



Good Life. Great Mission.

DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Committee members present:

Colleen Claassen, Chairperson, member at large
Sharon Busch, Aging Partners
Luana Duennerman, member at large
Ira Nathan, member at large
Charlotte Dorwart, Aging Office of Western NE
Danny DeLong, Blue Rivers AAA
Frank Herzog, Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging
Alicia Toczek, South Central NE AAA
Phil Lyons, West Central NE AAA
Absent: Kimberly Baumann, NENAAA
Vacancies: Midland AAA, at large

ASL interpreters:

Ben Sparks
Kelly Brakenhoff

State Staff Present:

Cynthia Brammeier, Administrator
Amy Hochstetler, Information Technology Business Analyst
Coordinator
Penny Clark, State Long-Term Care Ombudsman

Guests present:

Mary Ridder, Public Service Commission
Rod Horsley, Executive Director, South Central NE AAA
Erin Arensdorf, Executive Director, West Central NE AAA
Connie Cooper, Northeast NE AAA

The meeting was called to order at 9:04 am, Colleen Claassen, chairperson presiding.

Roll call was conducted.

The guests and speakers present were welcomed and introduced themselves. Those online were welcomed and introduced themselves. Thoughts were expressed for Florida families affected by the hurricane.

Agenda: The agenda was approved. Alicia Toczek moved, Luana Duennerman seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**State Unit on Aging
Aging Advisory Committee Meeting**

Thursday, October 6, 2022, – 9 am-2 pm
South Central Nebraska Area Agency on
Aging
625 E. 25th St., #12, Kearney, NE 68847
virtual meeting via WebEx.

Speaker, virtual:

Anne Byers, Office of Chief Information
Officer, State of Nebraska

Guests virtual:

Carla Frase, Director, Blue Rivers AAA
Trish Bergman, Director, Eastern NE
Office on Aging
Randy Jones, Director, Aging Partners
Tricia Weathers, public

State staff virtual:

Cheryl Kirby, Program Coordinator
Erik White, Nutrition Program
Coordinator
Antonio Carranza, Legal
Gene Hogan, Fiscal Program Manager
Ben Stromberg, Program Manager
Mary Prai, Federal Aid Administrator

Minutes: The minutes were approved as presented. Alicia Toczek moved, Frank Herzog seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Presentations:

UNO Statewide survey report - Chris Kelly, PhD., UNO Gerontology Chair, presenting
 A copy of the report was shared with those present. The report will be posted online and included as an appendix to the State Plan on Aging. The surveys were sent to 2,200 Nebraskans age 50+ in January 2022, with a 26% response rate, through March. There were over 50 questions on the survey. Paper copies were sent to those who did not respond to the online version. In-person listening sessions were conducted in May 2022 in 19 communities statewide and provided additional information surveys could not. All eight service areas hosted sessions, with a total of 271 participating, plus AAA staff. AAA directors and staff were instrumental in the session setup, attendance, and support. The report is robust, and everyone was encouraged to review the data. Of note:

- 34% of the Nebraska population is age 50+
- There is a higher concentration of persons age 50+ in rural counties
- There is a higher concentration of people aged <49 in urban and suburban counties
- The survey response average age was 69; the listening session average age was 77
- 68% reported being married, 71% living with a spouse
- Workforce shortages are an issue in all areas; in-home services are of specific concern
- 50% did not know who would help them if they needed it besides their partner
- 86% provide caregiving to someone with no help
- Cost and availability of caregiving limit in-home support
- 70% Do not know where to go for help with Alzheimer’s support.
- Multiple methods of information sharing needed – paper is most desired, online less
- Internet availability & access concerns and high cost. Training on technology is needed, preferably in person, however, respondents made little use of telehealth
- In-home care providers and handyman work is needed
- Senior centers are valued for those aged 80+

