



Washington State Council on Aging

Meeting Title: 2024 June Washington State Council on Aging Meeting

Date: 06/25/2024

Location: Zoom

	Members Present	Appointment		Members Present	Appointment
✓	Jean Kindem	At-Large East		Vacant	Association of Counties
	Gavin Carmichael	AAADSW 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, Michael Adusah sitting in)	ADS King County Advisory Council	✓	Cathy MacCaul	AARP
✓	Bob Scarfo	Aging & Long-Term Care Eastern Washington Advisory Council	✓	Mary-Anne Grafton	WA Assoc. of Senior Centers
✓	Sen. Karen Keiser (Emma Hellthaler, Leg. Aide)	WA State Senate	✓	Leslie Emerick	WSHPCO
✓	Michele Blythe	Association of Cities	✓	Jacqueline Cobbs	ALTSA
✓	Stephanie Carpenter	Southeast WA Aging and Long-Term Care	✓	Susan Engels	ALTSA
	Rep. Tarra Simmons	WA House of Representatives	✓	Melanie McGuire	ALTSA
✓	Bruce Dougherty	Pierce County Aging & Disability Resources Advisory Board	✓	Cameron Akita	ALTSA
✓	Karen Kiessling	At-Large East			



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Topic	Key Points and/or Decisions Made
<p>Welcome/Introductions Review/Approve Minutes and Agenda</p>	<p>Chairperson Michele Blythe called the meeting to order at 9:01am.</p> <p>Council passed a motion to approve the agenda.</p>
<p>WA State Hospice & Palliative Care Organization (WSHPCO)</p>	<p>Leslie Emerick, Director of Washington State Public Policy & Outreach for the WSHPCO provided an overview and presentation on current hospice & palliative care issues.</p> <p>Chronic Disease in America</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Healthcare Costs: \$4.1 trillion. • Impact: Leading causes of death and disability. <p>Palliative Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost Savings: Palliative care can save money; 5% of seriously ill patients account for approximately 50% of healthcare spending. • Team-based care involving doctors, nurses, social workers, and others. • Focus on improving quality of care and reducing costs by managing physical and emotional symptoms, skilled communication, and coordinating care plans. • Not to be confused with hospice care, which is for patients with a 6-month prognosis. • Care is often home-based and includes telemedicine. • Reduced total spending by \$7,254 per patient. • Challenges: Lack of standardized billing. <p>Initiatives and Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Health (DOH) Office of Rural Health: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assists rural healthcare systems in integrating palliative care across multiple settings. ○ Led by Dr. Vander Keef, Olympia, Director of Rural Palliative Care Initiative. ○ Works with providers in remote areas to address healthcare needs and create sustainable funding for palliative care. • Palliative Care Roadmap: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Available through DOH. ○ Used by providers, patients, and those with serious illnesses.



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Funding and Legislation

- 2022 Budget Proviso:
 - Funded Palliative Care Benefit at Health Care Authority (HCA) for Medicaid, Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB), and School Employees Benefits Board (SEBB).
- Private Insurers:
 - Efforts to include private insurers in palliative care benefits.
 - Regence and Kaiser Permanente (KP) offer palliative care benefits, but they are not standardized.
- SSB 5936:
 - Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) is the lead agency on this bill.
 - Signed on June 6, 2024.
 - Includes actuarial analysis, no state general funds.
 - Coordination with HCA to design a palliative care benefit for Medicaid, PEBB, and SEBB.
 - Palliative Care Benefit Workgroup to consider clinical eligibility criteria, services, staffing, evaluation criteria, and payment models.
 - OIC is ensuring transparency and public participation.

Questions?

Dennis Wheeler asked how palliative care is triggered. Leslie shared that typically, healthcare providers trigger the response when a patient is diagnosed with a serious illness. Patients should ask their healthcare team about this service if it isn't triggered. Tracking is difficult without a standardized billing method. Billing codes are fragmented and depend on the providers and insurers.

Suone Cotner noted that in experiences with elderly relatives, social workers at hospitals guide patients to services and wondered if WSHPCO works with social workers? Leslie noted that social workers are a part of the palliative care team, as well as physicians, RNs/ARNPs. Many are palliative care specialists.



