

Commonwealth Council on Aging

**Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services
8004 Franklin Farms Drive
Henrico, VA 23229
September 22, 2021**

Quarterly Meeting

DRAFT MINUTES

Members Present: David Broder, Harvey Chambers, John Countryman, Jennifer Disano, Amy Duncan, Carter Harrison, Carla Hesseltine, Debbie Preston, Beverley Soble, Debi Taylor, Michael Wampler, Roland Winston, Kathryn Hayfield, Ex-Officio, Deborah Silverman, Ex-Officio, and Terry Smith, Ex-Officio

Members Participating Electronically: Billy Gorman, Diana Paguaga, J. Tina Savla, Jay White, Erica Wood, and Deborah Silverman, Ex-Officio

Absent: Deborah Davidson, Tresserlyn Kelly, and Tara Davis-Ragland, Ex-Officio,

Staff Present: Charlotte Arbogast, Devin Bowers, John Carpenter, Marcia DuBois, Catherine Harrison, Cecily Slasor, and George Worthington

Guests: Josh Myers, Alzheimer's Association

Welcome and Member Introductions

Beverley Soble, Chair

Chair Soble welcomed members and guests. Charlotte Arbogast, Council Staff, identified the members participating electronically due to a personal matter or disability/medical condition/caregiving obligations. No objections were made for their electronic participation. Charlotte Arbogast called for a Roll Call for attendance and for members to introduce themselves. Charlotte Arbogast confirmed that a quorum was present. Staff for the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) and guests then introduced themselves.

Review Proposed Agenda (Handout)

Beverley Soble

Proposed Action: Approve Proposed Agenda

Following guidance from Council Staff, Roland Winston made a motion that was seconded by Amy Duncan to approve the proposed agenda with the added agenda item to approve the 2022 Best Practices Awards process. Hearing no further discussion, Chair Soble called for the question. The motion was approved unanimously with no abstentions.

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes (Handout)

Harvey Chambers

Proposed Action: Adopt July 28, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Secretary Harvey Chambers presented the July 28, 2021 draft meeting minutes. There were no corrections so the July meeting minutes were approved by consensus.

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Public Comment Period

Beverley Soble

Beverley Soble reported that there were no public comments received.

DARS Division for Community Living Update

Marcia DuBois, Deputy Commissioner

Marcia DuBois welcomed members and provided an update on the Division for Community Living. Marcia DuBois highlighted several grant activities. DARS received a no-cost extension on the Administration for Community Living (ACL) falls prevention grant, which continues to exceed expectations. DARS received a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration grant through the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles to support GrandDriver. ACL also awarded a No Wrong Door community infrastructure support grant to Bay Aging, an area agency on aging. She reported that the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program and Farm Market Fresh for Seniors has been widely popular this year, and cited the exemplary work Arlington has done to make the program a success in that locality. Lastly, she noted that DARS also received grant funding for the Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (VICAP). Carter Harrison asked about the dementia infrastructure grant. Marcia DuBois deferred to Dementia Services Coordinator George Worthington, who indicated he would expand on that during his presentation.

Report on General Assembly August Special Session (Handout)

Erica Wood, JD, Committee Chair

Legislative Committee Chair Erica Wood reviewed the handout compiled by DARS staff with information on the recent General Assembly August Special Session and the allocation of Federal Rescue Act (ARPA) funds for aging-related services and programs. She noted the recent federal allocations for DARS for the Older Americans Act and Elder Justice Act. She also highlighted discretionary allocations for DARS to provide funding to Auxiliary Grant Program assisted living facilities to update their ventilation systems, as well as allocations to other agencies, including the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) and Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS).

Carter Harrison raised a concern regarding potential changes under consideration by DBHDS to the change the Code of Virginia definition for “serious mental illness” to exclude diagnoses of dementias. Carter Harrison noted that this could have wide rippling effects on older adults with dementia and their caregivers who currently lack sufficient community-based and long-term care supports when they are experiencing behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia. Cutting off access to the state’s mental health system, while not a perfect fit, and could lead to increased unnecessary emergency department visits, acute care hospitalizations, and arrests and jail admissions. There was general agreement among the members that this was concerning and something the Council should monitor moving forward.

DARS Agency Update

Kathryn Hayfield, Commissioner

Commissioner Hayfield welcomed members and highlighted the recent discussion about the Council members concerns for individuals with Alzheimer’s and other dementias. She noted that DARS is also monitoring and has been working with DBHDS on the dementia workgroup. She shared that there are certainly not sufficient community-based services for people with dementia.

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She also highlighted DARS' involvement and participation with the Joint Commission on Health Care's Aging in Place study. She noted the recent legislative priorities of groups like the Northern Virginia Aging Network (NVAN), the Virginia Association of Area Agencies on Aging (V4A), and others.

