



TRI-COUNTY AGING CONSORTIUM ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
Thursday June 11, 2020, 1:00 P.M.*

Members Present	Members Absent	Staff Present
Beals, Laurie	Cockerill, Susan	Buonodono, Carl
Dell, Jim	Rios, Liza	Lemmer, Tammy
Fliss, Bud		Long, Kate
Ford, Robyn	Members Excused	Owen, Marion
Gutierrez, Joseph	Baker, Susann	
Heideman, Eileen	Gardner, Penny	Guests Present
Jackson, JJ	Keilman, Linda	
Johnson, Chad	Wallin, Jane	
Lasater, Carla		
Mask, Cheryl		
Monroe, Phyllis		
Neve, Kelly		
Pineda, Meghan		
Przybyl, Gina		
Tomczyk, Archi		
Turner, Anita		
Sargent, Dawn		
Zachrich, Joel		

**Via tele-conference call due to recommendations to date relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

- I. Call to Order: A. Turner** called the meeting to order at 1:05pm.
- II. Welcome and Introductions:** T. Lemmer took attendance.
- III. Approval of the Agenda for June 11, 2020:** J. Jackson moved for approval. A. Tomczyk seconded. Motioned carried.
- IV. Approval of the Minutes from May 14, 2020:** J. Jackson moved for approval. E. Heideman seconded. Motioned carried.
- V. Public Comment and Correspondence:**
T. Lemmer shared information about advocacy efforts. Advisory Council members are being asked to follow up with Senator Stabenow and Senator Peters to help encourage and promote the HEROES Act relief bill that passed in US House but has not yet made it through the Senate. TCOA, and the state and national AAA associations have signed on to the support letter.
 Information was shared from the Michigan legislature about Senate Bill 690 that passed in the Senate but not the House. This bill proposes a \$3/hour wage increase for those with frontline Direct Care Worker status. Since the MI Choice Waiver increase was never





allocated as anticipated, this would help. M. Owen will expand on this in the Executive Director's Report.

The Annual Caregiver Retreat hosted by the Alzheimer's Association has been officially cancelled.

The AAA Association of Michigan has officially cancelled the annual in-person conference. There has been discussion around the possibility of online workshops instead.

The annual Community Mental Health breakfast was also officially cancelled. There is a save the date for March, 2021.

VI. Executive Director's Report: M. Owen reported the Nutrition program has an increased client count, as expected. TCOA continues to receive fresh fruits and vegetable boxes weekly through AASA who received a USDA grant. This has been contracted through the LeGrasso Brothers. TCOA currently expects to receive those through September but is hoping to get an extension through December.

TCOA took delivery of a new supply of Quarantine (Q) Boxes which are being distributed.

Relating to Project Choices, the Supports Coordinators are working from home and continue to do reassessments and contacts over the phone. Some clients have tested positive for COVID-19, but only one client has passed away from it.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is obtained and distributed to providers as much as possible. Over 100,000 pieces of PPE have been distributed to date to in-home providers and Adult Foster Care facilities (AFCs).

When the pandemic began, there was an influx of potential new volunteers, mostly because the state had a special website for volunteer sign up and referral. Friendly calls continue. There is concern around the length of isolation and health outcomes for older adults. TCOA hopes to continue friendly calls beyond the pandemic, contracted through RSVP.

Adult Day contractors continue to serve clients over the phone or online and are being reimbursed accordingly.

TCOA has received more financial contributions through the spring Older Americans Month Solicitation than what is typical, producing \$35,300 from 314 individuals. In 2019 the mailing collected \$27,700 from 255 individuals. The increase could be connected to recognizing how COVID has impacted older adults.

The TCOA Crisis line is still open 24/7/365 for issues related to utility, prescription medication assistance, and other imminent health or safety concerns.

The draft of the Tri-County Office on Aging COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan will be reviewed for approval by the Board on Monday, June 15. Per the plan, some staff are scheduled to return to the office in phases beginning June 29th.

The status of the AARP Tax program is being discussed. The deadline for taxes is July 15th. Besides health and safety concerns in reopening the program, space availability is also a concern as PPE, nutrition supplies and other items are currently being stored in both community rooms.

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MDHHS has revised the capitation reimbursement payments to MI Choice programs (Project Choices at TCOA) to cover a \$2 an hour increase to direct care workers of home care agencies. This is only for April through June. However, the Senate bill referenced above proposes to increase the pay to \$3 an hour to be effective through September 30. MDHHS Medicaid staff and leaders of the Senate are working on a final plan. In the meantime, TCOA has applied the \$2.00 an hour increase to the rates we pay for all in-home services such as personal care and respite services. We hope that the increase will remain into next year as wage increases have been needed for several years in order to maintain the quality workforce so critical to enabling people to remain independent.

The Ingham County Senior Millage, “Ingham County Elder Persons Millage” will be on the ballot on August 4. A “Say Yes to Seniors” committee has been formed consisting of interested citizens supporting the millage and is looking for additional supporters. TCOA cannot promote the millage but can provide educational materials. Mary Ablan is chairing the committee. **T. Lemmer** shared that the committee is developing a list of endorsement names of individuals, organizations, or businesses to openly support the millage efforts as “Champions for Independence.” The committee will be looking for donations to cover the cost of educational materials. **M. Owen** continued that the millage will be a milestone for the area. The TCOA service area is one of the few areas in the state to not have a senior millage. Priorities of the millage include: Wait lists, meals, and home repair and other emerging needs.