The top 5 concerns rated very important to aging adults:	Top 5 services important for quality of life for Nebraskans:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85.2% healthcare • 72.1% financial security • 64.2% having enough food • 59.7% affordable, accessible housing • 56.4% programs for those with dementia and families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 62% information and applying for Medicare, Medicaid • 61.4% affordable, accessible housing • 57.2% programs that help with dementia and families • 48.3% preventing elder abuse and exploitation • 44.9% assisted living

Considerations:

- Redesign the local senior center model - with meals and serve as an information & education hub in the community. Encourage social connections where there are few or none.
- Target outreach to those living alone. Those without a spouse may not have support.
- Housing – most want to remain in their current home. Home modifications and minor repairs are expensive, and services are limited.
- Conduct surveys and listening sessions regularly.
- A trend is that more older adults are single.
- There is a migration of younger Nebraskans leaving the state.

Adult Protective Services (APS) reporting and the process – presenting Toni Bonsera, Program Specialist. Slides were provided.

- APS investigates, determines vulnerability, and finds the least restrictive solution.
- Develop plans and arranges for services.
- Adults can accept or refuse services.
- One toll-free # for APS & CPS call center is staffed in Omaha, 24/7/365.
- Call, even if called before and not followed up. Keeps track of the reports.
- APS and Law enforcement coordinate responses.
- A problem in a facility is up to the Division of Public Health (DPH) Licensure Unit.
- All facility reports are sent to DPH also.
- Cannot be a guardian or conservator; remove someone from their home; force services on someone, or place people.
- A perpetrator will be listed on the central registry if it is a substantiated case.
- APS has 30 workers across the state and will be hiring seven new positions.
 - Training is about three months before they can have case assignments. There is ongoing training. The minimum qualifications are bachelor's, and some workers have master's degrees.
 - APS conducts outreach activities – at the State fair and through media campaigns.

Broadband progress statewide – Anne Byers, OCIO; Mary Ridder, PSC; Danny DeLong Anne Byers – NITC – digital equity planning project.

Broadband is essential to growth in the state. The top two priorities are rural counties, and people aged 60+.

The Nebraska Information Technology Commission lists events: <https://nitc.nebraska.gov/>.

Listening sessions on older adults, internet use, and telehealth are scheduled for 10/18, 10/21, and 10/26 – all are open to the public. <https://broadband.nebraska.gov/Home> calendar lists events.

The OCIO is working with the SUA and using the UNO survey information.

BEAD Broadband Equity Access Delivery coordination –

<https://broadbandusa.ntia.gov/sites/default/files/2022-06/BEAD-FAQs.pdf>

Anne is available to present locally.

There is a 30-day comment period on the plan.

See also Anne Byers, NITC broadband presentation at Elder Justice Training:

Mary Ridder – Public Service Commission (PSC) District 5

Handouts were provided.

Three funding sources – two federal pandemic funds: CARES, ARPA, and State funding.

Mary provided a worksheet to develop a plan in rural communities –

- Include an inventory survey sample of what entities have fiber – every school in Nebraska, most hospitals, most libraries, and most banks.
- Who else to work with on the broadband effort?
- What do we know? What do we need?
- Gather information and a starting point.
- All communities getting broadband look different in how they did it.
- Contact more than one telecom.
- 100Mbps upload / 100Mbps download is the goal.

Ombudsman - Penny Clark, State Long-Term Care Ombudsman presenting

Handouts were distributed.

