



TRI-COUNTY AGING CONSORTIUM ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
Thursday January 14, 2021, 1:00 P.M.

Members Present	Members Absent	Staff Present
Beals, Laurie	Heideman, Eileen	Buonodono, Carl
Fliss, Bud	Monroe, Phyllis	Lemmer, Tammy
Ford, Robyn		Long, Kate
Gutierrez, Joseph		Owen, Marion
Henry, Emma		Smith, Thomas
Kotval-Karamchandani, Zeenat		
Kovnot, Gloria		
Lewis, Kirk		
Lasater, Carla		
Martin, Kristina (LSSCM)		Members of the Public
Mask, Cheryl	Members Excused	Dell, Jim (RSVP)
Neve, Kelly	Cockerill, Susan	Fraizer, Craig (CATA)
Pineda, Meghan	Hoffman, Sue	Black, Daniel
Presas, Raul	Stauffer, John	
Sargent, Dawn	Zachrich, Joel	
Tomczyk, Archi		
Turner, Anita		
Wiese, Deb		

- I. Call to Order: M. Pineda** called the meeting to order at 1:02pm.
- II. Welcome and Introductions: K. Long** took attendance. T. Lemmer welcomed and introduced new members from Maplewood AFC (Raul Presas), Eaton County (Sue Hoffman, not present), and the Capital Area Housing Project (Emma Henry) during attendance.
- III. Approval of the Agenda for January 14, 2021: A. Tomczyk** moved for approval. **K. Neve** seconded. Motion carried.
- IV. Approval of the Minutes from December 10, 2020: D. Wiese** moved for approval. **A. Tomczyk** seconded. Motion carried.
- V. Public Comment and Correspondence:**
T. Lemmer shared information on a Tele-Town Hall with Governor Whitmer this afternoon at 3:45pm that will focus on vaccination efforts in Michigan.

T. Lemmer also shared that TCOA received a supply of KN95 masks. Seniors age 65 and older and their caregivers are the priority groups for distribution. Local Health and Human Services departments have a supply for the general public. Contact Tammy at 517-887-1382 to coordinate pick up or delivery. M. Owen mentioned home care providers will be receiving some as well.

5303 S. Cedar Street, Suite 1, Lansing, MI 48911-3800
 Telephone 517.887.1440 • Toll Free 1.800.405.9141
 Fax 517.887.8071 • www.tcoa.org





VI. Executive Director's Report: Marion Owen

M. Owen shared Happy New Year wishes.

TCOA staff have been busy working with county health departments on vaccine efforts. There has been emphasis on older adults and nursing homes, along with essential workers. Concerns around transportation to clinics and confusion around locations and processes were communicated to the health departments. TCOA is working on streamlining communications and information regarding vaccines and what is needed for people to receive them, if interested. Outreach to communities of color is also a priority because these communities tend to have more reservations about the vaccine. TCOA is planning to work with local churches and trusted entities in those communities to educate and promote. T. Lemmer shared that just today, the state announced plans to launch a public service campaign to provide information on the vaccine. Members are welcome to call Tammy or Marion with any concerns or questions.

M. Owen also shared that the \$2 an hour increase for Direct Care Workers (DCWs) was extended to the end of February. There is interest in extending it further with the potential to make that raise permanent. She will keep the council posted.

There are also discussions about looking to increase reimbursement for in-home services for Older Americans Act and Waiver services.

The Ingham County Elder Millage contract is being finalized and new staff are being hired. TCOA is looking into the ability to use some funds for Ingham County residents to access transportation to obtain their COVID vaccine, in addition to the priorities in the contract.

The MDHHS Aging and Adult Services Agency funded Personal Care Kits to provide some basic essentials for older adults to stay safe and prepared during the global health crisis. Contents include printed documents featuring TCOA and other senior resources and programs, health and emergency preparedness materials, masks, sanitizing products, soap, toilet paper, paper towel, information for online activities to help reduce social isolation, and more. TCOA was able to plan for 400 kits and have begun coordinating volunteers for delivery.

Volunteers are also still calling clients to reduce loneliness. M. Owen added that Information and Assistance staff are especially busy as calls have increased.

The AARP Tax program is still being discussed. As of right now, AARP volunteers will conduct tax preparation virtually, via email. TCOA is discussing how to assist those unable to access the service online.

Discussion followed, including council member's experiences with the vaccine process.

5303 S. Cedar Street, Suite 1, Lansing, MI 48911-3800
Telephone 517.887.1440 • Toll Free 1.800.405.9141
Fax 517.887.8071 • www.tcoa.org





VII. Presentation: Craig Frazier, Operations Manager Paratransit, CATA

D. Wiese introduced Craig Frazier. Mr. Frazier began his presentation explaining how paratransit (ADA service known as SpecTran, fits into CATA. The paratransit service typically serves over 20,000 people per month outside of the pandemic. Mr. Frazier also provided a summary of service changes since the pandemic started, including sanitizing procedures and the changes in ridership count due to restrictions. CATA is only allowing essential workers on site. Because CATA staff are considered front line essential workers, CATA staff started receiving the COVID vaccine in early January. He also mentioned that CATA will be upgrading their computer system for bus routing, which should be complete by the end of January, keeping their systems relevant. Mr. Frazier was pleased to share that CATA is partnering with community organizations and providers to arrange transportation to vaccine sites and the rides for older adults are free.

