



# Washington State Council on Aging

Meeting Title: 2023 November Washington State Council on Aging Meeting

Date: 11/14/2023

Location: Zoom Meeting

	Members Present	Appointment			Appointment
	Jean Kindem	At-Large East	✓	Danny Stone	Association of Counties
✓	Gavin Carmichael	AAAD Southwest WA Advisory Council	✓	Susan Conniry	O3A Advisory Council
	Rep. Kelly Chambers (Dianna Hawkins, Leg. Aide)	WA House of Representatives	✓	Dennis Wheeler	Snohomish County AAA
✓	Suone Cotner	At-Large West	✓	Susan Kerr	Kitsap AAA Advisory Council
✓	Vacant (Georgiann Dustin sitting in)	NWRC Advisory Council		Arlen Washines (Melissa Howtopat)	Yakama Golden Eagle Advisory Council
✓	Deb Murphy	Central AAA		<b>Guests Present</b>	
✓	Michele Horaney	Lewis Mason Thurston AAA Advisory Council	✓	Governor & First Spouse Inslee	WA State
✓	Ron Vivion	At-Large West	✓	Walt Bowen	Senior Lobby
	Vacant (Michael Adusah sitting in)	ADS King County Advisory Council	✓	Cathy Knight	W4A
✓	Bob Scarfo	Aging & Long-Term Care Eastern Washington Advisory Council	✓	Amber Leaders, Melissa Littleton, Jim Kopriva	Office of the Governor
	Sen. Karen Keiser	WA State Senate	✓	Bea Rector, Susan Engels, Melanie McGuire, Cameron Akita	AL TSA
✓	Michele Blythe	Association of Cities	✓	Senator Muzzall	WA State Senate
✓	Stephanie Carpenter	Southeast WA Aging and Long-Term Care	✓	Cathy MacCaul	AARP
	Rep. Tarra Simmons	WA House of Representatives			
✓	Bruce Dougherty	Pierce County Aging & Disability Resources Advisory Board			
	Karen Kiessling	At-Large East			



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Topic	Key Points and/or Decisions Made
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome/Introductions</li> <li>• Review/approve November agenda</li> <li>• Review/approve September meeting minutes</li> </ul>	<p>Chairperson Michele Blythe called the meeting to order at 9:01am.</p> <p>Council members reviewed the November agenda and approved meeting minutes from September.</p> <p>Council members introduced themselves.</p>
<p>Governor Inslee</p>	<p>Chairperson Michele Blythe introduced Governor Jay Inslee to the Council.</p> <p>Governor Inslee thanked the Council for inviting him to speak. Governor Inslee shared his pride for Washington, noting that his work is not done yet. Washington has been named the second-best state for long term care (LTC), and we continue to work to be #1.</p> <p>The Governor thanked those who provide supports to families, acknowledging the <math>\frac{3}{4}</math> of a billion hours unpaid work contributed by unpaid caregivers. He shared that work is going into expanding financial and educational supports, and progress is being made incrementally.</p> <p>Governor Inslee expressed the challenges of housing in Washington state. Housing affects all age groups and demographics and is an affordability crisis as well as a homelessness crisis. There is not enough housing, and seniors are being squeezed. Last session, the Governor asked the legislature to fund over \$4B to expand affordable housing. Zoning laws have been restrictive and new laws may look at building near transit stops. Seniors should not have to decide between housing and food.</p> <p>The Governor shared that the Medicaid Waiver has been renewed which looks to expand presumptive eligibility through Apple Health.</p>