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	<p>Stephanie Carpenter shared that Columbia County Health System successfully implemented palliative care in the county, working closely with Dr. Vander Keef and Pat Justice. Leslie applauded their work as a model for others.</p> <p>Bruce Dougherty asked about what happened to Providence, who used to be at the forefront of palliative care. Leslie shared that palliative care is no longer included due to budget cuts. The workgroup aims to define what fits into this palliative care benefit.</p> <p>Leslie closed by sharing how this work is moving forward:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Funding from 2022 to work with the HCA to commission a report. This is currently missing actuarial analysis.2. Worked on a bill after meeting with State Senators this year, which moved to a workgroup to inform the legislature. The hope is that HCA can move forward after their report is completed for a palliative care benefit. <p>Michele Blythe thanked Leslie for sharing her information and presentation.</p>
Senior Center Discussion	<p>Ron Vivion, Chair of the Legislative Outreach and Advocacy Committee proposed to the Council to take a position statement on the status of senior centers in WA State which would highlight centers as critical infrastructure. Ron made a motion to send a letter to leadership on the status of senior centers—this motion was seconded.</p> <p>Council discussed considerations and information to be included in the advisory letter. Ron noted that senior centers are often ignored and access/transportation to these sites is a challenge.</p> <p>Dennis Wheeler emphasized the importance of senior centers that support social programs like the SFMNP and SHIBA, and stressed the need for the state to recognize their importance.</p> <p>Cathy MacCaul highlighted their pivotal role to connect individuals and support meal programs. There is often a lack of a formal organizational body to run programs holistically. She mentioned Senior Hubs in King County as a model, which are supported by Veteran’s Senior Services.</p>



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	<p>Susan Conniry shared about funding issues faced by Ocean Shores Senior Center due to its non-traditional nature. She emphasized local needs for more food rather than entertainment and mentioned important initiatives like memory cafes and craft fairs.</p> <p>Jean Kindem expressed the underutilization of Adult Day in Spokane as an issue, and the need for more people to use Providence Adult Day Health.</p> <p>Susan Engels, Office Chief of the ALTA's State Unit on Aging thanked the Council for their input and provided a brief overview of future plans. One area ALTA is working on is to develop a Multi-Sector Plan on Aging, which SCOA could help shape. This is a high priority issue, and historically senior centers have been locally supported, through city, county, or community/grassroots organizations. Some of this work may involve a survey to support issues that need to be addressed in the MPA.</p> <p>Mary-Anne Grafton, Chair of the Washington State Association of Senior Centers (WSASC) shared her excitement for this conversation, and emphasized the importance of these institutions that offer a source of community for older/retired adults.</p> <p>Bruce Dougherty had seconded the motion to write a letter and suggested a vote. Council passed the motion to write an advisory letter on senior centers.</p>
Legislative Update	<p>Michele Blythe introduced Representative Kelly Chambers to the Council. Rep. Chambers represents the 25th Legislative District and is ranking Republican member of the House Regulated Substances and Gaming Committee, assistant ranking member of the House Appropriations Committee (which covers operating budget, fiscal issues, pension policy, compensation) and, member of the House Innovation, Community and Economic Development, and Veterans Committee.</p> <p>Rep. Chambers shared about her background in long-term care, having been an owner of a home care agency for the past 25 years. In college, she worked at a community center helping to organize senior dances, and later met her husband at a hospice conference. As a small business owner, active in chambers of commerce and involved with Pierce County home care providers community, her work surrounds serving seniors.</p>



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	<p>Rep. Chambers discussed her role in the Veteran's Honor Flight Program. This program provides trips for WWII and Vietnam War veterans to Washington DC to visit memorial sites.</p> <p>She sees many opportunities to help address senior concerns through this Council, and shares goals of serving the senior community. Her work also looks at how to leverage additional benefits for the veteran community.</p> <p>Rep. Chambers also touched on opportunities to work with AAAs, connecting services through senior centers, and improving teaching around dementia care. She concluded by sharing more information on Honor Flights and shared her openness to hearing legislative priorities.</p>
Break	
Excellence in Action Committee	<p>Bruce Dougherty, Chair of the Excellence in Action Committee, provided a brief overview of the purpose of these awards. Walt Bowen added information on the process for recognizing these individuals/organizations, which is done at the Fall Conference. Cameron will send out the flyers and information to AAAs to follow this meeting.</p>
Partner Updates	<p>Cathy Knight, W4A State Director</p> <p>Cathy expressed appreciation for the meetings and encouraged SCOA members to help in identifying EIA (Excellence in Action) awardees. She noted that AAAs can be shy to highlight their work, but Advisory Council members can help highlighting these recipients.</p> <p>Cathy praised Leslie Emerick's presentation and mentioned a roadmap for in-home services is being developed by the Department of Health (DOH). This will be a great tool for AAAs and hopes there will be drafts for SCOA's review.</p> <p>The Care Transitions Program and the importance of timing presentations with future legislative requests is key. This program operates at cost savings by avoiding rehospitalizations.</p> <p>Cathy shared about the Fall Conference, noting the need for planning and possibly meeting before September to discuss. She highlighted the importance of OAA reauthorization and the collaboration between AAAs and SCOA. SCOA's role of commenting on federal legislation, particularly the OAA is important.</p>



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Cathy raised the question of where funding for Senior Centers would come from, and the need to have a discussion about the variety of plans for this work.

