

-DRAFT MINUTES-

**ILLINOIS COUNCIL ON AGING
VIRTURAL WEBEX**

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2020
10:00AM – 12:00PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA WEBEX AND TELECONFERENCE:

Phyllis Mitzen, Anthany Frazier, Lee Moriarty, Anna M. Oestreich, Jane Angelis, Julie Bobitt, Nancy S. Chen, Paulette M. Hamlin, Kim Hunt, Talat Khan, Britta M. Larson, Susan Lawler, Patricia Marton, Robert J. O'Connor, Steve Wolf, Representative Rita Mayfield

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Christie Goleman, Margaret Huyck, Senator Mattie Hunter, Mubarak A. Mirjat, Representative Anna Moeller

VISITORS:

None

DEPARTMENT ON AGING STAFF PRESENT:

Paula A. Basta, Director
Selma D'Souza, Chief of Staff
Rhonda Armstead, General Counsel
Lisa Zuurbier, Division Manager, Community Relations and Outreach
Amy Lulich, Senior Policy Advisor
Kelly Richards, State Ombudsman
Mike Berkes, Division Manager, Planning, Research, Development and Training
Theresa McKeon, Business Services Manager/Deputy CFO
Samantha Brill, Legislative Liaison
Michael Dropka, Public Information Officer
Amber Bolden, Administrative Assistant
Portia Riley, Administrative Assistant

SUMMARY

Opening:

The meeting was called to order by Phyllis Mitzen at 10:05 a.m.

Roll call was taken by Phyllis Mitzen and it was determined that a quorum was established.

Approval of Minutes:

Paulette Hamlin entered a motion to approve the minutes from the Illinois Council on Aging (ICoA) meeting held on September 10, 2019. Britta Larson seconded the motion; all members voted aye, and the minutes were approved as presented.

Paulette Hamlin entered a motion to approve the minutes from the ICoA/OASAC meeting held on June 16, 2020. Susan Lawler seconded the motion; all members voted aye, and the minutes were approved as presented.

Public Comment:

None

OLD BUSINESS

Introduction of Council Members:

Director Basta and Phyllis Mitzen welcomed new and returning Council Members.

The ICoA put together an extensive Orientation Manuel, which was sent out to new Council Members. Phyllis encouraged new Council Members to read the Orientation Manuel carefully. The Manuel provides detailed background information regarding the ICoA and how the Council serves the older adult population in Illinois. New Council Members were also encouraged to read the December 10, 2019 Council minutes, which seem to serve as a precursor to what was to come with COVID-19, as it relates to social isolation and the initiatives that were proceeding through Older American Act Services.

Julie Bobitt, Ph.D. is currently at the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign where she oversees the inter-disciplinary Health Sciences program, including students who are interested in aging and the aging minor. Julie will be transferring to the University of Chicago where she will serve as an Assistant Professor in Department of Medicine at the Center for Dissimilation, Termination, and Implementation Science. She has been working in the aging field for more than 20 years, and recently completed a Health and Aging Policy Fellowship in the Office of the Surgeon General. Julie also served on the board of the East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging for approximately 10 years.

Nancy Chen is a retiree who previously served as Regional Administrator of the Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor. During her tenure at the agency, Nancy had many opportunities to work with women and older adults. Nancy currently serves on the AARP Executive Council. The AARP Executive Council is working on a disparity project for people of color with Loyola University as the contractor. The Executive Council may need input from the Department on the disparity project regarding health and safety issues that elderly people encounter. The Executive Council will create a report with recommendations of policy changes. Nancy also served on the Naperville City Commission, helping the community receive funding for cultural and diversity program activities. Nancy also serves on the Plus Simon Public Policy Institute.

Kim Hunt is the Executor Director of Pride Action Tank, which is a project incubator and think tank on LGBTQ issues under the Aids Foundation of Chicago, where Kim also serves as the Senior Director of Policy and Advocacy. Aging is one of the priority issues for Pride Action Tank. Kim is also a Member of the LGBTQ Affinity Group that's part of the American Society on Aging. She helped found the aging project at Affinity Community services on the Southside of Chicago serving the LGBTQ community.

Britta Larson is the Senior Services Director at the Center on Halstead where she has served the LGBT community for over ten years. Britta has hosted many presentations and trainings on the topic of LGBT Aging. She is currently Co-chair for the LGBT Aging Network based in Chicago. Prior to her work at the Center on Halstead, Britta worked at a senior living community center in social services and marketing. Britta is a licensed Nursing Home Administrator with long term care experience.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Director Basta thanked the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), provider agencies, and long-term care professionals throughout the Illinois Aging Network. These individuals are hard at work providing vital services to the aging population statewide.

Home Delivered Meals:

- Over the past seven months, between 45,000 to 48,000 home delivered meals have been distributed daily. That totals approximately 1.2 million meals a month. The Illinois Aging Network has distributed approximately five million meals to date during the COVID-19 pandemic. To put things in perspective, last year there were 1.2 million meals distributed for the entire year. Closing all congregate dining sites throughout the State of Illinois and moving everyone to home delivered meals has been an enormous responsibility for the Department. The Home Delivered Meals program is one of the cornerstones of the work done across the State.

