



**DHHS - State Unit on Aging  
Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes  
October 15, 2014 10:00 am-2:00 pm  
620 East 25<sup>th</sup> Street, Ste. 12 Kearney, Nebraska  
South Central Area Agency on Aging**

**Present:** Michael Millea, Rod Hughes, Kenneth Niedan, Charlotte Dorwart, Kathy Stokebrand, Rodale Emken, Claire Schmidt, Doyle Howitt, Christine Sueverkruepp

**Absent:** Jacqueline Kuxhausen, Colleen Andrews

**Staff:** Cynthia Brammeier-Administrator, Penny Clark-LTC Ombudsman (via phone), Kevin Young-Staff Assistant

**Guests:** Rod Horsley, Executive Director, South Central Area Agency on Aging

**Rodale Emken** called the meeting to order and took roll call.

**Committee Chair:**

Claire Schmidt moved, Kenneth Niedan seconded, to re-elect Rodale Emken. The motion carried unanimously.

**State Unit on Aging Updates:**

**Cynthia Brammeier** updated the Committee on staff changes at the State Unit on Aging. Nutritionist Erik White, and Staff Assistant Kevin Young both started in September.

**Ombudsman:**

Penny Clark was officially appointed as the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman at the end of April, 2014. Penny now reports directly to the DHHS CEO, Kerry Winterer, as of October 1, 2014. This change addresses an audit finding regarding a conflict of interest for the SLTCOP. The State Unit on Aging now reports directly to the Medicaid director.

There will be no legislative changes submitted by DHHS this year.

**Aging Nebraskans Task Force:**

Work of the Aging Nebraskans Taskforce continues. Cynthia serves as Kerry Winterer's designee. The voting members are the State Senators on the Task Force. A public hearing is scheduled for November 13. A virtual "town hall" Q&A session will be held in October, and will be facilitated by AARP.

**Monitoring:**

The State Unit began monitoring visits in July. The next visit will be with Blue Rivers in Beatrice. A recent visit to Northeast Nebraska Area Agency on Aging yielded great results. Staff visited, but did not monitor, the Santee Sioux reservation senior center.

### VISTA Volunteers:

A concept paper was submitted to the Corporation for National and Community Service to place four AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers with the State Unit on Aging. This team would help increase evidence based programs statewide. Four volunteers would develop infrastructure, capacity planning, and volunteer recruitment plans. If approved, they will start in June 2015, working primarily in Lincoln.

### Senior Employment:

The Senior Employment Program was audited in June, and a request for proposals (RFP) was required by the US Department of Labor. Experience Works is currently the only vendor serving Nebraska and is authorized until December 31, 2014. ENOA stopped offering the services as of June 30, 2014.

### ADRC:

The Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) website had a “soft launch” in July. The website is up and running, the phone number rings to the State Unit on Aging, however it is not advertised yet.

### Service Area Reports:

#### **Lincoln Area Agency on Aging / Aging Partners:**

**Kathy Stokebrand** reported that Aging Partners budget requests have been made and filled. Saline County Aging Services increased referrals and has had problems with space as they share office space with the Food Pantry. The Dewitt Senior Center started serving meals five days per week. They offer Tai Chi classes, Bridge, Quilting and recently had a successful BBQ fundraiser.

#### **Agency on Aging of Western Nebraska:**

**Charlotte Dorwart** spoke about how Sydney’s senior center is struggling with the meals they serve being more expensive than their suggested donation. They offer a travel group that regularly visits popular destinations such as Branson, MO; the Black Hills of South Dakota; and the Cheyenne County Community Center for bingo.

#### **West Central Nebraska Area Agency on Aging:**

**Kenneth Niedan** reported that an Experience Works Volunteer who helps out a local community center that is experiencing difficulty. Another local center loses \$1,000 a month due to rising meal costs.

### State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

**Penny Clark** reported that the Ombudsman Volunteer Conference in August went well with about 60 attending. Penny currently oversees 54 volunteers statewide and is seeking recruitment ideas to increase that number. Penny sent legislators lists of volunteers that support their respective constituencies.

The next Ombudsman Volunteer Conference will be April 15, 2015 at Mahoney State Park. It will coincide with National Volunteer Recreation Week. Penny will be also offering, in partnership with the State of Iowa, a mediation training with four other states. She also underscored her new report to Kerry Winterer.

## **Service Area Reports, continued:**

### **Northeast Nebraska Area Agency on Aging:**

**Roderick Hughes** outlined the mixed results with the varied Senior Centers in his area and went over the issue with the Santee Sioux kitchen. He also added that unfortunately the Ombudsman is seeing a lot of financial abuse. Good news from Pilger as they are looking forward to rebuilding their Senior Center after their tornado with the upcoming grant.

### **Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging:**

**Michael Millea** stated that he participates in a business group called the Partnerships in Aging. They provide educational workshops on a wide range of subjects concerning the Aged population and provides direct services including home remodeling and legal assistance. Michael also stated that he is a past President of the Nebraska Chapter of AARP.

### **Lincoln Area Agency on Aging / Aging Partners:**

**Christine Sueverkruepp** discussed the closing of the Panama Senior Center due to falling participation and people frequenting other centers. Effective January 1, wage regulations for caregivers will have a great impact on the aging. There is a concern that it will price many caregivers and their clients out of the market. Christine also expressed concerns about Access Nebraska wait times and the lack of caseworkers to call directly when referrals come from Adult Protective Services.

### **South Central Nebraska Area Agency on Aging:**

**Rod Horsley** reported for **Rodale Emken** that Medicaid open enrollment sites have been doubled in Kearney this year to accommodate increased participation. Senior Centers in the area have been losing money on meals and it has been suggested that they find other larger vendors to cut costs. Average daily participation at the Seniors Centers has been good with Holdrege coming in at 73, Kearney 105 and Spaulding at 45. Overall for the area, meal contributions have exceeded with an average of \$3.62 over the suggested contribution of \$3.50.

### **Midland Area Agency on Aging:**

**Claire Schmidt** is a proud volunteer for the Senior Medicaid Patrol and also participates in a ministry to the homeless in Grand Island that provides a foot clinic, winter coats and salon services. At the Senior Centers there are exercise classes, card clubs and Adult Daycare that are having success.

### **South Central Nebraska Area Agency on Aging:**

**Doyle Howitt** who has been filling in and teaching graduate level courses on aging is frustrated by how little students know about the process.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:45pm.

### **Next Meeting:**

April 22, 2015, 10:00 – 2:00, South Central Nebraska Area Agency on Aging