivers, 71 percent are women and 29 percent are men. It was found that 47 percent of family caregivers in Illinois have experienced a negative financial impact because of their care responsibilities. In addition, 40 percent of caregivers reported moderate to high levels of emotional stress. Lori also shared that 32 percent of caregivers are with a child at home while caring for an adult. The most common caregiver tasks include transportation (82 percent); shopping (78 percent); housework (74 percent); managing finances (70 percent); preparing meals (49 percent); medical and nursing care (49 percent); and giving medications (48 percent).

Amy encouraged ICoA members with interest in IFCC membership to reach out to her at Amy.Brennan@ageoptions.org.

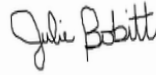
NEW BUSINESS:

New members Illinois State Representative Tom Weber and Donya Flohr were introduced and welcomed to the Council. In addition, new IDoA staff member Desire Bernard, Special Assistant for Community Engagement and Equity, was introduced and welcomed.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was asked for by Vice Chair Kim Hunt, a motion was made by Steven Lord and seconded by Sherry Sparks.

The meeting adjourned at 12:24 p.m.



Julie Bobitt, Secretary
Illinois Council on Aging