Budget/Fiscal:

- Fiscal is currently working on Fiscal Year (FY) '21 budget; closing out FY'20 budget and starting to work on FY'22 budget. A new accounting system is being implemented and fiscal staff are learning to process budget items through the new system.
- FY'21 budget items processed in February and March have been posted to the Department's website; the Department's website was recently re-designed; Council Members are encouraged to review the website which is an informative resource.
- Through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the Department received \$38.6 million in federal funds from the Administration on Community Living (ACL). The funds were disbursed to address the massive amount of service delivery needs during the pandemic.
- Funds from the CARES Act were appropriated for home delivered meals, social isolation, transportation services, and caregiver services; FFCRA funds were appropriated for congregate meals and home delivered meals. Funds were also released for the Adult Day Centers (ADS). The Department provided Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to help ADS safely open and serve clients.

Re-opening Activities and Workgroups:

- The Department put together seven workgroups to get stakeholder involvement and investment regarding services. The Department provided more than a million units of PPE to the Aging Network.

- Currently, there are 35 to 40 ADS sites up and operating again. ADS sites are required to submit a reopening plan to the Department, along with a video showing the Department how they have adjusted their space to serve clients while socially distancing. ADS sites that aren't open now will begin to re-open at the end of September 2020.
- In conjunction with Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS), the Department leveraged Appendix K under the Elderly Waiver. Appendix K allows for certain operational flexibility during a pandemic or another public health disaster.
- While sites were closed for the delivery of face to face services, providers delivered meals to individuals; assisted with medications; helped with ongoing wellbeing checks; and utilized various virtual platforms for exercise classes. The Department worked with HFS and the Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) to ensure ADS sites are reimbursed for the remote services provided to MCO Members.

Emergency Senior Services:

- Care Coordination Units (CCU's) are the primary case management entities for the elderly population in Illinois. The Department issued Emergency Senior Services (ESS) grants to all the CCUs to provide immediate resources to seniors in their homes during the pandemic. ESS funds assist individuals 65 and older; assist individuals 65 and older who are not member of the Community Care Program (CCP); and assist adults ages 18-59 with a disability that may have or have had an open APS case with the Department. To date, the Department has issued approximately \$1 million in funds under the ESS initiative to address various needs including nutrition, transportation, assistive technology, respite care, and durable medical equipment. Since the middle of March, the Department has assisted 10,000 individuals. The Department plans to issue \$5 million in ESS funds for FY'21.

IDoA Virtual Conference:

- Due to COVID-19, the Department has moved to remote platforms for all trainings and conferences.
- The Department has scheduled a one-day Virtual Conference to focus on COVID-19. The Virtual Conference is scheduled for October 15, 2020. Training is working on a save-the-date announcement to share with stakeholders.
- The one-day event on October 15 will serve as a prelude to a larger more robust virtual conference to take place in January or February 2021. The exact date to be announced.

State Plan on Aging:

- The State Plan on Aging is a report that is required by the U.S. Administration on Aging that outlines the Department's structure and financial plan for future service delivery over a three-year fiscal period. The Department was due to submit the State Plan by July 1, 2020 but received a waiver from ACL to delay submission. Due to COVID, work on the State Plan was suspended but resumed within the last month. Delaying submission gives the Department an opportunity to take another look at the State Plan, think about lessons learned from COVID, and analyze current initiatives implemented this year. A draft of the State Plan will be released to the General Public by the end of September 2020.
- The Department will schedule Virtual Stakeholder Hearings open to the General Public in the Fall of 2020. Hearings dates will be widely publicized. The Department asked the

Council to help publicize Stakeholder Hearing schedule. There will be an opportunity to provide comments via several virtual platforms. Council Members should contact Amy.Lulich@illinois.gov with questions.

Long Term Care Ombudsman:

