

ILLINOIS COUNCIL ON AGING

WEBEX MEETING FINAL MINUTES

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2023

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

ILLINOIS COUNCIL ON AGING (ICoA) MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kim Hunt, Julie Bobitt, Anthony Frazier, Paulette Hamlin, Christina Hardin-Weiss, Talat Khan, Britta Larson, Susan Lawler, Sylvia Mahle, Phyllis Mitzen, Crystal Odom-McKinney, Edgar Ramirez, Kate Schwartz, Susan Vega, Meijian Linda Yu, Senator Mattie Hunter represented by Angela McLemore, Senator Laura Fine, Representative Rita Mayfield represented by Dylan Olthoff

ICoA MEMBERS ABSENT:

Melvin Grimes, Patricia Marton, Mubarak Mirjat, Senator David Syverson, Representative Maura Hirschauer

VISITORS and GUESTS:

Susan Real, CEO, East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging (ECIAAA)

Linda Little, Dementia Friendly Decatur Program Coordinator, Community Home Environmental Learning Project (CHELP)

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT ON AGING (IDoA) STAFF PRESENT:

Paula Basta, Director

Becky Dragoo, Deputy Director

Rhonda Armstead, General Counsel

Sandra Pastore, Division Manager of Home & Community Services

Dana Wilkerson, Deputy Division Manager of Advocacy & Prevention Services

Glenda Corbett, Special Assistant to the Director on Community Engagement & Equity

Kelly Richards, State Long Term Care Ombudsman

Lee Moriarty, Deputy State Long Term Care Ombudsman

Gloria Simmons, Legislative Liaison

Iris Schweier, Public Information Officer

Lisa Zuurbier, Division Manager of Community Relations & Outreach

Lynnette Martin, Deputy Division Manager of Community Relations & Outreach

Sandy Leith, SHIP Director, Division of Community Relations & Outreach

Lisa Dupoy, Administrative Assistant, Division of Community Relations & Outreach

SUMMARY

OPENING:

The meeting was called to order by Acting Chair Kim Hunt at 10:02 a.m. Roll call was taken by Council Secretary Julie Bobitt and it was determined that a quorum was established.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Kim asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 19, 2023 meeting. Britta Larson entered a motion. Phyllis Mitzen seconded the motion; all members voted aye, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

WELCOME NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Kim welcomed and introduced four new Council members: Kate Schwartz, Meijlan Linda Yu, Crystal Odom-McKinney, and Christina Hardin-Weiss.

STATE LONG TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PRESENTATION:

Kelly Richards, ICoA State Long Term Care Ombudsman, provided a program overview. Since the early 1970's, the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) has been protecting residents in long term care facilities. In 2013, the Home Care Ombudsman (HCO) was added to serve older adults and adults with disabilities enrolled in the Medicare Medicaid Alignment Initiative (MMAI) or receiving services from a Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver.

Kelly shared that with regard to LTCOP, the mission is to protect and improve the quality of care and quality of life for residents living in long term care communities by working as their advocate to assure that their rights are upheld. In addition to their work inside nursing home facilities, the Long Term Care Ombudsmen conduct community education sessions, advocate through legislation, and support the development of resident and family councils.

Ombudsmen engage in person directed advocacy and do not act without the permission of the resident or participant. They work to problem solve complaints to the satisfaction of the resident, educating and empowering residents to ensure that their rights are honored. Kelly explained that Ombudsmen are not mandated reporters due to the fact that the program is resident-directed. However, if a resident gives permission to an Ombudsman to report abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation, they will do so.

Lee Moriarty, IDoA Deputy State Long Term Care Ombudsman, highlighted current initiatives including *Artifacts of Culture Change* to promote person-directed living. The *Artifacts of Culture Change* is a self-assessment tool that nursing homes and other long term care communities can use to note their progress toward changing institutional culture care. The tool can be used to implement changes that increase resident rights and choices. Statewide trainings are wrapping

up for long term care communities that explain how to successfully use and benefit from the *Artifacts of Culture Change*.

Lee added that a new Person-Directed Change Collaborative has been developed to test the *Artifacts of Culture Change* tool. Nine long term care communities have agreed to use *Artifacts of Culture Change* and allow their data to be extracted and assessed. The goal is to put residents first and implement systemic change across Illinois.

LTCOP is also working to raise awareness of their services and making efforts to ensure that residents are aware of the program as soon as they enter a long term care facility. Efforts to raise awareness include the Virtual Resident Family Support Council that meets twice a month. The sessions are recorded. Currently, there are more than 55 videos posted to *YouTube* that can be accessed at any time. The podcast and videos can be viewed at www.youtube.com/@illtcombudsman6169.

Future projects include creating videos that hospital case managers can access and make available to patients and families. A mascot, "Buddy", has been developed to brand the LTCOP and increase visibility.

Lee also spoke about IDoA's Consumer Choice Website, located at <https://webapps.illinois.gov/AGE/ombudsmanSearch>, where individuals may search for long term care communities that offer resources to meet specific needs.

