

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON AGING  
MEETING SUMMARY  
Friday, August 26, 2022**

**Members Present**

Ada Anderson	Douglas County
Barbara Boyer	Arapahoe County
Bob Brocker	At Large – Denver
Bob Davis	City and County of Broomfield
Cary Johnson	Jefferson County
Cathy Noon	Arapahoe County
Connie Ward	Jefferson County
Dawn Perez	Adams County
Donna Mullins	Jefferson County
Gretchen Lopez	Douglas County
Houston “Tex” Elam	At Large – Arapahoe County
Karie Erickson	Douglas County
Perla Gheiler	City and County of Denver
Wynne Shaw	DRCOG Board – Lone Tree

**Guests Present**

Allison Cutting, Douglas County, Debbi Haynie, Castle Rock Senior Center, Nikki Crouse, City and County of Broomfield, Valerie Robson, Jefferson County

**DRCOG Staff Present**

AJ Diamontopoulos, AHC Manager, Alejandra Lerma, Ombudsman, Cindy Grainger, ADRC Administrative Assistant, Desiree Boelte, SHIP Program Manager, Erika Dubray, I&A Manager, Jayla Sanchez-Warren, AAA Division Director, Malorie Miller, Transportation Program Manager, Mindy Patton, AAA Division Assistant, Shannon Gimbel, Ombudsman Manager, Travis Noon, Program Manager AAA Grant Compliance

Karie Erickson Committee Chair – Called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m.

**Public Comment Period (Non-ACA Members)**

There was no public comment.

**Report of the Chair – Karie Erickson**

- Chair Erickson wanted to bring attention to the growing food insecurity among older adults, especially now with growing fuel and food costs. She said that the State has gone back to pre-COVID regulations and providers can no longer deliver food and groceries to older adults that cannot get out and about.

**Report of the AAA Director – Jayla Sanchez-Warren**

- Jayla announced that Bob Davis an ACA member for over 20 years has resigned. Bob did several terms as the ACA Chair and led the Committee and AAA through some trying times. He also has served on the ACA Funding Subcommittee where he provided useful history and knowledge to the RFP process and grantee selection. Jayla thanked Bob for all his years of service to the region and his mentorship over the years.

- Jayla is beginning work on the four-year plan which is required to be completed by March 31, 2023.
  - The plan includes information from the Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults (CASOA). This survey has been sent to 17,500 older adults in Colorado and the AAAs will receive region reports in November. There have been a few hiccups with the survey which has made the Information and Assistance line busy with calls.
  - Jayla and a team of AAA staff will be completing community conversations and key informant sessions which will also provide input for the report.
- While at the Gilpin County Fair, Jayla was approached by a consumer expressing concern for their congregate meal site and the Meals on Wheels program.
  - Jayla met with Mary Ellen Makowski the Director of Senior programs at Gilpin County. She also went to the congregate meal site and had a meal which was not of good quality. She listened and talked to folks about what they wanted and what they were frustrated about.
  - Jayla then met with Volunteers of America (VOA) to discuss the issue and found they subcontract with Gilpin County who contracts with Summit Foods and the Gilpin County Jail. After several meetings it was decided that DRCOG will contract directly with Gilpin County, and they will subcontract with Summit Foods. They will have an increase to their budget to cover food costs so they can provide a better-quality meal.
- Jayla and AJ Diamontopoulos are preparing for a trip to Washington DC in October to attend the Coalition to Transform Advanced Care (CTAC) conference and do Hill visits with legislators. They hope to educate new legislative staff about the AAA's, their needs and the pending fiscal cliff expected in 2024. In addition, they hope to update legislators on the upcoming reauthorization of the Older Americans Act.
- Jayla mentioned the upcoming broadcast of the No Copay radio program focusing on gout and the Good Rx service.
- Jayla congratulated the refugee team who just had their first group of 30 refugees complete the CSU Extension Aging Mastery class. The Aging Mastery is an eight-week evidence-based course that teaches such things as financial health, nutrition, and advance directives. Staff translated into five different languages, Arabic, Tongan, Amharic, Swahili, and French. The National Council on Aging is recognizing the team for their accomplishment.

