



Washington State Council on Aging

Meeting Title: 2024 March Washington State Council on Aging Meeting

Date: 04/23/2024

Location: Zoom

	Members Present	Appointment		Members Present	Appointment
✓	Jean Kindem	At-Large East		Vacant	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	NWRC Advisory Council		Vacant (Melissa Howtopat)	Yakama Golden Eagle Advisory Council
✓	Deb Murphy	Central AAA		Guests Present	
✓	Michele Horaney	Lewis Mason Thurston AAA Advisory Council	✓	Cathy Knight	W4A
✓	Ron Vivion	At-Large West	✓	Walt Bowen	Senior Lobby
✓	Vacant (Dolores Wiens sitting in)	ADS King County Advisory Council	✓	Georgiann Dustin	Guest, NWRC AC
✓	Bob Scarfo	Aging & Long-Term Care Eastern Washington Advisory Council	✓	Bea Rector	ALTSA
✓	Sen. Karen Keiser (Emma Hellthaler, Leg. Aide)	WA State Senate	✓	Melanie McGuire	ALTSA
✓	Michele Blythe	Association of Cities	✓	Cameron Akita	ALTSA
✓	Stephanie Carpenter	Southeast WA Aging and Long-Term Care	✓	Mary-Anne Grafton	WA Assoc. of Senior Centers
	Rep. Tarra Simmons	WA House of Representatives			
✓	Bruce Dougherty	Pierce County Aging & Disability Resources Advisory Board			
	Karen Kiessling	At-Large East			



Washington State Council on Aging

Topic	Key Points and/or Decisions Made
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome/Introductions• Review/Approve Minutes and Agenda	<p>Chairperson Michele Blythe called the meeting to order at 9:00am.</p> <p>Council approved the meeting agenda and March meeting minutes.</p>
Senator Karen Keiser	<p>Suone Cotner introduced Senator Karen Keiser, who has been serving the 33rd district since 1995. She has been re-elected six times and has been a pivotal leader of healthcare reform. She was the former chair of the health and long-term care committee and the lead negotiator of the capitol budget.</p> <p>Senator Keiser provided an update on the short 2024 legislative session. She is adamantly opposed to Initiative-2124, which is an attempt to bankrupt the WA Cares program. WA Cares is a social insurance program that would not work without universal participation. WA Cares benefits do not have daily limits for eligible Washingtonians, premiums are in statute and cannot be raised without legislative action. This benefit now has portability, as well.</p> <p>Senate Bill 5825 passed, regarding guardianship and conservatorship, which provides \$2M for a pilot program. This will provide guardianship support to cover clients needing to enter back into the community.</p> <p>Regarding senior hunger – significant funding (\$12M) was added to support AAAs in providing senior nutrition services. They faced a loss of 39% funding, and this was a big lift from a supplemental budget.</p> <p>The JLEC has continued to support the work of the Dementia Action Collaborative (DAC), renewing its State Plan to Address Alzheimer’s Disease and Other Dementias. State funding (\$1.3M) and Medicaid funding (\$2.7M) were added to support dementia care. This will also support collaborative work across agencies, including expansion of the Dementia Friends Program.</p> <p>Senator Keiser thanked SCOA members for their work to support senior centers across the state.</p>



Washington State Council on Aging

	<p>Members expressed gratitude for Senator Keiser’s service, noting her book as an insightful look at the state legislature, and by asking about the most important accomplishment during the last decade. Sen. Keiser shared that the full implementation of the Affordable Care Act, reducing those uninsured from 16%-5% as the greatest accomplishment. Also, the State Family/Medical Leave program has been very helpful, as will the WA Cares program when it is fully implemented in 2026.</p>
DAC Update	<p>Georgiann Dustin reported on the Dementia Action Collaborative (DAC), sharing information on its 3 committees: the public awareness and readiness committee, the long-term services and supports subcommittee, and the health/medical subcommittee. She highlighted the progress made in changing the perception of seniors, emphasizing that age should not define an individual.</p> <p>Georgiann also reported on the first meeting of the Consumer Directed Employer (CDE) Rate Setting Board, which aims to evaluate and propose rates for home care agencies. This 14-person board consists of 4 voting members, 9 non-voting advisory members, and 1 chair. The board meets 2-3 times per month until June, and recommendations must be ready by September. Recommendations will go into the 2025 budget planning.</p>
Aging Summit and Built Environment Discussion	<p>Dennis Wheeler introduced Bob Scarfo and his work surrounding dementia and the built environment. Bob has worked as a landscape architect for 39 years, has a PhD in Landscape Architecture, is working on a memory garden, and is an author, educator, and activist.</p> <p>Bob shared about his involvement with the Aging and Longevity Summit planning committee and the agenda for the upcoming event. He also emphasized the importance of the built environment and his role as the only landscape architect in the group. The Aging Summit will include an introduction by the Governor and his wife, and will highlight advancements, programs, and how things have changed in the last decade. There are plans for a follow up to the summit after the election, which will be more action oriented. Bob will also try to promote having a 3rd meeting.</p> <p>Bob discussed innovative programs at the University of Sterling Scotland with their focus on designing dementia-friendly living spaces. Bob shared about the benefits of memory gardens for individuals with dementia as well as their caregivers. Current work is going into developing a ¼ - ½ acre garden in Spokane, coordinating with the Parks and Recreation Department.</p>