- On March 16, 2020, Ombudsman in-person visits were suspended, and Ombudsman staff modified the way in-home services were delivered. Services to residents and family members are now provided via phone, email, zoom, and facetime. The Department sent out postcards, flyers, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to help Ombudsman stay in touch with residents. Ombudsman also delivered postcards, flyers, and FAQ's to long term care facilities which facilitated an increase in calls to the Ombudsman program.
- In April 2020, the Ombudsman started participating in virtual Resident Council meetings and conducting virtual window visits. In July 2020, Ombudsman started conducting outdoor visits throughout the State. The State Ombudsman sent a letter to facility Administrators reminding them that Ombudsman should have access to visit privately with residents. The State Ombudsman, Kelly Richards, developed comprehensive guidance for Ombudsman to begin re-entering long term care facilities. The guidance will be released on Friday to solicit feedback from Regional Ombudsman. It will be posted to the Department's website when finalized.
- Social isolation has significantly impacted residents of long-term care facilities during the pandemic. Some residents lost weight, stopped eating, and experienced cognitive decline due to social isolation. The Ombudsman program continues to stress the importance of interacting with family members. Kelly reached out to facility Administrators, Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Alzheimer's Association to better address social isolation. Kelly participates in a workgroup with IDPH and will continue to keep social isolation at the forefront of conversations.
- State Ombudsmen across the country met with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in August to provide feedback regarding issues related to visitation. The Association for State Ombudsman drafted a letter to CMS outlining issues to consider when drafting guidance regarding visitation and isolation. The CMS guidance release date will be announced soon.
- CARES Act funds have been received by all Ombudsman programs across the State. CARES funding was used for the development of technology, including telephones, computers, and tablets for Ombudsman staff.
- All Ombudsman programs initially received PPE in the form of face masks, gloves, face shields, and thermometers. The Ombudsman programs are purchasing additional PPE with funding received from the CARES Act.
- Council Members should contact State Ombudsman, Kelly.Richards@Illinois.gov with any questions regarding the Ombudsman program.

Illinois Department on Aging Hall of Fame Award:

- Nominations were originally due for the Hall of Fame on May 31, 2020. Due to COVID-19, the deadline date was postponed to August 31, 2020. The Department received 62 nominations, which is more received than any time in recent history. The next step is to send all packets out to the judges for review. Judges are being asked to

return the graded nominations to the Department by October 2, 2020. The Hall of Fame awards will be presented during the IDoA Virtual Conference to be held October 15, 2020.

Legislative Affairs:

- The Department has submitted spring proposals to the Governor's Office. A meeting is scheduled later in the month to go over the proposals in details.

Census Count:

- Illinois is doing a great job with the Census. Illinois is one of the top ten states regarding response rates. The AAAs received funding from the ACL and Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) to help complete the Census. As of today, the AAAs have reached out to approximately 1.5 million people across Illinois. The Census count will end September 30, 2020.

Illinois Care Connections:

- Illinois Care Connections is a grant Amy Lulich wrote and submitted on behalf of the Department. The Department received \$1.2 million in federal funding. The Department is working in partnership with IDHS, as well as the Illinois Assistive Technology Program, to contribute iPads and tablets to older adults with disabilities who are experiencing social isolation and/or loneliness due to COVID-19. The program assists seniors who had previously been going to senior centers, ADS sites, and congregate meal settings who are now at home and are missing social interaction. Older adults with disabilities must be referred to the program by the AAAs or the Community Care Program (CCP) providers.
- The Department may provide 12 months of internet access for individuals who are referred for a device if they don't have the ability to access the internet. There is a link of the Department website for more information.

Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP):

- The Division of Community Relations and Outreach houses the Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP). SHIP receives funding from ACL to provide outreach and counseling to Illinois Medicare beneficiaries. The SHIP team conducts trainings for individuals to become SHIP Counselors and provides ongoing technical assistance and continuing education.
- The SHIP team is holding virtual trainings to prepare SHIP counselors for the Medicare Open Enrollment Period (OEP) to be held October 15 to December 7, 2020. An extension of the Medicare OEP has not been announced.

NEW BUSINESS

Governor's Engaging Aging Award:

In the past, the Department worked with the AAAs to present the Governor's Awards for Unique Achievement. The award highlighted organizations that made a significant impact to the Aging Network and aging community. The Department and the Governor's Office recently decided to bring the award back to life with a new name, the Governor's Engaging Aging

Award. The Department will be presenting the award to five well deserving organizations during the IDoA Virtual Conference to be held on October 15, 2020.

Closing Remarks:

The next Council Meeting is scheduled for December 15, 2020.

The Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) is coordinating a new plan called the Housing Blueprint and asking for feedback from organizations and residents throughout the State. Council Members were asked to respond to the Housing Blueprint Statewide Resident Survey. There are open-ended questions that allows Council members to discuss aging in the community. The link to the Housing Blueprint Statewide Survey is posted on the Department's website.

Anyone looking to receive a voting ballot by mail should go to the website: <https://www.illinoisvotes2020.com/>. This user-friendly site instructs the user how to request voting ballots by mail and provides information regarding where to turn-in the ballots and early voting locations. All voters throughout the State of Illinois received notice to apply for an application to vote by mail. Early voting will commence on September 24, 2020. Mail-in ballots are scheduled to be delivered to individual requestors starting September 25, 2020 thru mid-October. Individuals who have submitted a request for mail-in ballot and have not received the paper ballot by mid-October should go on the <https://www.illinois.votes2020.com> website for additional information and assistance.

Lisa Zuurbier shared the Planning and Service Area (PSA) map indicating where additional Illinois Council on Aging representation is needed. The AAAs can be helpful in recommending qualified individuals from their respective PSAs who may be interested in serving on the Council.

Motion to Adjourn:

Meeting adjourned at 11:40 p.m.

Lee Moriarty, Secretary
Illinois Council on Aging