#### Move to approve consent agenda

Items on the consent agenda included: Summary of the June 17, 2022, meeting.

Bob Davis motioned for approval. Barbara Boyer seconded the motion; the consent agenda was unanimously approved.

Agendas and summaries are posted on the DRCOG website located at <https://drcog.org/calendar> from there choose the month and date of the meeting, click on the event. Once clicked, you will find the link to the meeting for that month.

#### Action Items

##### Discussion and approval of replacing the September 23, 2022, meeting with the Regional Summit

- Cathy Noon moved to replace the September 23, 2022, meeting with the Regional Summit, Barbara Boyer seconded the motion. Replacing the meeting with the Regional Summit was unanimously approved.

## **Informational Briefings**

### **Ombudsman Program Update – Shannon Gimbel**

- Shannon presented information from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). She said currently in Colorado there are 260 long term care facilities and assisted living facilities in an outbreak status. (A COVID outbreak is determined by the CDPHE as two or more confirmed cases, which can include staff who are positive within a fourteen-day period, or one confirmed case with two probable cases. A facility must be cleared by CDPHE before it can come off the outbreak list.)
- Shannon went on to say that COVID deaths have gone down considerably with 59 in December to none in August. Currently in the DRCOG area there are 98 homes with a COVID outbreak.
- Staff are still dealing with COVID and are following all safety precautions such as mask wearing and not visiting facilities with outbreaks unless necessary.
- Facilities are still short staffed and using a lot of agency staff to cover. Though the facilities are short staffed they continue to accept new residents which is an increased problem with giving residents sufficient service.
- Vaccination rates in facilities is between 70 and 80 percent. This includes those with a single vaccine or those that have received boosters.
- The Ombudsman are working on the closure of the Little Sisters of the Poor Mullen Home. Shannon was not sure of why it was closing but assumed they just could not afford to operate any longer. The home is owned by the Archdiocese of Denver, there are approximately 29 residents that will need to be placed in new homes by the end of October.
- In May, the health department closed a large Medicaid assisted living home with 49 residents. The health department pulled the license, making it an emergency closure with ten days to move residents. The home was not providing adequate care. Shannon said they do not have a lot of options in the assisted living world that will accept Medicaid and they are becoming less and less.
- A new PACE provider is starting day centers in the region. This poses a problem because the location of the day centers is in Boulder and Lafayette which are areas out of the DRCOG service area for the Ombudsman. Shannon is working with the state on the issue.

### **Presentation Senior Medical Patrol and Medicare Open Enrollment Update – Desiree Boelte**

- Desiree Boelte, SHIP Program Manager presented information to the group about the upcoming open enrollment for Medicare which begins October 15, 2022, and ends December 7, 2022.
- DRCOG serves Arapahoe, Douglas and Jefferson counties but will always take calls from other counties.
- The program is funded by three grants: State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), Medicare Improvement for Patients and Providers (MIPPA), and the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP).
- Staff provide counseling that is unbiased and person-centered. They want to make sure that consumers are provided with the best information so they can make an informed final decision. This is different than a broker who is selling a product.
- They assist with setting up a new social security account so they can access benefits. Teach consumers about the Medigap programs and the Medicare Savings program which helps pay

for part A and Part B premiums. Provide outreach to various communities and referrals and resources when needed.

- Desiree also spoke about the Senior Medical Patrol (SMP) which help Medicare beneficiaries and their caregivers to prevent, detect, and report healthcare fraud. In turn, this helps preserve the integrity of the Medicare program.

#### Regional Summit Update – Kelly Roberts

- Kelly Roberts reported that the Regional Summit will be held on September 30th at the Fossil Trace Golf Club. An invitation and event registration information will be going out the first week of September.
- DRCOG has reached out to the County Commissions on Aging and the Senior Commissions within the AAA region, currently about 90 contacts. Kelly said that it has been a good time to reconnect with these organizations.
- The planning committee has decided on two presenters: Todd Coffee with the State Unit on Aging will present on the Older Americans Act (OAA) and the roles of different government entities involved with the OAA and speak about funding. Nancy Gedeon from the state demographers office will present on the economic and social impact of Colorado's aging population.
- There will be two rounds of facilitated conversations to allow attendees to connect, exchange information and talk about how to collaborate in the future.