Washington State Council on Aging

	<p>Dennis asked whether a garden at Sacred Heart was considered a memory garden. Bob noted that it didn't meet the criteria as it didn't have a closing feature.</p> <p>Michele Blythe noted that many memory care facilities are being built and asked if smaller memory gardens were included in these spaces. Bob noted that many privately owned spaces are working on this, but they lack public accessibility.</p> <p>Susan Conniry added that a discussion is planned with the City of Ocean Shores to talk about their parks and planning. She plans to include memory gardens into this discussion.</p> <p>Ron Vivion offered that many caregivers don't consider time for respite, and asked if there were any university architecture programs that set up a student base to support this work. Bob noted that there are programs, such as the University of Idaho that once had a specialty program on aging.</p> <p>Suone Cotner suggested that in addition to the legislative priorities, the Council consider developing a community priorities document.</p> <p>Cathy Knight reviewed a list of topics planned to discuss at the Aging Summit, including priorities from the 2013 Aging Summit, wages, WA Cares, WA Saves (a retirement savings plan spearheaded by AARP's efforts), housing, the JLEC, addressing pre-Medicaid populations, the DAC, Age and Dementia Friendly work, and asked if members had any other topics to share. Ron added that WA State is different from others because it prioritizes home & community-based services (HCBS), which improves the quality of life for people at a cost savings.</p>
Break	
Partner Updates	<p>Cathy Knight, W4A State Director</p> <p>Cathy discussed the work going into discharging difficult to place individuals. AAAs received state funding for care transitions programs which aims to connect these individuals to resources/placement and cut down on hospital readmissions.</p>



Washington State Council on Aging

	<p>Presumptive eligibility work aims to get people onto HCBS earlier, similar to how it works in nursing facilities. This will tie into care transition work, too.</p> <p>Cathy also noted that work is going into nutrition programming, caseload reduction, Dementia Friends programming, paid caregivers, and WA Cares Fund implementation at AAAs (which will need additional staff support).</p> <p>Walt Bowen, Senior Lobby</p> <p>Walt discussed the process of filing for public office as many longstanding representatives and elected officials are leaving office. This includes the WA State Insurance Commissioner, State Supreme Court, and others.</p> <p>Other issues being watched include the WA Cares Fund, and Medicaid, which covers about 7% of seniors.</p>
Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program Update	<p>Cameron Akita detailed the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, which provides an \$80 benefit card to lower-income older adults for fresh produce, honey, and herbs between June and October.</p> <p>The program, funded by various sources including the USDA and state funds, serves a growing number of participants across the 13 AAAs in Washington. Council members asked about the number of growers accepting benefits, which was brought up as an issue during the 2023 season. During 2023, electronic benefits were rolled out for the first time. In the 2024 season ahead, the program is looking to add resources to support growers and program participants to improve their experience.</p>
Legislative/Outreach/Advocacy Committee Discussion	<p>Council members discussed Older Americans Month (May). The Governor published a proclamation for the month, which is themed “Powered by Connection”.</p> <p>Stephanie Carpenter noted that she is working with local newspapers and the county council to acknowledge Older Americans Month. She is also focusing on how to prevent social isolation.</p> <p>Susan Conniry shared about speaking locally to get buy in from the Ocean Shores City Council in recognizing Older Americans Month. She emphasized the importance of providing data to get attention and action, citing the statistic that all baby boomers will be 65 or older by 2030.</p>



Washington State Council on Aging

	<p>Michele Horaney reflected on her experience in public relations, urging the council to assess goals and effective outreach. She expressed uncertainty about the council's goals and outreach strategies.</p> <p>Michele Blythe noted the positive impacts of the former members' outreach, and Ron advised members affiliated with local AAAs to highlight the Governor's proclamation.</p> <p>Ron added the topic of Ageism, encouraging members to read an article Walt had shared on this topic.</p> <p>Action item – resend Governor's Proclamation to the group.</p>
ALTSA Update	<p>Bea Rector addressed questions that Bruce had shared regarding the Aging Summit. Press has been invited to the event, with TVW recording presentations. Topics will include talks from subject matter experts and leaders on Reframing Aging, discussions on demographic changes, and how people can live longer and healthier lives as they age. DSHS cabinet staff will also be in attendance. The Aging and Longevity Summit is a beginning to kickoff support for a Multi-Sector Plan on Aging. ALTSA will seek legislative support for this work moving forward in the 2025 session.</p> <p>Final Rules – Bea discussed the several Federal Final Rules that had recently been released. This includes rules for staffing skilled nursing facilities, and several other rules that ALTSA will be assessing which significantly impact LTSS. Access rules for Medicaid have up to a 6-year implantation timeline. Other rules cover eligibility, Adult Family Homes, and the Older Americans Act. Bea discussed the potential to develop a summary document of these rule changes.</p> <p>General Updates – Bea discussed potential agency request legislation, which is still early on in its development. More stakeholdering will take place in the summer months for this work. ALTSA has until the end of May to work on budget requests, which will then be forwarded to the Secretary of DSHS.</p> <p>Priorities include capacity building, implementing new federal rules, working on provider rates, and regulatory oversight. In the Adult Protective Services Division of ALTSA (APS), ALTSA is thinking of a different approach to assist those with allegations of self-neglect. This approach would involve a budget request. Discussions on this topic have been ongoing for years with the community and W4A.</p>



Washington State Council on Aging

Workforce issues affect both AL TSA and the direct care workers. HCS is working to improve recruitment and retention of aides. Workforce development may be a good topic for future discussion. AL TSA is working on a second report to the legislature on workforce development. A Direct Care Workforce Summit is scheduled for July 9th in SeaTac, and SCOA members are welcome to join.

Council thanked Bea for her time and adjourned at 11:55am.

ACTION ITEMS	Assignee	Due Date
Send Governor's OAM Proclamation to Council	Cameron	ASAP