

ILLINOIS COUNCIL ON AGING

MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 2024

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

ILLINOIS COUNCIL ON AGING (ICoA) MEMBERS PRESENT:

Julie Bobitt, Anthony Frazier, Christina Hardin-Weiss, Britta Larson, Susan Lawler, Sylvia Mahle, Patricia Marton, Mubarak Mirjat, Phyllis Mitzen, Crystal Odom-McKinney, Kate Schwartz, Susan Vega, Meijian Linda Yu, Senator Laura Fine, Senator David Syverson represented by Cheryl Larson, Representative Rita Mayfield represented by Dylan Olthoff

ICoA MEMBERS ABSENT:

Kim Hunt, Melvin Grimes, Paulette Hamlin, Talat Khan, Edgar Ramirez, Representative Maura Hirschauer, Senator Mattie Hunter

VISITORS and GUESTS:

None

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT ON AGING (IDoA) STAFF PRESENT:

Mary Killough, Director
Selma D'Souza, Chief of Staff
Rhonda Armstead, General Counsel
Sandra Pastore, Division Manager of Home & Community Services
Chelsey Peters, Deputy Division Manager of Home & Community Services
Brian Pastor, Division Manager of Advocacy & Prevention Services
Jennifer Hebel, Special Research Assistant for the Executive Office
Kelly Richards, State Long Term Care Ombudsman
Lee Moriarty, Deputy State Long Term Care Ombudsman
Gloria Simmons, Legislative Liaison
Iris Schweier, Public Information Officer
Emily Howerton, Budget & Finance Manager
Roberta Vojas, Legislative Assistant
Lisa Zurbier, Division Manager of Community Relations & Outreach
Lynnette Martin, Deputy Division Manager of Community Relations & Outreach
Sandy Leith, SHIP Director, Division of Community Relations & Outreach
Shauna Kalaskie, Benefit Access Program Admin., Division of Community Relations & Outreach
Lisa Dupoy, Administrative Assistant, Division of Community Relations & Outreach

SUMMARY

OPENING:

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m. by Council Secretary Julie Bobitt. Roll call was taken and it was determined that a quorum was established.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Julie asked Council members for a motion to approve the minutes from the December 14, 2023 meeting. Britta Larson entered a motion and Phyllis Mitzen seconded the motion; all members voted aye, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

WELCOME NEW IDoA ACTING DIRECTOR:

Julie gave a warm welcome to Mary Killough, new Acting IDoA Director. The Director has more than 30 years of experience serving the older adult population. She previously served as Division Manager of Home and Community Services, as well as Deputy Director of IDoA. She most recently served as Vice President of Operations and Government Relations for Accent Care, a national leader in home healthcare and hospice services. Director Killough is also a licensed attorney and in the past served as Cook County's Assistant States Attorney.

ICoA members welcomed Director Killough's return to IDoA. Members introduced themselves and shared their professional backgrounds and individual experiences serving older adults. They also expressed that they look forward to working with Director Killough to improve services and programs for Illinois' seniors.

DIRECTORS REPORT:

Emily Howerton, IDoA Budget and Finance Manager, provided the Council an update on the budget. Emily stated that the Fiscal Year (FY) 25 budget is a maintenance budget of just over 1.7 billion dollars. There is a budget increase for the Community Care Program (CCP) due to the January 1 rate increase for providers. There is also a budget increase for utilization and case load, as well as for home delivered meals to allow accommodation for the increased demand in the number of seniors receiving meals.

Sandy Pastore, IDoA Division Manager of Home and Community Services, presented progress on the development of the next Illinois State Plan on Aging. Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) are currently conducting area needs assessments to implement their three-year plan for Fiscal Year (FY) 25-27. These assessments focus on the greatest areas of economic and social needs of the older adults within their service areas. Sandy provided an overview of the federal and state funding streams to support the programs and services offered through the AAAs. Sandy explained the initiatives being implemented to reach service goals: *Initiative 1* to raise awareness and share information about the availability of aging services and supports; *Initiative 2* is to drive continuous quality assurance and improvement activities to maximize the effectiveness of the services being delivered; and *Initiative 3* is to increase public awareness of needs and resources available to support caregivers in Illinois.

