

COMMISSION ON AGING

MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 12, 2022

~Via ZOOM video conferencing~

OPENING AND WELCOME

- Call to Order 9:00 AM

INTRODUCTIONS, COA CHAIR – PAM SHERNUK

APPROVAL OF MINUTES, COA CHAIR – PAM SHERNUK

- John P. Smith moved to approve November 2021 minutes. Cynthia Schendel seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONER LIAISON - SHIRLEY ALLENBRAND

- Commissioner Allenbrand stated the BOCC Chairman and county managers will be holding a town hall meeting with mayors to discuss COVID. Hospitals in Johnson County are at capacity. Continued vaccination, masking and physical distancing should be enforced and testing is offered throughout the health care communities. Mask mandate orders are currently in effect for grades K-6. Each city and local school board within the county have control of these decisions. Comm'r Allenbrand also addressed a question raised by Andrea Leavitt confirming that local hospitals are having to prioritize care and defer patient appointments that are not life threatening due to the staff shortages and increased hospitalizations.
- Joe Connor provided an update on COVID in the community as well. Infection rate has sharply increased which has put heavy demand on testing. Lab reports showed there were 30k performed in one week. Appointments at testing sites are being filled throughout the KC metro area. Johnson County hospitals are leading in COVID hospitalization admissions, a 29% increase in one week. One of those hospitals has requested additional ventilators. The county deployed two of these from the state with five remaining. Long Term care facilities are also struggling with staff shortages and will be addressing visitation policies.
- Pam Shernuk raised concern on how differing mandates are affecting our long-term care facilities. Jarrod Ousley, (KS State Representative), answered that there was no state mandate or emergency orders for these facilities other than for temporary staff. He will obtain an update from the Senior Care Task Force report and question if long term care facilities are legally able to make their own decisions regarding COVID protocols and visitation orders. Angela Pelger responded that while visiting the care facilities, many did have safety protocols in place including temperature taking and conducting vaccination & travelling questionnaires. She confirmed that AAA staff has been able to complete assessments in client rooms while wearing a mask.
- Chris Osborn expressed it would be beneficial to long term care facilities if upper authority would assist in maintaining equal decisions on vaccination & masking. These care facilities are currently in a dire situation relaying his preference for a vaccine mandate for staff due to the shortage. Carol Feaker also addressed this concern. Families and staff are all tested throughout the 19 Assisted Living Centers she oversees. Unvaccinated staff are tested twice per week and are screened prior to shifts. Once a positive test is recorded, all staff including residents are tested until there are no positive cases.

ASSISTANT COUNTY MANAGER - JOE CONNOR

- Joe Connor updated the board that the BOCC will be holding virtual meetings and a resolution is on the agenda that all board & commission meetings throughout the county remain virtual until February 17th. In addition, the panel interview date for the Aging & Human Services Director position has been moved to Friday, February 25th.

AREA AGENCY ON AGING (AAA) – DEPUTY DIRECTOR, JAY LEAK

- Jay Leak, Deputy Director addressed the board that COVID is also affecting the Area Agency on Aging. He pointed out some nutrition challenges along with staff & volunteer shortages. This includes contract providers who offer in-home services to the elderly community.
- Older Kansans Day is scheduled for Tuesday, February 15 amidst the increased number of COVID cases. The board was in agreement that no one would be attending this luncheon due to the pandemic. There would however be plenty of interest in participation if held in the spring.
- The AAA is currently in the beginning of a new fiscal year for the county and continues to remain busy. The number of people served by Information Specialists has increased 24% in 2021. This increase does not include the month of December. Aging Case Management services are also up this year jumping from 2,200 in mid-2021 to 4,400 units billed this year. Megan Laha, Interim Director also added that the county has given us a total of \$500,000 for the local Aging Care Services Program. Half of this amount was provided last year and again this year.
- K4ad (includes all AAA's) is creating their public policy goals for this year. One is to thank the KS State Legislature for additional money being put in the Senior Care Act (SCA). They are hoping to expand funding for nutrition centers because of inflationary costs we are incurring and exempt sales tax for Kansas AAA's who are not part of a county. In addition, they are wanting to create and build a work group that can address recruitment attracting employees and retaining workforce. Jarrod Ousley questioned if the elimination on food sales tax would provide the same outcome. Pam stated eliminating the sales tax on groceries has long been on the COA's Legislative platform. The concern was raised about social service funding decreasing if this would occur. Mr. Ousley clarified that the fiscal budget for the State would prevent cuts to social services if there is no change to the current tax structure. John P. Smith reminded the board about communicating with legislators.
- The 2022 Area Plan was returned from Kansas Department on Aging and Disability Services requesting additional compliance documents that were completed and forwarded back to them in a timely manner.
- Angela Pelger provided an updated change to the SCA sliding fee scale. Before the change, Kansas Department for Aging & Disability Services (KDADS) was using 100% of poverty as income guidelines. The minimum income amount for (donation only) services had been \$0 - \$1,073 while the maximum amount for a 90% copay was \$2,173. As of January 1, KDADS increased the income to 150% of poverty guidelines which has changed the donation level numbers. The lower limit has increased to \$1,610 and the upper limit to \$2,710. This change will allow more people to be served by the SCA, although staff shortages continue to be an issue.
- Stephany Ikpe, Nutrition Manager reported the Olathe Towers nutrition center was going strong. Most people were receiving their meals by the "grab & go" option although there were still some people dining in.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- None at this time

REPORT FROM THE COA CHAIR, PAM SHERNUK

- Pam reported that she is assisting Advent Health with a community health survey in which she will participate on a panel for 4 dates in April. John P. Smith will be her alternate.
- The COA will continue working towards an active outreach group when the pandemic is controlled. All future COA meetings through March will be held virtually through Zoom. The Affordable Housing Study presentation by Prairie Elder Care will be rescheduled to the Spring.

OLD BUSINESS

- None at this time

NEW BUSINESS

- None at this time

OPEN FORUM/PUBLIC COMMENTS

- None at this time

ADJOURNMENT

- Meeting adjourned at 10:13 AM

Next COA meeting ~Via ZOOM~
Wednesday, February 9, 2022 @ 9:00 AM