

**ILLINOIS COUNCIL ON AGING**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, JUNE 28, 2022**

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

**ILLINOIS COUNCIL ON AGING (ICoA) MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Christine Goleman, Kim Hunt, Julie Bobitt, Nancy Chen, Anthony Frazier, Melvin Grimes, Paulette Hamlin, Talat Khan, Britta Larson, Susan Lawler, Sylvia Mahle, Patricia Marton, Mubarak Mirjat, Phyllis Mitzen, Robert Mueller, Susan Vega, Marisol Mohica on behalf of Representative Rita Mayfield.

**ICoA MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Jane Angelis, Senator Mattie Hunter, Representative Anna Moeller, Robert O'Connor, Senator Brian Stewart, Senator Dave Syverson.

**VISITORS/GUESTS:**

Colleen Burns, Illinois Commission to End Hunger  
Nancy Contreras, Kivvit  
Alex Hanns, Kivvit

**ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT ON AGING (IDoA) STAFF:**

Paula Basta, Director  
Lora McCurdy, Deputy Director  
Selma D'Souza, Chief of Staff  
Rhonda Armstead, General Counsel  
Mike Berkes, Division Manager of Planning, Research, and Development  
Amy Brown, Division Manager of Advocacy and Prevention Services  
Lisa Dupoy, Administrative Assistant, Community Relations and Outreach  
Jennifer Hebel, Special Research Assistant  
Emily Howerton, Budget Manager  
Amy Lulich, Senior Policy Advisor  
Sandra Pastore, Division Manager of Home and Community Services  
Brian Pastor, APS Program Administrator  
Dana Wilkerson, Deputy Division Manager of Advocacy and Prevention  
Kelly Richards, State Ombudsman  
Iris Schweier, Public Information Officer  
Gloria Simmons, Administrative Assistant II, Executive Office  
Lisa Zuurbier, Division Manager of Community Relations and Outreach

## **SUMMARY**

### **OPENING:**

The meeting was called to order by Council Chair Christie Goleman at 10:04 a.m. Roll call was taken and it was determined that a quorum was established.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Christie asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the March 22, 2022 meeting. Melvin Grimes entered a motion. Sue Vega seconded the motion; all members voted aye, and the minutes were unanimously approved. Christie also extended out a thank you to the previous serving ICoA Chair and Vice Chair, Phyllis Mitzen and Anthony Frazier, for their many years of dedicated service.

### **BARRIERS CONTRIBUTING to UNDERUTILIZATION of FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS:**

Christie introduced Colleen Burns of the Illinois Commission to End Hunger. Colleen explained that the Illinois Commission to End Hunger is tasked with developing recommendations to end hunger in Illinois. The Commission is currently looking into why federal nutrition programs in Illinois are underutilized. Barriers contributing to underutilization include eligibility restrictions, limited access to transportation, and lack of access to technology. The Commission is embarking on a statewide marketing campaign to promote federal nutrition programs, increase enrollment, and address the stigma and lack of awareness about the programs that are available.

The campaign is targeting three specific populations who are eligible for these programs but have low enrollment. These populations are households with mixed immigration statuses, households with very young children, and households with older adults. Colleen explained that only about 50 percent of older adults who are eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are enrolled. The marketing campaign will include informational websites and materials, as well as working with community-based organizations across the state to ensure this information gets to the targeted audience. Information will include SNAP, local food pantries, and congregate dining resources.

Colleen and the Council members discussed how best to reach older adults and the multipronged approach needed to encourage eligible older adults to sign up for SNAP. Suggestions included simplifying the application process by making it available through an app on a smart phone. Another suggestion was to educate trusted healthcare partners or religious organizations about the program so that they could assist older adults in signing up for benefits. It was noted that people need to fully understand the information presented, as well as the application process.

Accessibility and responsiveness to changing trends were also discussed. Discussion included making the application process easier, integrating the application with other programs, and revising to match the dietary requirements of those seeking services. It was recommended that the “No Wrong Door”

approach using an integrated benefits application with no username or password should be considered that would allow individuals to sign up for multiple programs in one place.

### **ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES:**

Amy Brown, Division Manager of Advocacy and Prevention Services, provided an overview of Adult Protective Services (APS). The APS program was established in 1988. It is one of the largest APS programs in the United States. The APS program is managed by IDoA and operated through 38 local APS provider agencies. APS reports can be made through the APS Hotline or directly through a local agency. The goal of the program is to maintain proper health, safety, and welfare of older adults and persons with disabilities living in the community. APS conducts investigations and works with individuals to resolve abuse, neglect and financial exploitation. In addition, APS investigates cases involving self-neglect and abandonment. Cases are kept open as long as needed to develop a care plan that allows the individual to remain safe and independent for as long as possible.

Brian Pastor, APS Program Administrator, shared information about initiatives and program expansions. These include using data collection to track the effectiveness of services and make improvements as needed in real time. APS is in the final developmental stages of new data reporting allowing providers to track the services they are providing on a monthly and quarterly basis. These reports will help the APS staff identify deviations in service to discover new training needs to ultimately improve provider agency service levels. Brian mentioned the Safety Committee which focuses on APS caseworker safety during visits with efforts that include collecting data on safety issues to monitor incident trends that could impact services. APS is also seeking to locate, from programs and resources in other states, existing literature on caseworker safety to define best practices. Brian shared that simulation training is conducted that allows workers to experience the ups and downs of field work and receive constructive feedback in a virtual environment before they physically go out into the field.

