

NH State Commission on Aging

Monday, September 16, 2024

10am to 12:00pm

NH Hospital Association, 125 Airport Road, Concord, NH

Attendance

Present in person: **Members:** Laurie Duff - Vice Chair, Roxie Severance – Clerk, Wendi Aultman, (DHHS), Susan Buxton (OLTCO), Brandy Cassada (Dept. of Safety), Danielle Albert (DOL), Polly Champion (Grafton), Sunny Mulligan Shea (NH Attorney General), Carissa Elphick (Belknap), Beverly Bjorklund, (Sullivan), Joanne Ward (Rockingham), Doug McNutt (Merrimack), Shelly Winters (DOT), Beth Quarm Todgham (Hillsborough). **Guests:** Heather Smith (DMVA), Judith Jones (New Futures),

Staff: Rebecca Sky, Executive Director, Karen Knowles, Project Director, Dan Wise, Communications & Community Engagement Director.

Online: **Members:** Margaret Franckhauser (Belknap) (travel conflicts), **Guests:** Martha McLeod, (New Futures), Nick Toumpas, Carole Boutin (NH Action Coalition), Rosemary Simino, Monique D, Teri Palmer (Mobility Manager), Madeline Ullrich (NH Care Collaborative), Allison Lamontagne (Senator Maggie Hassan's office).

Absent: Representative James Mackay, Senator Bill Gannon, Rep Charles McMahon, David Ross, (Hillsborough), Jack Ruderman (NHHFA), Daniel Marcek (Hillsborough), and Susan Ruka (Carroll), Richard Lavers, (DES), Rep. Lucy McVitty Weber (Cheshire).

Welcome

Laurie Duff, Vice Chair, opened the meeting, in the absence of Sue Ruka, Chair

Dan Wise was introduced as the new COA Communications Director. He will be working on the annual report, monthly newsletter, website, and social media. His background includes working as a journalist for a daily newspaper, Editor of NH Magazine, Communications Director for NH Bar Association, Blog Writer - Dan is a self-described recovering journalist. In 2019 he became a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant working in schools and nursing homes. He currently anchors a Concord Community TV show focused on Aging sponsored by AARP. Dan has also served on the AARP Capital Area Task Force. All welcomed Dan to the COA.

Approval of Minutes

Laurie Duff reminded those calling in remotely to please state the reason they were calling in remotely.

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Sue Buxton; seconded by Carissa Elphick. Roxie Severance, clerk called a roll call vote, Shelley Winters, DOT, Doug McNutt abstained. All other members present voted in the affirmative.

Operational Infrastructure Task Force Updates

- Nominations for new commission members have been submitted to the Governor’s office for approval. They include:
 - Laurie Harding,
 - Nick Toumpas, and
 - Kris Herring

Once appointed, member will be introduced at an upcoming meeting. (New State Agency Reps too!)

- Rebecca Sky reported that the COA budget was submitted just this week for the agency phase of budget development. The budget, like all agency budgets this round, is very, very tight.

COA Annual Report Work Session

Laurie Duff turned the meeting over to Rebecca Sky. Rebecca shared in advance of the meeting a first draft of the COA 2024 Annual Report. Rebecca indicated this was an opportunity for commission members to shape the report. The purpose and ways the annual report is used:

- Copies are sent to the Governor, Legislators, and other State Leaders per statute requirement.
- Communication tool for other external audiences
- Because the Commission votes to approve the report, in effect agreeing with its content, the Commission Policy Team uses the content and intent in its guidance provided during the legislative session and in communications with state agencies.

Annual Report Development Timeline:

- September 16th COA Meeting - Work Session - Significant Edits
- October 21st COA Meeting – Vote to Approve Report (with minor edits)
- November 1st Report Disseminated:
 - Governor
 - Statute Identified Leaders of the Legislature
 - All Legislators
 - Agency Heads
 - Media
 - Other State Leaders as Recommended by COA Members

All members were encouraged to share their knowledge, life experiences, wisdom, and areas of expertise to make the report a collective best effort!

All agreed it was a very encompassing report.