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	<p>Governor Inslee closed by conveying his pride in Washington over the COVID-19 pandemic. Washington was one of the most successful states in preventing the loss of life during the pandemic. Hard but necessary measures saved many lives. Programs to connect older adults must keep momentum and the Governor extended his optimism to the Council.</p>
<p>Legislative Update – Senator Muzzall</p>	<p>Chairperson Michele Blythe introduced Senator Ron Muzzall to the Council.</p> <p>Senator Muzzall thanked the Council for the opportunity to address everyone. He discussed his background as not in politics but coming from a farming background and serving for 11 years as a fire commissioner. After serving on various committees, problem solving is accomplished through dialogue and compromise.</p> <p>Senator Muzzall considered our legacies are how we treat our children and elderly. In terms of long-term care programs, costs have continued to rise for many reasons. Labor is an issue from minimum wage increasing to a lack of available workers. The state has made home care more available. Many adults will have to move to a LTC facility at some point, and many facilities have shut down over the past 5 years. Washington's Medicaid program falls behind many other states.</p> <p>Senator Muzzall discussed how LTC facilities struggle to afford taking Medicaid patients as it affects their profitability. The Rate Setting Board had assessed, and the legislature will look at how to change this during the next session.</p> <p>Bob Scarfo thanked Senator Muzzall for mentioning both ends of the age spectrum. Project-based learning across children and the elderly provides mutual benefits.</p> <p>Senator Muzzall discussed the multigenerational approach that farm life brings and how important this intergenerational transfer of information is today.</p> <p>Council Members and Senator Muzzall discussed several topics, including the need to increase training opportunities for nursing, improving the career trajectory for nursing, exploring the critical infrastructure of senior centers, the impact of testing center locations on direct care workforce shortages, exploring</p>



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	<p>funding issues as they apply to senior meal sites/senior centers, and the challenges of accessing healthcare as a Medicare beneficiary.</p>
SCOA Bylaws Discussion	<p>SCOA Secretary, Bruce Dougherty reviewed the <a href="#">Council Bylaws</a>, section by section.</p> <p>Ron Vivion volunteered his efforts to help revise the Bylaws, as he was around during the previous revision.</p> <p>Danny Stone noted potential scheduling conflicts with the regular schedule of meetings falling on Tuesdays.</p> <p>Council moved and approved the assembly of a Bylaws Committee. Bruce Dougherty, Ron Vivion, Susan Kerr, and Dennis Wheeler volunteered to participate, as well as Michele Horaney with occasional participation.</p>
Committee Discussion	<p><b>Legislative Priorities</b></p> <p>Ron Vivion reviewed the priority issues as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Support W4A request for funds to reduce caseloads to 55:1 for case managers</li><li>2. Support funding for nutrition programs</li><li>3. Senior Center support</li><li>4. Ongoing issues to support: AL TSA Request Legislation, the work of the JLEC, the work of the DAC and rollout of WA State Plan to Address AD, mitigating the negative aspects of social isolation</li></ol> <p>Council discussed potentially adding transportation and housing as priority issues.</p> <p>Susan Engels discussed one of AL TSA's requests which provides funding to support about 750 clients that do not have an open authorization for personal care. Funding would be passed on to AAAs to support these clients.</p> <p>Council motioned to approve the Priorities, which was seconded. The Priorities were tabled by the Legislative Committee to discuss in greater detail at another meeting.</p>



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Break	
Partner Updates	<p><b>Walt Bowen, Senior Lobby</b> Walt shared that the Senior Lobby is preparing for the 2024 Legislative Session. The short 60-day session begins January 8<sup>th</sup>. The next Senior Lobby meeting is November 20<sup>th</sup>. This will help celebrate family caregivers, discuss other member organizations work, and potentially discuss SCOAs priority issues.</p> <p>Walt shared that during the last election, the group with the highest voting rate was 60 and older. The age group 18-24 was the lowest voting rate.</p> <p><b>Cathy MacCaul, AARP</b> Cathy MacCaul noted that committee days is approaching for legislators. Cathy also shared AARP's 2024 legislative priorities, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Housing – transit-oriented development, rent subsidies for vulnerable populations, funding for workgroup on Housing Plus Services</li><li>• Ground Ambulances – federal law prevents all balance billing except for ground ambulances</li><li>• <a href="#">HB 1859</a> – extend the rights of residents of nursing homes to residents in veterans' homes, assisted living facilities, enhanced services facilities, and adult family homes.</li><li>• DSHS Request Legislation and Budget – Adult Day Services funding, prevent spousal impoverishment funding, technical change for an acuity sources to determine nursing home rate setting, add parents-in-law and children-in-law to definition of family members paid by Medicaid</li><li>• SNAP Funding</li><li>• WA Cares – portability, supplemental plans</li></ul> <p>Cathy MacCaul also shared that AARP tried to get representative on the Governor's task force looking at complex/difficult to discharge clients, WA State was selected into a cohort for the Multi-Sector Plan on Aging, which would need a governor's executive order.</p> <p><b>Cathy Knight, W4A State Director</b></p>