She then shared an update on the Secretary of Health and Human Resources (SHHR) Aging Services Workgroup Study about the best way to elevate aging services in Virginia to include consideration for establishing a standalone aging agency. ADvancing States was hired to solicit input and engage the community, which has included a survey was sent to the AAAs concerning aging services in VA, as well as interviews with DARS staff and other stakeholders. She reminded member that the next meeting is October 7 and DARS staff indicated they would send the information out to Council members. Commissioner Hayfield urged Council members to be involved and to register to speak at events if desired. She concluded by reminding members the final report on this study is due to the General Assembly and the Governor on December 1.

Chair Soble commented that she was interviewed by ADvancing States for the workgroup representing the Council on Aging. She was disappointed that she could not participate in two of the recent meetings/town halls as they were held on designated religious holidays, which she feels was unfortunate. Chair Soble also encouraged members to participate in the meetings and emphasized the importance of adding the annual report to the Code of Virginia for the Council's duties. Jay White commented that the Council needs to support the Commissioner in executing her duty and charge from the Code of Virginia.

Present & Approve the 2021 Council Annual Report (Handout)

Beverley Soble

Proposed Action: Adopt 2021 Council Annual Report

Chair Soble presented the draft report and asked Legislative Committee Chair Erica Wood to update the members on the minor tweaks to the 2022 Legislative Recommendations. Erica Wood thanked those involved in working on the report, and shared new information that was added into the Legislative Recommendation around food insecurity and SNAP benefits. Debbie Preston and Roland shared two technical updates for the DARS staff. Roland Winston made a motion to approve the draft of the annual report and it was seconded by Debbie Preston. Hearing no further discussion, Chair Soble called for the question and the annual report was approved unanimously with no abstentions.

Working Lunch with Aging Boards Reports:

Carter Harrison: *Alzheimer's Disease & Related Disorders Commission*

Erica Wood, Council Representative: *Public Guardian & Conservator Advisory Board*

Deborah Silverman: *Virginia Association of Area Agencies on Aging (V4A)*

Carter Harrison provided a brief update on the Alzheimer's Commission. He noted the commission meeting scheduled for September was canceled. The Commission is following the DBHDS dementia workgroup as well as continuing to implement the Dementia State Plan. The Commission has formed several workgroups charged with implementing efforts around data, care coordination, and training. The Commission was pleased the General Assembly funded the Dementia Case Management Program, which is now underway, and the Commission is hoping for increased funding to serve even more individuals and families.

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Erica Wood provided an update on the Public Guardian & Conservator Advisory Board (PGCAB). The PGCAB meeting scheduled for yesterday was also canceled. She provided members a brief overview of the Public Guardian Program operated by DARS with state general funds. She reported that the PGCAB has recently provided input on the updated DARS contract with providers and DARS program regulations, sent a letter to program providers, and participated in the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) study on guardianship.

Deborah Silverman offered a brief report on behalf of the V4A. She shared that Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) continue to support older adults through the COVID pandemic. There were increases in requests for services across the state and across all types of services. AAAs have been doing a lot of work around vaccine education and access. Across the country and in Virginia, AAAs are struggling to help with isolation and the anxiety, depression, other issues isolation can cause. She also shared that V4A appointed 3 AAA directors to serve on the SHHR Aging Services Workgroup, and all AAAs have been surveyed and participate in the process. Lastly, she noted that V4A and the AAAs are working with DARS and the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Policy at UVA on a demographic information and a plan for future data collection efforts.

Best Practices Committee: 2022 Process Update (Handouts)

Charlotte Arbogast, Council Staff

Proposed Action: Approve the 2022 Best Practices Awards Process

Charlotte Arbogast reminded members that included in your materials for today's meeting were three handouts related to the 2022 Best Practices Awards. The first is a planned timeline for the 2022 awards. This timeline has been adjusted from last year's to allow Committee members to have more time to review and score the nominations, while still accounting for the deadlines related to the Older Virginians Months Proclamation. The second two handouts, the Nomination Instructions and the Nomination Form, have also been updated in relation to the diversity, equity and inclusion. These changes and materials were vetted through the current Committee membership, which includes: Jennifer Disano, Tresserlyn Kelly, Diana Paguaga, Tina Savla, Jay White, and as Ex-Officio, Beverley Soble. While the Committee was not able to meet in person, members provided individual input to me via email and it was compiled and the results have been put forward today.

Roland Winston requested additional information on the Best Practices Awards history and recent successes. DARS staff and Council members jointly responded to those questions. John Countryman noted that he enjoyed the 2021 Best Practices Awards webinar, and learning about this year's winning programs.