1. GAO / CMS findings from 2018 – 2021.
 2. CMS Facility letter regarding debt collection practices, 9/8/22.
 3. Residents' Rights month 2022, 'Inspiring Unity within our Community, 10/2022.'
 4. CMS letter to states regarding visitation guidance, 9/17/22.
- Assisted Living facilities are not regulated by the feds. The LTCOP has received several calls about boosters, activities, etc.
 - ARPA provided funding to the Ombudsman program. The LTCOP is working to recruit more ombudsmen.
 - No Ombudsmen are located in North Platte, Beatrice, or west. The State Ombudsman in the west cannot travel.
 - The Ombudsman is talking to AAAs about 3-year grants to start Ombudsman programs.
 - The State is required to provide ombudsman services to receive the bulk of the funding for access and nutrition programs.
 - New training is being offered on zoom & in person. The new requirement is 36 hours of training annually. This is up from 20 hours.
 - A change being implemented is that shadowing will be done after a few hours of classroom training. By moving up shadowing in the training plan, they hope to spend more time with those who enjoy it and less with those who self-select out of the program.
 - The annual Federal report is due in January; it will be provided at the April Aging Advisory Committee meeting.
 - Penny presented at the AARP meeting recently.
 - The LTCOP has 80 volunteers across the state.
 - Facilities using a lot of contract staff have higher complaint numbers.

SUA Updates - Cynthia Brammeier, Administrator, presenting

- Handouts on grant expenditures were distributed. This report is also available online.
- The Elder Justice training was successful, and all comments have been positive. Attendance was 493 registered, up from 357 in 2021 (+38%). Online attendance totaled 818 (this includes the 493 registered). Free CLEs and CEUs are available to attorneys, nurses, and social workers (6.25 per profession) who register and confirm attendance.
- GetSetUp – technical skill-building classes have offered over 5,000 classes to over 4,000 users.

- Legal Risk Detector – the software pilot started in September with Omaha and Scottsbluff staff conducting interviews and sending referrals to Legal Aide Nebraska. So far, just a few have been sent.
- State and Area plan efforts FY2023-2027 – The state plan will be due to the Administration for Community Living (ACL) in early March 2023. The area plans will be due to the State Unit on Aging (SUA) in April 2023. Plans are well underway across the state. The teams have met several times on the plan's service definitions and various components. A December in-person training is planned for the teams in Kearney.
- The annual Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) report to the legislature is written and is in DHHS review. Participating agencies provided summaries that were included also.
- ADRC funding for SFY24-27 is changing to an application process due to legislative changes permitting the SUA to fund the agencies directly. Requests for Information resulted in 13 responses. All 8 AAAs, the four existing partner organizations, and 211 responded.

Senior Center Survey – Amy Hochstetler, Information Technology Business Systems Analyst Coordinator, handouts were available.

- Great response, 145 centers, 127 responses back.
- Threads – staffing, computer access
- Handouts.

Bar code scanning – the pilot is on hold until spring.

Service Area Reports & AAA Director reports

Colleen Claassen, Chair (Lincoln, at large member) - Colleen reported that she retired this summer and is writing a novel.

Luana Duennerman (Lincoln, at large member) – Luana reported that she attended the May 18 retirement event and picked up an excellent elder care resources handbook for the Lincoln area. She shared the resource handbook at the meeting.

Ira Nathan (Omaha, at large member) - Ira provided a written report. Ira attended his high school reunion in Scottsbluff & visited AOWN. Ira met with Scott, AnneMarie, & Samantha. Issues included staffing, wanting more training, 5G / broadband, technology, and nutrition. Some seniors are afraid of congregate meals, afraid they would be put into a nursing home. Ira enjoyed the Elder Justice conference. He especially enjoyed Dr. Jose Schafer – on the future of Aging in Nebraska. According to the Census – 69 Nebraska counties lost population. They measure stay v. leave. Overall, Nebraska is not losing or gaining a lot. The metrics show how aging-in-place is happening. There are labor force participation issues, with insufficient health care providers (and low salaries).

AOWN - Charlotte Dorwart (Sidney) on behalf of Cheryl Brunz (Scottsbluff) – Extreme weather, low congregate numbers due to weather. Gering congregate is doing well. Dominoes and pinochle are attracting more to senior centers and congregate meals. The school's emphasis on making arrangements for your children's care if something happens to you is increasing attention to this issue. There was a case of an adult disabled child who was left when the parents were killed. Gering is offering a hard-of-hearing support group monthly, attracting people from all over the panhandle.

