

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON AGING
MEETING SUMMARY
Friday, September 17, 2021**

Members Present

Ada Anderson	Douglas County
Anne Gross	Arapahoe County
Barbara Boyer	Arapahoe County
Bob Brocker	At Large Denver
Bob Davis	City and County of Broomfield
Cathy Noon	Arapahoe County
Connie Ward	Jefferson County
Donna Mullins	Jefferson County
Houston "Tex" Elam	At Large Arapahoe County
Jim Dale	DRCOG Board - Golden
Karie Erickson	Douglas County
Perla Gheiler	City and County of Denver
Phil Cernanec	At Large Arapahoe County
Wynne Shaw	DRCOG Board - Lone Tree

Guests Present

Conner McCarthy, Grants Manager Aging Resources of Douglas County, Debbi Haynie, Director Castle Rock Senior Center, Kristine Burrows, Jewish Family Services, Mark Levine, DRCOG Consultant

DRCOG Staff Present

AJ Diamontopoulos, AHC Manager, Ana Lilia Lahowetz, Case Manager, Caitlin Phillips, Ombudsman, Cassie Scott, I&A Manager, Cindy Grainger, ADRC Administrative Assistant, Doug Rex, Executive Director, Erika Dubray, I&A Program Manager, Heather Porreca, Ombudsman Program Manager, Jayla Sanchez-Warren, AAA Division Director, Jennifer Reeves, Transitions and Veterans Program Manager, Jenny Castle, Resource and Quality Assurance Coordinator, Kelly Roberts, Community Resource Specialist, Liv Bergman, Community Resource Specialist, Ryan McGee, Transitions Counselor, Sara Murray, Ombudsman, Sharon Day, AAA Business Operations Manager, Travis Noon, Senior Program Specialist, Zack Gibbons, Fiscal Specialist

Cathy Noon Committee Chair – Called the meeting to order at 11:04 a.m.

Public Comment Period (Non-ACA Members)

There was no Public Comment.

Report of the Chair

- Cathy attended the Transportation Subcommittee meeting which is awaiting census data to have a good picture of where our seniors are; what age and what location. They hope to be meeting in October. The Funding Subcommittee met, they are looking at what and how to make the next RFP process better.

Phil asked that the Census data be shared with board members.

Report of the AAA Director

Jayla had several opportunities to talk about the work of the AAA and the Accountable Health Communities program.

- Rich Mauro, AJ Diamontopoulos, and Jayla met with Representative McClusky about the impact the Hospital Transformation Program (HTP) is already having on AAA staff and our contracted services providers and will have in the future. They reported that contractors are seeing increases of 30% to 50% in referrals from hospitals. The team explained that the hospitals are getting reimbursed for every referral, but service providers are not getting paid to coordinate or provide the service. The increase in service is putting a strain on an already strained system and adding to wait lists. Representative McClusky thanked DRCOG for bringing this issue to her attention and said she would follow up.
- Jayla was invited to be a part of a national incubator session with the Coalition to Transform Advanced Care (CTAC). The session was about integrating community services and supports into existing clinical and financial models. Jayla was invited to the meeting because DRCOG is the only AAA in the country to operate the AHC. They wanted to hear about our experience, lessons learned and policy recommendations. The primary recommendation was to include payment for coordination of service, the service, and the data collection. Jayla reminded them “referrals don’t change health outcomes services do!”
- AJ and Jayla were interviewed by individuals from the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission. A non-partisan legislative branch agency that provides the U.S. Congress with policy advice on Medicare programs. They were also interested in the AHC program, the AAA process and practice, the lessons learned and policy recommendations. AJ and Jayla were consistent in their message and explained that the only way these models would see reduced health care costs and improved health outcomes is if there was money included to help pay for service.

Move to approve consent agenda

Summary of the June 18, 2021 meeting will follow at a later date.

- 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.

Informational Briefings

Funding Update – Sharon Day

- SFY2021 Pass Through Budget: Noted that the budget started September 1, 2020 which is a two-month deferral of when the contract would normally start. Part of the reason was that the State Unit on Aging opted to defer the start of the next long-term contract with the AAA. It is important to note this because the Pass-Through Budget was available in a ten-month period as opposed to a twelve-month period.
- SFY2021 Pass Through Budget, September 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021, \$23 million; CARES \$4.9 million, OAA \$8.1 million, SFSS \$9.6 million and Homestead \$1.2 million. FY2021 Funds Expenditure: the AAA spent 71% of those Pass-Through dollars as of June 2021, in keeping with the prioritization of spending those funds we spent all the state funds and the majority of the CARES funds. Sharon gave specifics on how the monies were spent and opened the floor for discussion.

Jim asked for more information on the Homestead Acts monies. Jayla will provide the group documentation of the Act.