The link to access abuse prevention materials on the IDoA website:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/aging/Resources/NewsAndPublications/Publications/Pages/ElderRights.aspx>

### **ILLINOIS COMMISSION ON LGTBQ AGING:**

Kim Hunt, ICoA Vice Chair and Executive Director of Pride Action Tank, shared that Senate Bill 3490 was signed into law by Governor Pritzker on May 16, National Honor Our LGBTQ Elders Day. The new law creates the Illinois Commission on LGBTQ Aging. Through Kim's work with Pride Action Tank, past surveys have shown that LGBTQ older adults feel they lack appropriate access to resources and services supporting the aging community. Kim said that LGBTQ cultural responsiveness in healthcare and other service-based areas is also of great concern. She shared a video from AARP titled *Disrupt Disparities: Challenges & Solutions for LGBTQ Illinoisians 50+*. The video addressed inequalities and highlighted strides being made, as well as the challenges ahead for LGBTQ equality in elder care and related services.

Kim shared that the Illinois Commission on LGBTQ will focus on three areas. The Commission has the responsibility to investigate, study, and analyze LGTBQ issues including health, housing, financial, psycho-social, as well as home and community services, assisted living, and long-term care. The Commission will examine the impact of state and local laws, policies, and regulations upon LGBTQ older

adults and make recommendations based on their findings. The second component is to appoint, at the Department level, an LGBTQ older adult advocate to ensure that the needs and experiences of LGBTQ older adults and those living with HIV are considered and incorporated into decision making. It is thought that Illinois is the first in the country to have such a liaison in their State Unit on Aging. The third component is to require providers that are funded or contracted by IDoA to complete LGBTQ awareness and competency training.

Kim shared that member nominations for the Commission are being recommended to the Governor's Office. She hopes that there are results of analysis to report by this time next year. Kim provided the following links for further information:

Disrupt Disparities video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ebp834zxHx4>

OUTAging Summit report:

<https://prideactiontank.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Outaging-Report-Short-Report.pdf>

Disrupting Disparities Report:

<https://www.sageusa.org/resource-posts/disrupting-disparities-solutions-for-50-lgbtq-illinoisans/>

Public Act 102-0885 (SB3490):

<https://trackbill.com/bill/illinois-senate-bill-3490-commission-on-lgbtq-aging/2198471/>

#### **DEPARTMENT UPDATES:**

IDoA Director Paula Basta introduced Sandy Pastore as the new Division Manager of Home and Community Services. She said that IDoA is grateful to have Sandy's many years of experience in the aging field. Director Basta also introduced Glenda Corbett as the new Special Assistant to the Director on Community Engagement and Equity.

Lora McCurdy, Deputy Director, introduced Jennifer Hebel as the new Special Research Assistant. Lora mentioned that this is a new position for IDoA and that Jennifer will be helping with the assessment of new services to add to the Community Care Program (CCP).

Emily Howerton, Budget Manager, provided an update. She shared that the Fiscal Year (FY) 23 budget provides a 13.6 percent increase. It includes additional funding for home delivered meals. There are also increases to accommodate the approved Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) for CCP. There is an increase earmarked to give a 70 cent per hour rate increase for in-home workers that will go into effect on January 1, 2023. APS has also received a budget increase to help cover the increase in APS reports. There is also a new budget line of \$4 million for caregiver support.

Gloria Simmons, Legislative Assistant, provided a legislative report. She spoke about SB702 that creates the Senior Housing Residents Advisory Council. She reported that IDoA is in the first phases of nominating members. She added that the Illinois Department of Public Health will also nominate members to the Council. The first meeting is scheduled tentatively for the second week of January 2023. Gloria added that the first annual report of the Illinois Commission on LGBTQ Aging is due in March of 2023.

Mike Berkes, Division Manager of Planning, Research, and Development, provided an update on the CCP enhanced FMAP initiative. The plan includes funding to expand current CCP services and add new services, such as home modifications. Also, rate increases will be accelerated for adult day and in-home services, as well as CCU workforce retention grants to help address staffing shortages. The FMAP spending window was set to expire in April 2024, but an extension was received to March 2025 to allow more time for implementation.

Iris Schweier, IDoA Public Information Officer, and Lisa Zuurbier, Division Manager of Community Relations and Outreach spoke about the Senior Hall of Fame. A record number of 67 nominations were received. Two ICoA members will be serving as judges this year, Anthony Frazier and Christie Goleman. Purnell Borders, IDoA Events Coordinator, is currently packaging nominations to forward to the judges for review and scoring. An announcement of the inductees will follow.

Amy Lulich, IDoA Senior Policy Advisor, provided an update on federal funding granted to IDoA for COVID-19 community outreach. The goal is to reach older adults who are not vaccinated and learn where the hotspots are to develop new strategies for outreach and education. She asked for input from ICoA members as to what they were hearing in their own communities concerning COVID-19 vaccination efforts. Julie Bobitt raised the issue of confusion surrounding boosting now or waiting until fall when there may be variant specific boosters available. Sue Vega said she is hearing a lot of the same concerns about boosters and vaccine safety. Nancy Chen shared that the Midwest Asian Health Association in Chicago was doing a tremendous job promoting vaccinations and boosters. Alex Hanns encouraged Council members to share suggestions on messaging and outreach with him at [ahanns@kivvit.com](mailto:ahanns@kivvit.com).

**CLOSING REMARKS:**

In closing, Chair Christie Goleman reminded everyone that September 20 is the next ICoA meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Dr. Melvin Grimes made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Kim Hunt. All members were in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 12:03 p.m.



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Julie Bobitt, Secretary

Illinois Council on Aging