

Tompkins County Office for the Aging

Advisory Committee Meeting

February 27, 2023

Hybrid

9:30am

Members present: Hart, Hultberg, Hatch, Beyers, Mallison, Lesser, Stamm, Shearer

Liaisons: Lynch, Burger, Jewell, Askew, Stuart, Evans, Hillson

Staff: Monroe, Bullis, Maine, Jackson, Davis, Willer (intern)

Public: Lawrence, Roe

1. Hatch called meeting to order at 9:30am. Introduced Deb Roe as new committee member from Brooktondale area.
2. Meeting minutes from January 2023 approved.
3. Public comment: Lawrence mentioned watching a presentation of the County Health Plan. Appeared plan does not include enough rural outreach. County Legislator, who was at the presentation, was asked to push for more funding so that the plan could have a high degree of success. Lawrence also mentioned a community member who was an emergency room patient and the ambulance that was available in the county was not available to take her to Sayre because then there would not be an ambulance to serve county during that time. Were going to airlift her but they were not immediately responding either. Brings up real concern about the state of emergency response in our county. Monroe commented that there has been some discussion in various groups about emergency response.
4. Member comment: none at this time.
5. COFA Update-Monroe:
 - State Association on Aging and NYSOFA testified at joint legislative meeting for human services advocating for funding; specifically Community Services for the Elderly, Home Care, Elder Abuse, LTCOP and Fair Pay for Home Care Act
 - Dir. Of Assessment provided us with information that the County is increasing the maximum/minimum income limit to receive 5-50% off taxes. Some municipalities have done this, and some have not. Those who have are Tompkins County, Town of Caroline, Dryden, Enfield, Ithaca, Lansing, Ulysses, Village of Trumansburg, and Newfield. We will be advocating for the remaining municipalities to participate.
 - Through our Age Friendly work, Dr. Mildred Warner and Xue Zhang wrote a paper on the role of county government in cross collaborations to address rural aging; recently published in the Journal of Aging and Social Policy.
 - Older Americans Month in May- NYSOFA recognition of Outstanding Volunteers will be held remotely in November. COFA will be holding an event in May so nomination requests will be going out shortly.

- Newsletters for different municipalities. Intern has reached out and collected contacts for newsletters. Hatch suggested that COFA peruse and determine what would be of interest to the committee.
- Jackson reported that Caregiver Group is every other Tuesday. Caregiver presentation by Ann Dolan on Self Care for Caregivers in March. In April, an attorney will be presenting on estate planning. Powerful Tools for Caregivers starts March 15th and runs for six Wednesdays from 2-3:30pm. Presentations and class will have zoom option.
- Lesser asked how we adjust when costs increase but funding does not. Monroe explained that depending on what program it is, direct funding is available. Can request money from County. Still have reserves from ARPA funding. Luckily, we have not had to cut back any services at this time. Have been able to provide subcontractors with more funding due to the ARPA funds. Overall, try to find creative ways to address needs.

6. Liaison Reports:

a. Burger: Lifelong-

- Working on releasing new website within next week or so; open to feedback
- Save the Date: Lifelong Annual Meeting, Thursday May 25th at Hotel Ithaca
- Halfway through tax season; going well. Dryden site has been terrific. Have now opened up appointments to any eligible taxpayers.
- Looking to hire a new Program Director

b. Lynch: FLIC-

- Working on Strategic Plan; will be hiring a few new positions soon
- Will hold a job fair this Spring
- Hatch asked about ways to get comments to State on Fair Pay for Homecare; Lynch responded that she would share a letter with Lisa to give to the group
- Lynch expressed how the raise that aides got was not included with minimum wage increase so as minimum wage increases, these aides pay will slowly come back down; advocating strongly on this

c. Evans: Foodnet-

- May 3rd; Mac n Cheese Bowl at Farmer's Market; interested in being a vendor please let her know
- In 2022, served 155,138 meals; 652 unduplicated clients were served; 691 nutrition hours were provided; drove over 94,000 miles in Tompkins County
- Hart asked if prices were looking better; Evans replied eggs are high, mayo-some things are still high, some have gone down

d. Hillson: TCWH-

- Shared the link to the Community Health Assessment and Improvement Plan; presented it at the Health Planning Council, also presenting at the Community Health and Access Committee meeting, and at a Health Equity event at GIAC on March 13th

- Have redone website with integration with Mental Health and would appreciate any feedback
 - COVID- county is still supplying masks and test kits; if need please reach out to Shannon Alvord at TC Whole Health or Geoff Dunn at the Dept. of Emergency Response
- e. Askew: StateWide-
- Budget Briefing is up on website that provides break downs of the budget
 - Teach in on autopsy and the role of the coroner; all recordings are located on their website
 - Getting back out into the community for presentations; if you have any events, please let her know
 - Action Alert out to address Medical Debt; there is a bill to address Medical Debt in NYS
- f. Jewell: Love Living at Home-
- Still have 3-month free trial membership available
 - Goal of rural outreach and they are getting out more in the rural areas
 - Discussions with Cayuga Health Partners on how they can collaborate together; grant collaboration, transportation home after same day procedure and looking at role Love Living at Home may have in helping older adults in the Cayuga Health System
- g. Stuart: VNS-
- Still see 4 or 5 active COVID patients, just wanted to comment that she doesn't think it is time to let down our guard; they are seeing that when someone does have COVID they aren't as sick
 - Seeing more patients move to Medicare Advantage Plans; more difficult because they require authorizations for many services
 - Constantly challenged with recruitment; working on orientation program
 - Collaboration with hospital on program called Choose Home; a patient who might have to go to nursing home, VNS is working to try to provide the services necessary for them to come home
 - Stuart asked about the Social Engagement brochure; Monroe explained that it came out of the LTCC to address social isolation and to highlight programs to address that

Lawrence asked if there was a place where covid statistics are still being made available. Hillson responded that they made a new dashboard that pulls directly from State and CDC resources; updates automatically as the State updates numbers. Push any additional updates on Fridays

7. Discussion: Safe Driving Resources: Cheryl Willer, Intern at COFA

- Broken up into a 4-part process: options for addressing issues of safe driving
- Least invasion would be a safe driving programs; saves on car insurance; a lot of these programs are available online
- Assessing a driver: looking at driver rehab program, dual driving assessment, gives suggestions for safer driving: can be covered under some insurances with a referral from a doctor

- Evaluation through DMV if really concerned about the ability of an individual's ability to drive
- What happens if a driver's license needs to be revoked- need support for grief and loss as it's a huge loss of independence
- Yellow Dot program: sticker goes on car alerting first responders that medical information is located in the glove compartment
- Will be continuing to research and do a deeper dive into this topic; will have a page on our website devoted to this topic

Burger mentioned to include information on resources for those in our community who don't feel like driving, what are their options for getting about.

Mallison stated that in her experience it can be a tricky thing when someone started exhibiting signs of dementia and are still driving; have worked with DMV in the past. Its not an easy thing to do but can be a life saving measure. Would also do their best to engage the family.

Hart asked about eye exams and if they are done at each renewal, which they are not. Mallison also pointed out that people in their 90's were getting their license renewed for 8 years.

8. No old business

Hart reminded people to send Lisa any subcommittees that they are interested in joining.

Lawrence commented there is a difference in Medicare Advantage plans depending on where you live.

Next meeting will be March 27, 2023

Meeting adjourned 10:50am