#### Board Report

- Wynne Shaw reported that the Board is working with DRCOG Transportation staff to crunch the numbers to work within the greenhouse gas guidelines. Priority is being given to bus rapid transit, bike and pedestrian facilities which will benefit everyone. The Board will be reviewing and voting on the plan in September.

#### County Reports

##### Arapahoe County – Cathy Noon

- As Arapahoe County begins to open up after COVID they are starting to have resource fairs. Cathy said it was good to have contact with people and see what kind of help can be provided.

##### City and County of Broomfield – Bob Davis

- Bob Davis announced that Nikki Crouse will be replacing him on the ACA and ACA Funding Subcommittee once approved.

##### City and County of Denver – Perla Gheiler

- Denver currently has two distribution programs they are doing, one is giving out food boxes and the second is giving \$200 food cards to low income, older adults, and people of color. This is a Mayor funded campaign to help with food insecurity.
- In September Perla is reconvening partners for phase two of their Age Matters campaign that began in 2018. The purpose of the campaign is to evaluate how partners look at aging, what type of plans they had for the future, and where there were gaps. The departments have been very collaborative, and this will be a chance for them to see their progress.
- The Denver Connects program has been doing outreach throughout the summer. Most inquiries are regarding housing and transportation.

- Denver had 65 older adults, the majority of whom were Spanish speakers, graduate from their technology program. The class was for ten weeks and provided them with a Chromebook and hotspot. They plan to continue through the end of the year, and then consider continuing the program in 2023.

#### Douglas County – Karie Erickson

- Karie reported on their Help at Home hot meal delivery program. This is a wrap-around services program where participants are provided a hot meal three times a week. Additionally, participants receive an emotional wellness check, home visits, help around the house, and access to services. This was a way for them to serve rural parts of the county. They have piloted the program in Larkspur where they have been well received. Larkspur has given them a space for staff one day a week to distribute the meals. Douglas County has also partnered with a food bank to bring out a bag of groceries to participants each week. Karie said people are socializing with each other, collaborating, and connecting at the weekly event.

#### Jefferson County – Connie Ward

- Jefferson County is getting ready to host their Senior Heroes awards the first week of September. They will be recognizing eight senior volunteers for their services, two have over twenty-five years of volunteer history. They will celebrate with their families, friends, and some elected officials from Jefferson County.

#### Other Matters by Members

- Tex Elam wanted to make the group aware of an issue with RTD Access-a-Ride. RTD has decided to enforce the liquidated damages clause of their transportation vendor contracts. This clause states that vendors can be fined if something goes wrong.
  - In the spring RTD began enforcement for vendors who were not able to provide all services they had in their contract. This is affecting three vendors that are being charged between \$80,000 to \$99,000 per month. Tex said the impact is enormous, especially for, Via Mobility Services. Because of the additional cost Via is having a harder time providing other services. This has cost them approximately \$3 million since the spring.
  - The reason vendors cannot meet the contract is because they do not have enough drivers. RTD is also unable to provide services for the same reason.
  - Doug Rex and Jayla have been working to see how they may assist with the issue. Jayla said that the concern with Via is they are DRCOG’s largest provider of transportation services, if Via cuts back services, this will affect DRCOG’s consumers who receive transportation services.
- A second mention from Tex was the suggestion for DRCOG and the committee to find a way to use federal funds to convert the vans being used for transportation services to electric vehicles preventing pollution in the neighborhoods.
  - Travis Noon said DRCOG is trying to work with getting electric vehicle fleets for Via using the 5310 and HST funds.
  - One of the issues they have is with the FDA requirement to buy American. A certain percentage of the steel in the vehicle must be produced in America. This must be verified through audits and documentation. Manufacturers do not want to have federal contracts and so finding a manufacture that can supply all the information necessary to verify this is limited. Travis said it was easier for this to happen through CDOT purchasing as they are going through the verification process.

Next meeting – **October 28, 2022**

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:11 p.m.