Cathy plans to share W4A legislative priorities, which might differ from SCOA's which should connect with DSHS. She encouraged those on AAA Advisory Councils to bring these topics back to their councils and stressed the importance of continuing the conversation regarding Senior Centers.

Walt Bowen, Senior Lobby

Walt provided an update on what's ahead over the next 6 months.

Upcoming Elections: significant with the Governor, Attorney General, Insurance Commissioner, Compliance Commissioner, and 27 legislative seats open for election. Three statewide initiatives will impact everyone.

Primary ballots in July (August primary), including Supreme Court justices. Final votes in the November election. Many will have voted by the Fall Conference, making it a good time to contact candidates before the November election.

Social Security: Walt emphasized the importance of Social Security, with 1.4 million recipients in Washington. It is critical to maintain Social Security for individuals in the state.

Climate Change: a major threat to seniors, with impacts like floods, heat waves, and fires. The Department of Health (DOH) is preparing healthy responses to climate events.

Walt also noted the construction of a new House Building in Olympia. Also, the average age of millionaires has increased from 57 to 61 nationally.

Cathy MacCaul, AARP

Cathy shared that the 6th Congressional District would be holding a forum on Friday, June 28 at 5:30 pm at the Key Peninsula Civic Center. It will be broadcasted live on AARP Washington's YouTube and Facebook page. Candidates will need to be informed on issues impacting older adults, especially since



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	<p>Rep. Kilmer is not running for reelection. This would focus on Social Security and support for family caregivers.</p> <p>WA Cares Campaign: AARP is actively involved. This will have a significant impact of the 50+ voter demographic on the “No on I-2124” campaign. A launch event is set for July 15th at Harborview Park and features national speakers on caregiving, highlighting Washington as a model.</p> <p>Medicare Advantage: Congresswoman DelBene is addressing support for those experiencing delays.</p>
AL TSA Update	<p>Jacqueline Cobbs, Deputy Director of HQ Operations at HCS</p> <p>AL TSA Legislative Priorities/Budget Requests: awaiting feedback on AL TSA legislative priorities and budget, expected in the first week of July. Focus areas include the Multi-sector Plan on Aging, senior nutrition, and case management support.</p> <p>Access Rules and OAA Final Rule: Jacq discussed who is managing the Access Rules, OAA (Older Americans Act) Final Rule, APS (Adult Protective Services), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. A project manager is currently reviewing the Access Rules. AL TSA is also receiving project management support for all these final rules. Access Rules will work towards improving website accessibility and considering system changes to enhance access for older adults and individuals with disabilities.</p>
LTC Workforce Summit	<p>(This agenda item was moved up to follow introductions).</p> <p>Michele Blythe provided information for the upcoming Long-Term Care Summit. The daylong, in-person event is scheduled for July 9th and will be held at Cedarbrook Lodge in SeaTac. Bob Scarfo requested information or a public webpage to be shared, if available. Suone Cotner and Bob Scarfo shared interest in attending.</p>
Programs Reviewed by SCOA	<p>Cameron Akita, Program Manager in the State Unit on Aging, provided a brief review of programs reviewed during past SCOA meetings. This included reviewing Older Americans Act programming and State Plans over several meetings, Public Health Emergency updates, and state Medicaid Waivers programs under COPES and Residential Supports.</p>



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Nominating Committee	<p>Dennis Wheeler, Chair of the Nominating Committee presented the slate of nominees to the Council as follows: Chair – Michele Blythe; Vice-Chair – Bruce Dougherty; Secretary – Suone Cotner.</p> <p>Ron Vivion suggested to formally open nominations ahead of the Council's vote in September.</p>		
New Business/Public Comment	Council adjourned the meeting at 11:29am.		
ACTION ITEMS		Assignee	Due Date
Develop advisory letter and set up series of committee meetings over summer	Ron Vivion/Cameron Akita	ASAP	
Open nominations	Council members	Sep. meeting	