Sandy shared that in 2023, IDoA partnered with the AAAs to hold twenty in person and three virtual caregiver round table meetings to hear from caregivers across the state and better understand their needs and challenges. The input from the more than 450 participants will help to shape the future of services offered. There will be additional opportunities to collect public feedback in the upcoming months with public hearings beginning in January of 2025 and the final FY26-28 Illinois State Plan on Aging due on July 1, 2025. Sandy encouraged the Council to reach out to their local AAAs to attend public hearings and provide input.

Brian Pastor, Division Manager of Advocacy and Preventive Services (APS) updated the Council on quality assurance measures conducted by their new Quality Assurance (QA) team. The QA team's primary duty is to complete comprehensive reviews of provider case documentation to identify deficiencies and form corrective action plans if necessary. The APS Division has also contracted with the National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) to complete a comprehensive analysis of the APS program. They will review statutes, regulations, and procedures to locate inefficiencies and provide solutions to any problems found and recommend best practices. This evaluation will be completed in November 2024.

Sandy Leith, Director of the IDoA Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP), provided an update noting that the Medicare Medicaid Alignment Initiative (MMAI) started in 2010 will conclude at the end of 2025. MMAI will be replaced by a new generation of plans called *Special Needs Plans (SNP)* in 2026. SNPs combine Medicare and Medicaid to provide low cost health insurance, prescription coverage, supportive services and transportation in one plan to people who qualify for both Medicare and Medicaid. SHIP grant monies are being used to support counseling of SHIP sites to help with conversion to these new SNPs. Sandy also introduced the new Medicare Choices handbook developed by SHIP to help counselors and beneficiaries make better health care choices. Sandy also told the Council about current SHIP counselor trainings being held throughout the state. These are four-day trainings and scheduled through June 21 in six locations including Springfield, Chicago, Dixon, Lombard, Decatur and McLeansboro. Sandy encouraged Council members to go to <https://cmsnationaltrainingprogram.CMS.gov> to take a training course by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and brush up on their Medicare knowledge. If anyone has questions, IDoA SHIP staff can be reached by email at aging.ship@illinois.gov.

MEMBER HIGHLIGHT, Adaptive Equipment and Caregiving Corner:

Christina Hardin-Weiss, MS/SLP provided an overview of Adaptive Equipment & Caregiving Corner. Christina co-founded Adaptive Equipment & Caregiving Corner with partner Cindy Hardin-Weiss to provide education and resources to enhance the safety, comfort, and peace of mind for seniors, family members and professional caregivers. Adaptive Equipment produces educational and instructional video and home medical equipment product reviews. They realized these videos were very helpful to so many and have made them into Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) videos that are available on their You Tube channel, *Adaptive Equipment Corner*. They also have a subscription based website containing "how-to" videos on many different topics as well as product usage instruction. Christina guided us to the three resource web pages that are essential to every caregiver. They are the National Health Equipment Lending Closet Directory, the National Directory of Assistive Technology Programs, and the

National Directory of Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs). For questions or to access resources, individuals may visit the website at www.aecorner.com. This site contains interactive tools, videos, product information for seniors, family caregivers and professional caregivers that will make caregiving safer and easier as well as allowing people to remain independent and to age gracefully in their homes for as long as possible. Christina and Cindy are available by email at aecorner15@gmail.com or by phone at 618-206-8401.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

The slate of officer candidates for Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Nominating Chairperson was presented to the ICoA members. Julie asked if there were any additional nominations from the floor. There were no further nominations. A motion to approve the slate of candidates was made by Sylvia Mahle and seconded by Phyllis Mitzen with no opposition.

The newly elected officers are as follows

Sue Vega, Chairperson

Kim Hunt, Vice Chairperson

Julie Bobitt, Secretary

Britta Larson, Nominating Chairperson

NEW BUSINESS:

Lisa Zuurbier asked for volunteers to service as judges in the upcoming Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame. There are four categories that nominees can compete in which are Arts, Sports and Entertainment, Community Service, Education, and the Labor Force. Please contact Lisa Zuurbier if you are interested in judging nominations.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was made by Susan Lawler and seconded by Meijan Linda Yu. The meeting adjourned at 11:56 a.m.

Julie Bobitt, Secretary

Illinois Council on Aging