IDoA Ombudsmen can be reached:

Kelly Richards, State Long Term Care Ombudsman at kelly.richards@illinois.gov

Lee Moriarty, Deputy State Long Term Care Ombudsman at lee.moriarty@illinois.gov

Joe Danner, Deputy State Home Care Ombudsman at joe.danner@illinois.gov

DEMENTIA FRIENDLY DECATUR INITIATIVE:

Susan Real, CEO East Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging (ECIAAA), shared recent efforts to expand dementia friendly communities in their 16-county Planning and Service Area (PSA). The *Dementia Friendly America (DFA)* initiative consists of a national network of communities, organizations, and individuals seeking to ensure that communities are prepared to support people living with dementia, as well as their caregivers. She spoke about efforts in Decatur that started in 2021 using the DFA toolkit. *Dementia Friendly Decatur* is taking steps to educate and raise awareness to reduce stigmas surrounding dementia, encourage dementia friendly practices by businesses, and engage individuals with in-person training or participation in an online community. In late 2023, *Dementia Friendly Decatur* was a recipient of the 2023 IDoA Governor's Engaging Aging Award that recognizes groups that have made a positive impact on the lives of seniors in the state.

Linda Little, Coordinator of *Dementia Friendly Decatur*, highlighted program efforts that were kicked-off with a summit held at the Scoville Zoo in October of 2022. She said that the purpose of *Dementia Friendly Decatur* is to educate and help people become more comfortable interacting with individuals who have dementia. The goals include decreasing social isolation

that often comes along with dementia and supporting individuals with dementia so they can stay active for as long as possible. The *Decatur Dementia Friendly* initiative includes setting up a monthly dementia-friendly zoo day that includes free admission for people living with dementia and their caregivers. Highlights of zoo day include games, socialization, snacks, and interaction with zoo animals. *Dementia Friendly Decatur* is supported through three grants funded by the Land of Lincoln Credit Union, Macon County Mental Health Board, and the Community Foundation of Macon County. For more information, Susan Real can be reached at sreal@eciaaaa.org and Linda Little can be reached at lindal@chelpil.org.

DIRECTORS REPORT:

Kim announced the retirement of IDoA Director Paula Basta effective December 31, 2023. Kim thanked the Director for her support of the Council and her service to older adults in Illinois. Several members expressed their appreciation and fond regards for Director Basta recognizing her leadership and sharing that she will be greatly missed. Director Basta stated that she was grateful for her experience serving as IDoA Director. She also said she appreciated her interaction with the Council over the past years and their enthusiasm to improve the lives of older Illinoisans.

Director Basta highlighted 2023 accomplishments recently outlined in a report to the Governor's Office. She noted that IDoA's nutrition program served over 1.6 million meals in approximately 352 congregate dining sites, as well as serving more than 10.8 million home-delivered meals. She also noted enhancements to the caregiver program that included \$5.2 million added to the budget to support efforts. She mentioned the 22 statewide caregiver listening roundtables to learn what services would be most helpful to caregivers, such as healthcare, transportation, and other supportive services. She highlighted the Benefit Access Program that determines eligibility for discounts on license plates and free rides on fixed route transit, sharing that the program processed approximately 128,000 applications resulting in more than \$12 million in discounts in 2023. Director Basta thanked everyone who supported her during her tenure at the Department adding that the agency is strong and will only continue to get better.

SHIP MEDICARE 2023 OPEN ENROLLMENT:

Sandy Leith, SHIP Director, updated the Council on the 2023 Medicare Open Enrollment Period that concluded on December 7. She reported that SHIP counseling hours continue to increase each open enrollment period, as enrollees need help understanding the plans and the benefits covered. She shared that beginning January 1 through March 31 is the Medicare Advantage (MA) Open Enrollment Period where beneficiaries currently enrolled in a MA plan can make changes. She mentioned that the Medicare Advantage plan marketing is a continued concern and that SHIP is communicating with legislators regarding the issue.

Sandy also mentioned the SHIP Medicare Supplement Guide has been revised to better help beneficiaries understand the differences between original Medicare (parts A and B), Medicare Advantage plans (part C), prescription drug plans (part D), and Medicare Supplement plans commonly called Medigap plans. The guide will be used to train SHIP counselors and assist beneficiaries with their Medicare choices. She added that there is a Medicare pricing tool

available online to search for individualized coverage with current rates. The new updated Medicare Supplement guide will be called *Medicare Choices* and will be available soon.

CLOSING REMARKS:

Director Basta announced that an interim director has been selected. Beginning on January 1, 2024, Becky Dragoo who is the currently Deputy Director will serve as interim IDoA Director.

Kim announced that the next Council meeting will be the annual meeting when the election of new officers will be conducted. She added that Council members should be on the lookout for upcoming correspondence and encouraged anyone interested in an office to call or email Lisa Zurbier.

Lisa also reminded Council members to complete any outstanding 2023 required training modules as the due date for completion is December 31, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Julie Bobitt, Secretary

Illinois Council on Aging