Discussion followed, including clarification on coordinating rides for the vaccine. Contact TCOA for seniors needing a ride to a vaccine clinic or contact the SpecTran office (517-394-2282). If the senior is in a resident facility, the coordinator could contact CATA or TCOA to coordinate transport. TCOA is willing to promote this service to the community based on need.

M. Owen mentioned a specialized mobile unit through the health department that will be available in March for the homeless population.

VIII. Old Business

- A. **Advisory Council Vacancies: T. Lemmer** requested assistance in recruiting or suggesting residents for the two City of Lansing vacancies and one Ingham County vacancy.
- B. **Request for Pictures: K. Long** requested head shots of councilmembers to create a collage of the council in lieu of the typical group photo that is done in December that we were not able to do due to COVID. She will send an email to the group with contact information and options to turn in photos. K. Long requested the photos be turned in by February 11.
- C. **Presentation Topic Requests**

T. Lemmer explained to the council that this is an opportunity for them to provide presentation topic suggestions. Suggestions included an Advocacy 101 type presentation to help empower and educate the group on advocating collectively and individually. Other suggestions included an overview of the AASA State Plan and TCOA's regional plan, housing issues/CAHP programs, and auto no-fault insurance clarification/education. G. Kovnot spoke to the advocacy suggestion as a previous Eaton County representative on the TCOA Advisory Council and Michigan Senior Advocates Council. Members were asked to forward other potential topic ideas to her.



IX. New Business

- A. **Conflict of Interest Forms:** **T. Lemmer** will email or mail Conflict of Interest Forms to the council. It is a requirement to be transparent and recognize any conflicts for voting purposes. The information also helps TCOA know who is connected to community organizations and may be able to serve as liaisons for further collaboration. The form can be mailed, emailed (photo of form or scanned copy), drop off, etc. Contact Tammy with questions.
- B. **New Member Orientation:** **T. Lemmer** again welcomed the new members and notified them she will be contacting them to hold a brief orientation to walk through the expectations, history, and structure of the Advisory Council, as well as guidelines.

X. Council Reports

A. **Social Security Administration:** **R. Ford** reminded the council that 1099 forms are being mailed. Replacement 1099 forms can be retrieved off the “mysocialsecurity” account of the individual. She mentioned that the Social Security Administration is not allowed to replace the forms themselves until February 1 to ensure the mail has time to deliver.

R. Ford also explained that tax season typically leads to an increase in Social Security card replacements. She suggested using the option on the website to complete this request, otherwise individuals have to mail in original documents to the office which includes the risk of someone’s originals getting lost in the mail.

R. Ford will share a link with information about scams. The Office of Inspector General provided a list of things to watch for. R. Ford read from the document, highlighting the various recent scams.

B. **Michigan Senior Advocates Council (MSAC):** **T. Lemmer** shared that in leu of an in-person Older Michigianians Day (OMD) in 2021, MSAC and the Area Agencies on Aging Association of Michigan are hosting an advocacy week. The special online event will be on May 12th, but the whole week May 10-14 is Senior Action Week. This will include typical OMD activities with a focus on contacting legislators. Stay tuned for more information.

C. **State Advisory Council (SAC):** **R. Ford** shared that the council has not met and that the Isolation Report is still being finalized. “Aging In Place” is the new charge from the State Commission on Aging. The next SAC meeting is scheduled in March.

D. **Nutrition Council:** **C. Buonodono** thanked the council for their efforts in the community. The TCOA Community Nutrition Manager Tasha Stetler started “Let’s Talk Tuesday at 2:00pm” phone call forum for congregate clients and site directors to discuss updates and address any questions or gather suggestions.

A new initiative within the Nutrition program includes Boxes Bags and Buddies, where a volunteer is paired with a participant to have more dialogue through a meal to help combat isolation and loneliness. The first meals went out this week.

Another round of “Q Boxes” will be distributed as referrals are received. The boxes are expected to include pasta, cereal, canned goods, and other shelf stable items.



E. Transportation Advisory Boards:

D. Weise/CATA had no additional updates following the presentation.

A. Tomczyk/Clinton Transit explained that she was able to reestablish a link with a board member for Clinton transit updates. Money is coming in with taxes from the millage that was successful last spring, so budgets are being revamped, including wage increases for competitive pay with the growing job market in Clinton County. The transit provider is offering support for shopping and appointments in the community. Also, if people order and pay online, Clinton Transit will pick up and deliver the order to seniors from Kroger, Walmart, and Dewitt Meijer.

Also shared was a comment regarding labeling volunteer cars and concerns that this may allow for vulnerable adults to be targeted. M. Owen and C. Buonodono assured that volunteers are not mandated to label their cars and further discussion will be had outside the meeting.

J. Gutierrez/Eatran had no updates.

X. Member's Time and/or Announcements (Including Current Topics or Concerns impacting Seniors, Persons with Disabilities and/or Community Related issues)

G. Kovnot shared her positive experience on the GetSetUp online portal. GetSetUp information will be shared with the council again. Discussion followed.

C. Lasater shared that Disability Network Capital Area (DNCAP) has some CARES ACT money left for assistive technology. Those with a disability, regardless of age, can contact DNCAP to see if they can help assist in reducing barriers.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:28pm.