M. Owen continued with news that a Community Resource Navigator will be starting at TCOA at the end of this month and shared the vision for the position. Discussion followed.

VII. New Business

A. TCOA 2nd Quarter Services Report: **K. Long** reminded the council that the 2nd Quarter covered January, February and March so the numbers in this report will not reflect the major impacts of the health crisis on programs and services. Members will see that in the 3rd quarter report that we will review in July. Some points of interest included an increase in Information & Assistance calls and a review and explanation of the numbers within the minority row cells. Evidence Based Programs were reviewed with an explanation on workshop numbers. A reminder was offered that Evidence-based workshops have been moved to a virtual platform, with the exception of Matter of Balance which cannot be held virtually due to the nature of the material. Interested persons can check our website for schedules or contact our office and leave a message or ask to speak with Christine Histed, Evidence Based Programs Manager.

B. Statewide Advocacy Day Efforts: **T. Lemmer** confirmed that Older Michigianians Day 2020 was cancelled but advocacy is ongoing. The Fiscal Year 2021 budget has been the focus of advocacy. Specific talking points and examples of why older

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adult services continue to be a priority especially in the “post-COVID world” because of the impact the pandemic has had on health.

June 24th has been identified as Senior Action Day, and there will be a big push for contact and engagement with legislatures. This is meant to be done from home, as individuals. Talking points will be shared and council members were encouraged to call representatives or e-mail them to educate them on aging network and the importance of in-home service funds. There will also be a social media toolkit and templates for letters.

VIII. Old Business

A. Annual Implementation Plan Update: K. Long updated the council that since the last meeting, the Administrative Board was presented the plan and will take action on approval at their meeting on Monday, June 15th. Additional guidance on the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) requirements from AASA were reviewed, noting that the 2021 plan will be a continuation of the Multi Year Plan that was previously approved. At this time there is no requirement to send the plan for approval to local units of government, but TCOA will likely be sending some communication to Consortium members. Additional guidance was shared.

IX. Council Reports

A. Social Security Administration

R. Ford shared with the council that the Social Security Administration (SSA) has not received any direction on reopening buildings to the public. There is misinformation going around, and people believe that because the offices are closed to the public, they are unable to contact SSA. That is not true. SSA is still operating and the public can still file online, contact workers, etc.. R. Ford will send out more information, but there has been a slight change with how people can enroll with Part B. There is an online form available, but it is also accepted via fax or mail to a local office. R. Ford explained process.

B. Michigan Senior Advocates Council

T. Lemmer explained that conversations and efforts from MSAC are focused on the advocacy efforts noted above in preparation for Senior Action Day on June 24th.

C. State Advisory Council

R. Ford shared that work groups continue to meet via conference call. The council is actively doing research on social isolation in seniors. Some speakers have provided information toward the report. The meeting that would be held in-person in July will be virtual.

D. Nutrition Council

C. Buonodono shared that Community Nutrition Manager Tasha Stetler held a conference call and 13 dining sites were represented with 17 people on the call.



Discussion included how things are going with meal pick up locations and what it may look when congregate meal settings are reopened. Site openings will not happen any time soon and plans will be different location to location.

Project Fresh coupons (vouchers for fresh produce redeemable at farmer's markets) are available this year. Registrations are being taken over the phone. Coupons will be available for pick-up at designated markets to minimize contact. .

E. Transportation Advisory Boards

CATA/J. Jackson applauded TCOA for their efforts during this time. CATA is back in business. CATA was the first transportation authority in the state to implement social distancing. CATA partnered with the Ingham County Health Department to ensure proper procedures were followed. CATA's response efforts were highlighted, including meal/grocery deliveries, and contact with those on dialysis and those with other medical needs to ensure continuation of service. The "Saturday Schedule" was implemented as of June 1, which means no late-night rides and no MSU service. As of Monday, June 15, fares will be reinstated with safety measures in place. The "Wait-Stop" service previously discussed with the council is under evaluation. All CATA buildings are open to the public and Spectran is limited to 3 riders at a time.

Eatran/J. Gutierrez explained there was supposed to be a meeting in May, but it was cancelled due to the pandemic so there is nothing to report. The next meeting date is to be determined.

Clinton Transit/A. Tomezyk shared that Clinton Transit also resumed riders and social distancing practices and disinfecting procedure. There will be a Millage this year in the county, but she had no information on expectations. Discussion followed.

X. Issue Items

(Current Topics or Concerns impacting Seniors, Persons with Disabilities and/or Community Related issues)

No reports/comments.

XI. Member's Time and/or Announcements

P. Monroe mentioned she enjoyed hearing everyone speaking.

T. Lemmer mentioned the July 9th meeting location is TBD. J. Wallin will be covering the June 15 Administrative Board Meeting via Zoom. Megan Pineda confirmed availability for the following board meeting on July 20th. Location TBD.

Meeting adjourned at 2:12pm.

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