Jennifer Disano made a motion to approve the Best Practices Awards process, and John Countryman seconded the motion. Hearing no further discussion, Chair Soble called for the question and the motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

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Presentation: Dementia Activities & Initiatives (Handouts)

George Worthington, DARS Dementia Services Coordinator

Chair Beverley Soble provided a short bio and introduction of George Worthington, DARS Dementia Services Coordinator. In his presentation, George provided an overview of:

- Dementia statistics in Virginia;
- The current structure for state and local systems and initiatives that support people with dementia and their caregivers and that are considered ‘dementia-capable’, including:
 - The DARS Dementia Case Management Program,
 - Virginia Lifespan Respite Voucher Program,
 - VDH’s CDC Bold Grant for Public Health Programs,
 - Previous federal Administration for Community Living grants to DARS,
 - Several Virginia Center on Aging Geriatric Training and Education grants, and
 - Efforts underway by UVA, Riverside Center for Excellence in Aging and Lifelong Health, and the RAFT program in northern Virginia;
- Virginia’s Dementia State Plan goals;
- DARS’ plan for building a Dementia Capable Virginia with a website and resources for individuals and caregivers, providers and researchers;

Discussion ensued about the initiatives and future efforts. Jennifer Disano inquired about how Virginia is connecting with researchers in universities, and George noted that a stronger push in this area is forthcoming. George Worthington invited members to contact him with any questions.

Regulatory Update (Handout)

Charlotte Arbogast

Ms. Arbogast provided an update on regulatory announcements. For these updates, Charlotte Arbogast usually flags regulatory actions underway that are related to aging services, older adults, or caregiving. She noted that there had not been significant regulatory activity since the Council’s last meeting, and encouraged members to review the handout and let her know if they have any questions about any of the regulatory actions listed.

Announcements (Handout)

Beverley Soble

Chair Soble highlighted the announcements provided in the meeting handouts. Chair Soble reminded members about the Council’s recent webinar. DARS partnered with the Virginia Association of Area Agencies on Aging (V4A) to host a webinar to highlight this year’s Commonwealth Council on Aging Best Practices Award Winners. The webinar was held as part of the Virginia Governor’s Conference on Aging (VGCOA) Monthly Webinar Series. Members can still review the archived webinar here: <http://vgcoa.com/>.

Jay White inquired about the opportunity to connect the new administration and any new appointments following the upcoming statewide office elections. Upon further discussion among the DARS Council and Policy Staff regarding the scope of work of the Council on Aging and how administration appointments are typically identified by the Governor-elect, as well as among Council members regarding the best course of action in this instance, Jay White amended his motion to request:

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1. The Council on Aging's Executive Committee convene this fall to discuss and draft correspondence to the attention of the Secretary of Health and Human Resources for new gubernatorial administration that shares information about: a) the Council on Aging's purpose; b) the Secretary's role in regard to the Council on Aging and aging-related services in Virginia; and c) aging priorities and input on ways the Secretary can support older adults and aging services as the new administration gets underway.
2. The Executive Committee present such draft correspondence to the Council on Aging for consideration and approval at the January 26, 2022 meeting.
3. In preparation for the Executive Committee's work and upcoming meeting, Council on Aging members should send suggestions for the correspondence to DARS staff directly.

Carter Harrison seconded the motion. Hearing no further discussion, Chair Soble called for the question. The motion was adopted unanimously with no abstentions.

Set 2022 Council Meeting Dates (Handout)

Charlotte Arbogast

The next Council meeting is scheduled for January 26, 2021. The remaining 2022 dates are currently scheduled for April 27, July 27, and September 28. DARS staff will survey members in advance of each meeting to determine in the date still works for obtaining a quorum. For the upcoming January 26 meeting, Charlotte Arbogast noted a longer meeting may be needed in order to cover all the following items:

- Governor's Introduced Budget
- Update on the General Assembly Session
- Reports:
 - JCHC Aging in Place
 - JCHC Nursing Facility Workforce
 - JLARC Guardianship
 - SHHR Aging Services
- Council's Executive Committee Report and Letter for Adoption

Meeting Adjournment

Beverley Soble, Chair

Mrs. Soble adjourned the meeting at 12:55 pm. The next Council meeting is scheduled for January 26, 2022.

Meeting Handouts:

- Proposed Agenda
- July 28, 2021 Draft Meeting Minutes
- General Assembly Special Session Update
- 2021 Draft Annual Report
- Best Practices Handouts: Draft Timeline, Draft Nomination Instructions, and Draft Nomination Form
- Dementia Services Presentation PowerPoint Slides
- Dementia Safety Toolkit Handout
- Regulatory Update

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- Announcements
- 2022 Tentative Meeting Dates

Members Participating Electronically:

- Billy Gorman due to home repair appointment. Location: Roanoke, VA.
- Diana Paguaga due to a medical condition/disability/caregiving obligation. Location: Woodbridge, VA.
- Tina Savla due a medical condition/disability/caregiving obligation. Location: Blacksburg, VA.
- Deborah Silverman, Ex-Officio, a medical condition/disability/caregiving obligation. Location: 436 Addie Way, Lynchburg, VA.
- Jay White due to a medical condition/disability/caregiving obligation. Location: 1304 Oak Lane, Lynchburg, VA 24503.
- Erica Wood due a medical condition/disability/caregiving obligation. Location: 2318 N Trenton Street, Arlington VA 22207.