Aging Partners - Sharon Busch, Vice-Chair (Lincoln) & Randy Jones (Lincoln) – Moving to Victory Park in February 2023 takes a lot of time. All positions are filled on the AP advisory council. It is a diverse group. The Hispanic outreach in Crete has been very successful with a pop-up center. Geneva has increased attendance after closing and reopening.

BRAAA - Carla Frase (Beatrice) – Meal numbers are expanding. Activities are increasing at all centers. They have grown in 3 new home-delivered meal (HDM) communities and received requests from 3 more communities for HDMs. They have implemented a new menu system with Sysco. All centers offer the same menu. ARPA funding is helping replace kitchen equipment, agency software, vehicles, and TVs for health programming and supporting staff recruitment. Hourly payments were increased, which helped recruitment. Blue Rivers suggested meal rates were raised to \$5 from \$4. Lifelines & caregiver support are growing. They are waiting on seven buses from the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT, with CARES Act funding). They are conducting outreach with transit funds. They took clients to the state fair, Humboldt Lake Park, and Cancer Memorial Garden. Day trips are well received. Outreach through all programs is increasing. Carla has made County board presentations in all counties. The contracted attorney is providing presentations at senior centers and offering one-on-one consultations. They are offering health clinics. Last month, they had an all-staff meeting in the park and had outside presenters on scams (bankers, police).

Danny DeLong, Legislative Chair (Beatrice) - Danny distributed an article about Gage County's broadband effort with ARPA funding.

ENOA - Trish Bergman (Omaha) – ENOA is concentrating on visibility. They joined the Omaha Chamber of Commerce. The Annual caregiver support event is on 11/5, with UNO and VA speakers. Senior centers are fully staffed, although they have not fully bounced back. The Diners' choice program is growing. The Ombudsman lost volunteers during COVID and is rebuilding volunteers now. There is a new Ombudsman coordinator. ENOA is struggling with meals on wheels drivers. Paid drivers are down 6 of 26. In-home care is difficult to staff. An Omaha TV station story helped with snow removal provider recruitment. They made a significant effort on scams through email with staff. A vendor of ENOA had an employee information data breach, which is being handled. They are waiting on their 501(c)(3) status from IRS. IRS is significantly backlogged.

Frank Herzog (Omaha) - Frank shared an article about Medicaid expansion improving the number of people with insurance. It mentioned that hospitals had fewer charity cases, and State bankruptcies dropped.

MAAA - (Hastings) – no report.

NENAAA - Connie Cooper (Norfolk) – ARPA funding has benefitted many areas. The board approved increased reimbursement for meals at senior centers. Supportive services to senior centers are also receiving additional funding through ARPA. The In-home grants, and self-directed care, are receiving increased reimbursement. The Ombudsman volunteers will receive appreciation with the ARPA funding. The four-year area plan efforts are stepping up. NENAAA is deciding what services they will offer. Some definitions are changing and splitting into different services. To-Go meals will remain in NENAAA. Based on the UNO report, there is a need for community awareness of AAAs. The Attorney General Community Outreach Coordinator, Ryan Sothan, provided in-person cyber security training

at Northeast Community College (NECC). NENAAA recruited through local financial advisors and had a great turnout. NENAAA is offering another 3-part series, "crossing the digital divide." The class provides device fundamentals; how to go online, set up an email, etc. Attendees bring their phones, laptop, for hands-on training. The next class is on 10/25, 26, and 27, at NECC. Open enrollment for Medicare Part D is 10/15-12/7. The staff is in Lincoln today for SHIP training. NENAAA has 44 SHIP volunteers.

