

**WINNEBAGO COUNTY
AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER (ADRC) COMMITTEE**

MEETING MINUTES

DATE: 03/08/2021

TIME: 3:00 p.m.

PLACE: Zoom

Members Present: Paul Janty, Michael Norton, Peter Christianson, Tanisha Alvarado, Nicole Neuhoff, Larry Lautenschlager, Elizabeth Jones, Kate Pfaendtner

Members Excused:

Staff Present: Beth Roberts, Brian Nagler, Bryn Ceman,

Others Present: Representative Gordon Hintz, Representative Lee Snodgrass, Representative Dan Feyen, Alana Erickson of Winnebago County Health Department

Paul Janty called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

1. **Public Comments:** None made. Introductions were made around the table
2. **Approve Minutes of the February 8, 2021 ADRC Committee Meeting:** minutes approved as is
3. **Legislative Discussion with Representative Lee Snodgrass, Representative Rachael Cabral-Guevara, Representative Gordon Hintz, and Senator Dan Feyen**

Representative Gordon Hintz spoke regarding his awareness of the challenges of an ever-increasing shortage of essential health care workers mostly due to lack of competitive pay. Both in the last budget and current budget there have been proposed increases and the first increase in Medicaid long-term care reimbursement made it through the last budget. The current proposal has an additional \$7 million in funding for Wisconsin ADRCs, another \$3.5 for dementia care specialists, a yet to be determined amount for increasing rates for Medicaid reimbursement for long-term care workers to support improved wages for direct workers. He stated it seems there are efforts to increase reimbursement for payment for services such as transportation, housing, the Homestead credit, BadgerCare expansion, and access to critical care services. Representative Hintz encouraged ADRCs around the state to advocate by talking about the consequences of not acting. Representative Hintz stated that one thing that he feels is going to change the dynamic, even since the Governor has introduced his budget, is tomorrow Congress is expected to pass the COVID package which significantly ups

Medicaid reimbursement. If accepted, Wisconsin stands to gain another \$1 billion in Medicaid expansion for two years. This could also help free up State tax dollars to use in other areas.

Representative Lee Snodgrass shared that she was pleased to see the substantial investment in early childhood education from the Governor's budget which should help provide an incentive for workers in the childcare field. Senator Snodgrass indicated that there is an upcoming public hearing regarding some of the challenges faced by early childhood education. She also shared that another positive is the awareness that this is a bipartisan issue and that it is likely at least some of these provisions will remain in the budget. Representative Snodgrass shared that the Governor's listening session for healthcare, mental health, and Long-Term Care is scheduled for March 25 from 6:00 to 7:30.

Senator Dan Feyen shared that he is focused on the labor shortage which is driving a lot of the wage issue. Unemployment in Winnebago and Fond du Lac Counties is currently down in the 3's which is at or below pre-pandemic levels which exacerbates the labor shortage problems. **Beth Roberts** brought up the aspect that it is hard for caregiver agencies to give workers full-time hours as often care services are only needed in short shifts and that travel time between appointments is no longer reimbursed. Senator Feyen stated that Governor Evers put about an extra \$70 million in the budget towards direct care funding (Family Care). Senator Feyen spoke about the issues of early childhood care and elderly care and that the wages associated with these positions are not attractive for workers. He assured that they are continuing to work on these issues. Senator Feyen also indicated that he feels the need for immigration reform and stated a big part of the solution is for legal immigrants to become productive members of our society who contribute to our society and also pay taxes.

Mike Norton questioned what the State could do to encourage local governments and/or builders to develop senior housing to help people stay in the community. **Senator Feyen** indicated that the biggest issues right now are finding a builder that wants to develop senior housing along with the unaffordable costs related to new construction. **Representative Hintz** spoke regarding the increase in the proposed State housing tax program budget is meant to incentivize developers to engage in that market and that communities statewide are facing this same issue. **Senator Feyen** stated that they are seeing struggles dealing with the "red tape" in zoning which also drives up the costs of new construction and the difficulty of finding affordable property that can accommodate multiple unit buildings. **Representative Lee Snodgrass** shared that budget wise there was \$50 million GPR revenue dedicated to workforce housing grant programs for 2021-2022

Paul Janty questioned whether legislators would consider whether provider disclosure needs to occur regarding number of COVID deaths and cases that occurred at their facilities. **Senator Feyen** advised that he believes the handling of COVID-related matters will be heavily analyzed in the upcoming years.