- Covid-19 Stimulus funding: Approximately \$8 million federal stimulus funding allocated; \$1.5 million from Family First Corona Virus Response Act, \$5.2 million from CARES Act, \$1.1 million from Consolidated Appropriations Act.
- Additional Funds Pending: \$9.5 American Rescue Plan Act, \$9.1 million (est.). The funds may be divided in OAA funding parts. Possible three-year spending term for these monies. ACL vaccine funds \$332K (est.) could be used for outreach or promoting the booster. DRCOG staff does not know all the parameters related to these funds. Jayla noted that some of these monies may need to be allocated for transportation. Transportation providers continue to provide a lot of trips for vaccines and are concerned about the possibility of the boosters and what kind of load that will put on their ability to provide service.
- SFY2021 Pass-Through Budget \$19 million. This doesn't include the carry over or the ARPA & Vaccine funds because these funds have not been formally allocated to DRCOG. \$1.1 million from the Consolidated Appropriations Act, \$7.9 million from OAA, and \$9.4 million from SFSS. 2% CARES, and \$1.2 million from the Homestead Act.
- Jayla noted that other funds are available from Senate Bill 21-290 which authorized \$15 million of state funds for investment in infrastructure. The state unit on aging along with AAA's are putting together a process. Each AAA will have to submit a proposal for their top priority. The goal for this money is to invest in infrastructure and has been targeted for smaller more rural areas. This is a one-time fund opportunity and funds are available for calendar year 2022.
- Sharon presented a chart illustrating the AAA pass through funds for FY2018 through FY2022. Members discussed how the data in the graph can be expanded with additional data points and used in the future.

AAA Transportation Update – Jayla Sanchez-Warren

- Cathy Noon explained that the committee did not meet because they did not have the census data that was requested and staff from DRCOG planning, and transportation divisions could not attend.
- Jayla reported on a meeting held with the AAA transportation service providers including Via, A Little Help, Douglas County, Arapahoe County, Aging Resources of Douglas County, Broomfield, Lakewood Rides and Volunteers of America. The meeting was called because they were hearing increased complaints from consumers about difficulty in scheduling rides, canceled rides, and people having to reschedule medical appointments because of lack of drivers.
- Service providers were honest about the challenges they were facing which included:
 - Demand is increasing – there are more referrals from hospitals and doctors. Via said that they signed up 350 new riders in the month of August. All the providers agreed that demand was up.
 - Staff shortages – all our partners said they were short staffed and having great difficulty in filling positions. Drivers are the biggest need but also ride coordinators, administrative staff, and mechanics. Most if not all providers have raised drivers' salaries to \$18 dollars per hour, plus annual increases. Some have improved benefit packages. Via reported that they could use another 40 to 50 drivers

- Recruitment of volunteers has been difficult as well – it was reported that volunteers are not committing as much time as before the pandemic. Several older volunteers continue to be nervous about COVID and being around people. Some have found other things to do.
- Fleet restraints – all providers are still following COVID precautions including social distancing and cleaning. Many of our contracted service providers have smaller vehicles or smaller vans and can only take 2 or 3 riders at a time instead of 6 or 8. Volunteers are less willing to do all the cleaning required to transport people in their own vehicles. Several contractors are experiencing theft of vehicle parts, especially catalytic converters. These parts are essential and are taking months to replace.
- Changes in riders -contractors report that riders have declined physically and cognitively during the pandemic. They say they are serving more people with walkers or using wheelchairs. They say the cases are more medically complex with people needing multiple rides to medical appointments. Riders are more hesitant to drive after being off the road for several months.

Group discussed the issues with transportation services. Staffing and infrastructure for scheduling a trip. It has become more challenging for clients and providers. These issues are spread throughout all the counties in Colorado. Providers are feeling the pressure that the environment has created.

Impacts of COVID on AAA Services and Older Adults – Jayla Sanchez-Warren

Jayla provided current statistics of COVID in the region and shared that around 40 facilities mainly assisted living had cases of COVID in the building.

- Heather Porreca, Ombudsman Program Manager provided an overview of the new emergency order affecting nursing homes and assisted living and talked about the type of complaints staff are investigating in facilities.
- Jayla provided information about the boosters that she learned from meetings with health department staff and Dr. John Douglas, Executive Director of Tri-County Health.
 - The topic of boosters can be a confusing one with President Biden saying everyone should get a 3rd shot and the FDA and CDC saying wait we need more information.
 - Walgreens and King Soopers are giving 3 dose shots but only to those who are considered immunocompromised, being defined as people living with AIDS, those who have received an organ transplant and those receiving cancer treatments. Other people with compromised immune systems like those living with MS or lupus have not been able to get a third vaccine.
 - Health professionals recommend wearing a mask indoors and in large crowds and good hand hygiene.
 - CDC meeting to make recommendations for who should get a 3rd dose and when are predicted soon

County Reports

Douglas County - Karie Erickson

- Karie stated that Aging resources of Douglas County got the Age Friendly Certification for age friendly workplace putting them at number 5 in Colorado with DRCOG at number 3.

Other Matters by Members

No other matters were discussed.

Next meeting – **October 15, 2021**

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:14 p.m.