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	<p>Cathy Knight expressed her appreciation for the partnership with these groups, which is working on the Multi-Sector Planning and Aging Summit work.</p> <p>W4A legislative priorities (included under 2024 Legislative Session here: <a href="https://www.agingwashington.org">Advocacy (agingwashington.org)</a>) include reducing caseloads for case managers as well as an ask for Senior Nutrition funding.</p>
ALTSA Update	<p><b>Bea Rector, Assistant Secretary ALTSA</b></p> <p>Bea clarified a discussion point from Senator Muzzall’s discussion earlier in the meeting pertaining to nursing home beds lost. Since 2016, 7 or 8 skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) converted to assisted living (ALFs). Some of bed loss was due to changing the bed designation type because of a changing client population the facility chose to serve, as well as different regulations in ALF vs. SNFs. SNFs are Medicare certified and more of a medical facility. ALFs are more of a long-term care facility and don’t provide physician nor 24/7 nursing care.</p> <p>Supporting existing beds with a workforce is a greater issue. Statewide occupancy at SNFs is closer to 70% down from 80-90% pre-COVID. This is slowly increasing as recruitment and retention slowly improves, but there is still a staffing struggle.</p> <p>Relating to HB 1859, which Cathy MacCaul covered (Ombuds bill). This is a very complicated bill written to provide rights afforded in SNF which ask to extend to all LTC settings. WA state does have strong residential rights for residential settings with many unique differences. SNFs are Medicare certified facilities, not the same as other residential settings. Originally the right to appeal a discharge was the primary issue discussed with LTCO, which there is agreement on, but there is disagreement on the right vehicle for 1859 and how broad this should be during a short leg session. There may be a misunderstanding that residential clients don’t have rights when they in fact do. It will be discussed if there are some improvements needed.</p> <p>Revision to the minimum wage act – Family caregivers are a giant component to our workforce. Around 80% are family members. Individual providers were transitioned to CDWA in 2022. There is a need to adjust subregulatory guidance to wages that affect paid family caregivers. <a href="#">DOL – 79F</a>, recognition that large number of caregivers are family members. In situations where client is co-employer, it is very difficult to send employee home especially if they are family members. 79F allows definition as hours of</p>



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	<p>payment in a plan of care. If caregivers do similar things for care recipient that are not in the plan of care, these are non-compensable. This must be recognized in state law to be able to sustain family caregiver workforce, shouldn't be disciplined for doing things that are outside plan of care.</p> <p>The payment methodology in SNFs is changing from RUG to PDPM, and statutes need to be changed to reflect this new system.</p>		
<p>Council Discussion / New Business / Public Comment</p>	<p>Ron Vivion suggested committees do work off-cycle from the regular meetings, especially during the legislative session. Council discussed this idea with general support.</p> <p>Council discussed having more concise updates from speakers to allow for more Council discussion.</p> <p>The next scheduled meeting is Tuesday January 23<sup>rd</sup>.</p>		
<b>ACTION ITEMS</b>		<b>Assignee</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Finish and send Legislative priorities		Leg Committee/Cameron	Before Jan. mtg.
Set up off-cycle committee meetings		Committee Chairs/Cameron	ASAP