The Commission broke out into small groups to discuss parts of the report for the work session, with the intent to report back suggestions for change. The COA as a whole would then discuss the recommended changes and agree or disagree. Work session questions were as follows:

- What suggestions do you have for changes?
- What is good (and possibly worth highlighting)?
- What is one of the most impactful things we did or learned about this past year? Your biggest “aha” moment?
- Name one or two top recommendations for the Governor/Legislature. (Possibly to be highlighted in Exec. Summary)

Report back recommendations were as follows:

Calling for a Multisector Plan for Aging - AgeWellNH Section Suggestions:

1. Each priority has section of progress over last year and, the next steps - the group liked this.
2. Reviewed demographics. The group liked the trend information, and growth in population. They recommend adding poverty levels in a snapshot.
3. Two appendices. The letter that the Governor wrote in support of the MPA, all agree to keep that in there. Also liked the capture of highlights for the case for diversifying funding for LT Services & Support from the LTC Summit.
4. It was suggested that the report address staff shortages due to COVID vaccine requirements. Other Commission members responded that data support greater staffing challenges due to people getting COVID and other causal factors.
5. Polly suggested the 2nd appendix should mention how NH ranks in the AARP LTSS Scorecard. Investment look like they are rising based on currently shared graphs, possibly leading legislators astray in thinking that the issue is resolved. There was also a suggestion if possible to make comparisons in rates paid by other states. Doug agreed that comparing Medicaid LTSS payments to HCBC compared to Nursing Facilities program would send the right message.

Advancing Age-Friendly Policies, Systems, and Environments Section Suggestions:

1. Rebecca said she wanted to add quotes on each page throughout the report to add more visual interest.
2. Also she is looking to celebrate state agencies taking positive steps to become more age-friendly, regardless of whether or not that was the intent of the agency making the changes. By lifting up simple and more complicated steps, we are showing other state agencies what’s possible. For Example:
 - a. Work State Parks are doing to make Hampton Beach more accessible,
 - b. NH DHHS Bureau of Adult & Aging Services name change with quote from Wendi,
 - c. Dept of Safety’s work to recruit older workers to fill open positions.

Goal is to at least have something from every state agency represented on the Commission.

3. This work session group got into formatting discussions:

- a. Civic and social engagement can be combined to mirror better.
- b. They recommended the legislative and programmatic changes regarding housing be combined to reduce confusion,
- c. Another semantics question, under progress page 21, use of word communication action. Is there another word you can use?
- d. Page 19, at the end of housing, needs a lead into the housing program. Suggest reorganizing. Will share more qualifiers at another time.
- e. G & C past care coordination vendor??
- f. Add finding opportunities to support care coordination as an age-friendly organization could be added.

Grow the Direct Care Workforce Work Session Group Recommendations:

1. Also looked at formatting and the structure of the report. They sought to identify one sentence in each paragraph that might be bold, making it more readable.
2. A second recommendation was made to move the last paragraph up to be the first paragraph as it states what is the most important.
3. Include a sentence about what the graph is about. (Do this for all the graphs) The idea that is that there is disjointed information.
4. Highlight more on NH Needs Caregivers. State that supports benefits for direct care workers.
5. There was discussion about the Cliff Effect and a 32-hour per week LNA who is concerned about losing Medicaid benefits. Sue suggests allowing DCW to earn more income. An analysis of a way to achieve the goal. Explore this as an option.

Systems of Care for Health Aging Work Session Group Recommendations:

1. There were suggestions of formatting changes and suggestions for condensing information.
2. Bulleted is more readable.
3. System of Care Graphic – it needs to describe the challenge people have in navigating the system. Also in SOC graphic, Caring one's home, changed to home-based care.
4. What else is missing in the SOC Graphic? Where is the individual in the care? Is there a relationship between SNF and others? Maybe the current graphic isn't the way to go. Investigate other graphic options done elsewhere to depict systems of care.
5. Impact of CFI rate increases need to be a header at the top.
6. The denseness of the SNAP program needs condensing.
7. Wendi wants to confirm the number for the CFI rate and ID legislation that is needed.

Online Group Recommendations:

1. Major conversation was around the next steps. Want to start with engaging a broad audience.
2. The state agencies section leaves out the community. Need to change language to be inclusive of all.
3. Margaret commented on page 30 graph, is missing information.

4. Another suggestion made was to highlight more the need to promote the hiring of older adults, many who experience age-discrimination. We need to collectively make sure we are utilizing people to the best of their ability and desire.

Rebecca asked each work session group note taker to share their notes with her so that she doesn't miss a recommendation. We are building off our learning. An Executive Summary has not been prepared yet. Rebecca welcomes thoughts on the executive summary. forward.

Rebecca noted that the COA members will have one more chance at the October meeting to make suggestions for change on the final document. Commission members can bring forward changes prior to the final vote. Members will receive a copy in advance of the meeting.

Once completed the report will be disseminated electronically to all parties identified in the enabling statute and by COA members to receive the report. Dan Marcek asked if the executive summary be mailed? Rebecca said the budget is too tight for that. Laurie asked if we could have it posted electronically using online magazine reader technology rather than a link to download a PDF. Rebecca said the COA does not have the technology currently. Maybe next time around.

There was a brief discussion about the LTC Summit.

Public Input: None

Adjournment: Polly Campion made a motion to adjourn at 11:58pm. Doug McNutt seconded.

Next Meeting: October 21, 2024