Representative Gordon Hintz asked for updates on local transportation and COVID-related outreach. **Beth Roberts** indicated that a new flashing light was installed on the intersection of 9th and Washburn in Oshkosh for increased pedestrian safety. Public Health has set aside

about 20 percent of vaccinations for those who are unable to sign up online for vaccination appointments. In addition, free rides to vaccination sites are available to the public.

Alana Erickson reported that Winnebago County Health Department is currently in the process of writing a grant through DHS that would provide additional funds that could be used to focus on removing vaccination barriers for vulnerable populations. A partnership between the City of Oshkosh, the Fox Region, and other municipalities has enabled them to provide free transports to vaccination sites to anyone in need. The Winnebago County Health Department has done a lot of work at Sunnyview and are confident that they can provide mass vaccination clinics. She expressed that there has been great collaboration within the community. A focus has also been on increasing vaccination awareness to key groups. In addition, they are working on mobile units which would provide the set aside vaccines to vulnerable individuals who have no other good outlet to the local health system. Alana also indicated they have heard some hesitancy from child care center providers so they are working with UW-Oshkosh nursing students in creating a presentation which would provide a community Q & A to bolster confidence and help child care providers realize why they are a key part of the solution.

4. 2020 Caregiver Statistics – Brian Nagler:

Brian Nagler stated that the caregiving crisis was an issue prior to COVID and expressed that it is time to rethink about how to create more awareness regarding the nobility of choosing a profession in caregiving. Brian explained the benefits of funding respite for caregivers. Brian stated that the ADRC is experiencing increasing difficulties finding seniors affordable housing and out-of-home facilities options. Brian reported on 2020 funding from the National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP) and Alzheimer's Family Caregiver Support Program (AFCSP). The goal of these two programs is to help individuals remain in their homes as long as possible by providing services to qualifying individuals including respite to informal caregivers. Of the \$64,713 AFCSP budget for 2020, all but \$498 was able to be utilized towards respite for caregivers of Alzheimer's or dementia individuals. Due to COVID-related issues, extra monies were received from the NFCSP in 2020. Of the NFSCP budget of \$141,653, all but \$1238 was able to be utilized towards congregate meals, Meals-on-Wheels, and informal caregiver respite expenditures. 124 individuals were assisted by receiving services from these programs in 2020.

Brian stated that one of the new partnerships they are working with is Mosaic Family Health who holds "Caregiver Coaches" sessions in support of individuals who are caring for loved ones. In 2020, Mosaic provided 187 caregiver coaching sessions for 22 caregivers that were caring for Winnebago County residents in their household. This was an increase as in 2018 there were 141 sessions provided and in 2019 there were 147 sessions. Brian stated that there is evidence that people are finding out about more of the ADRC's programming through means such as these support groups that are being held.

Peter Christianson shared that in the past the AFCSP funded three hours a week of respite towards his wife's care of which he felt was critical to him.

Representative Lee Snodgrass also spoke regarding the toll that caregivers experience and that many individuals are unaware of the resources available to them. Utilizing some of the funding towards building community awareness of services can create an influx of individuals utilizing those services and in turn creates a need then for an increase in funding. There is a need to prioritize funding of these services as the population is aging along with an increase of those in need of services. There is a need not only for wage increases, but also for adequate care to be available for individuals who have shift work as well as those that need care for only a couple hours a day.

Beth Roberts stated that there is a caregiver respite program in Neenah where memory loss individuals can be dropped off. There is no cost and the only requirement is filling out a one-page information sheet.

Paul Jentry asked Brian for statistics on the East of Highway 41 corridor and West of the corridor. Brian indicated he will find out and will report those statistics at the next meeting.