SCNAAA -Alicia Toczek (Loup City) – They are experiencing challenges & opportunities to support aging in SCNAAA. There has been a slow recovery from COVID, with staff shortages, and they are rethinking services. They are using more online communication. AAAs are doing a lot. They still have in-person services – meals, HDMs, and health classes. The health department is now fully staffed. They offer in-person opportunities for socialization. They are encouraging vaccinations. There are outside impacts on other suppliers. They are relying on neighbors. Alicia thanked South Central for their help.

Rod Horsley (Kearney) – The Agency has been affected by the staffing shortage. The ADRC counselor left recently; the Agency had three applicants when five years ago, they would have had 30. The Medicaid Waiver program is overflowing with 226 clients. An average caseload is 45 for a service coordinator. Some are at 50-51. They may hire another services coordinator. The area plan meetings (calls) kicked off in July. The December training on area plans will be held in Kearney and it will be helpful to all attending. The Agency collaborated with local health departments (LHDs) on a postcard magnet mailing with their phone numbers to follow up with vaccines. Two Rivers LHD sent 15,000, and Loup LHD sent 8,000. The Agency submitted their ADRC proposal for 2024-27. The federal reporting started for FY22. Medicare open enrollment begins next week. They are offering Medicare 101 with the community colleges. The University of Nebraska – Kearney (UNK) Technology project has 30 Agency clients who received an iPad and each client was paired with a student. The goal is to teach each client to use the iPad. In the future, hopefully, clients can communicate with family and friends with the technology. Diabetes education continues. The Plumbers & Steamfitters Union is helping change filters and batteries in 30 Care Management client homes. The Loup City economic development has funding available to senior centers for equipment or food.

WCNAAA - Erin Arensdorf (North Platte) – Medicare open enrollment starts next week, offering call-in or in-person appointments. They submitted their intent to apply for ADRC funding for FY24-27. The Board's decision was partly due to people in the area needing assistance with Medicaid applications; DHHS in North Platte does not help with applications. Senior Centers are operating steadily and are excited about continuing to-go meals. They are working on a plan for provider recruitment. They are working on distributing ARPA funds to senior centers, and are offering \$2 extra per unit, including meals and supportive services, for the next six months.

Phil Lyons (McCook) - visited the McCook senior center. McCook serves 54 congregates, delivers 77/HDMs, and provides 26 to-go meals per day. It appears that 2% of McCook is getting meals! They increased prices for meals at senior centers. They are having staffing difficulties. The transit bus was in a wreck and is still waiting for repairs. Home improvement needs persist in the area. Meals are listed in the local newspaper.

Questions, Public Comments, Other Business

- Regarding the State & Area Plans – members are encouraged to read the state and local area plans. Input is welcome in all areas. Colleen will send an email to see who is interested in a meeting to discuss drawing younger people to centers. Shari, Colleen, and Ira expressed interest.
- It was suggested that this committee needs more women.
- It was suggested that we conduct a survey with 50+ to recruit for senior center involvement.
- Rebranding senior centers were mentioned.
- Pop-ups centers have been effective in Lincoln.
- Updating the mission was discussed, reminding members that baby boomers were being born when the senior centers were being designed.
- The language used was mentioned. Defining ageism. ‘Senior’ and ‘senior center’ is all outdated language. ‘Older people are the new norm. Cynthia will send a list of resources on aging language.
- About 15 years ago, UNK helped the AAAs work on senior center image and terms, including how we could broaden the language, move past labels and language barriers, and set up assessment and rebranding goals.

Next Meeting Date – 4/13/23

Speaker suggestions:

- UNO – Chris Kelly follow-up.
- Medicaid – follow up. NEMT, and duals?
- Senior Center Directors presentation.
- Carryover from 4/22 to 4/23 - Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) issues. Hospital discharges, with no pick-up. (Medicare / Medicaid dual-eligible clients) –Kris Radke, Administrator

It was requested that the group have a 30-minute break-out session on the agenda and divide into two groups.

Adjourn - The meeting was adjourned at 1:47 pm.