Tanisha Alvarado questioned whether there is a program being developed for providing training services for older adolescents and young adults who provide caregiving for their disabled parents. **Representative Lee Snodgrass** commented that she was unaware whether any funding for that type of services was in the current budget but that might be a point towards future legislation or an awareness at the very least. **Brian Nagler** stated that some of the NFCSP funding can be utilized for grandchildren providing caregiver services to grandparents in their home and agreed there is a need for future legislation of funding in the State.

5. Reports:

a. Manager Reports - Beth Roberts

Beth Roberts shared that they are still working to support COVID efforts to the extent they can including staff going out to places to assist. Winnebago County received an award for collaboration efforts with the City of Oshkosh in the installation of the flashing lights. This was a result of one of the wheelchair wash events in which citizens contacted Beth to vocalize concerns with regard to that particular intersection. **Mike Norton** questioned whether the City of Neenah has been approached to see if they would like to do the same thing on any of their roundabouts. Beth responded that due to the large expense involved, it is important to ensure that the flashing lights placement is done where the highest need exists. She stated that no one has expressed any concerns to her regarding any of the intersections in Neenah. Even though an intersection may have a lot of vehicle traffic, this does not necessarily mean that pedestrians have a need to cross that intersection.

Beth indicated that Winnebago County continues to work with the City of Oshkosh on efforts in fall prevention with plans for expansion to other communities in the County. Unfortunately, there has not been a decrease in the number of falls which could be attributed to either more people falling or perhaps some may not be taking advantage of

the services available. The program does not allow Public Health the ability to offer an in-home falls assessment; however, this is something they are working on.

Bryn Ceman shared as far as outreach efforts, with Zoom a segment of the population is being missed; however, the ability to attend more meetings has greatly increased. She shared that they have an upcoming Oshkosh Today segment. A lot of effort is being put into the website to ensure accuracy and that it remains up to date including that the Google Translate feature can be utilized in users' primary languages.

Bryn announced that Winnebago County is the seventh county in Wisconsin to have been approved into AARP's age-friendly network membership for county residents. A YouTube live and Facebook Live event is coming up on March 17 in which a 10 or 15-minute press release will be held unveiling the Age Friendly program. This is being done with hopes for community feedback from the survey and will be utilized to craft a five-year plan.

Bryn shared that the City of Oshkosh has reached out as their EAP has identified that there was a "sandwich generation" that is caring for loved ones typically children as well as older grandparents or older siblings. These individuals are experiencing difficulties in trying to meet everyone in their family's needs. The Lunch Bunch Zoom meeting will be tomorrow at noon so that services can be offered not only to the City of Oshkosh but the entirety of Winnebago County. Last year Bryn met up with the Women's Welders Union in Neenah and continues to go wherever a need is expressed.

Bryn also shared the 2022 older adult aging plan which she creates with stakeholders from Winnebago County, this allows for funding through the Older American Act. These monies go towards NFCSP and AFCSP for home-delivered meals, Wellness Plus, or evidence-based health promotions classes.

Lastly, Bryn indicated she had been in touch with the traffic engineer from the City of Oshkosh regarding the Green Bay Road exit's larger roundabout. There had been some interest, so pedestrian flags have been implemented there as well as the City is open to funding a potential beacon installation in the future.

Alana Erickson expressed that they are continuing with the fight against COVID and that any vaccine brand is good. She urged others to try to work toward access and be patient in regards to this. Over 18 percent of the Winnebago County population has been vaccinated and she believed Wisconsin is a little under 10 percent.

Alisa Richetti also reported on the two respite programs and efforts to get those back up and running and learning how to do so with COVID. Once this has been accomplished, efforts will be put into creating awareness of the availability of these services. Alisa reported in support groups she is hearing a lot from individuals who have loved ones in assisted living and nursing homes about how difficult it has been with COVID along with the caregiver shortage. These individuals are usually the ones who hold everything

together for their loved ones so it is helpful for them to have support groups available to them at this time.

6. **“Community Beat” – Sharing of Compliments / Complaints from Community, Consumers, Providers – Committee Members**

Nicole Neuhoff reported that on recommendation from Supervisor Lautenschlager, she was appointed to the Human Services committee at the last County board meeting and is happy that she will be getting even more of the bigger picture and will be able to help even more.

Mike Norton stated that with the COVID relief bill, Winnebago County will receive \$34 million. He shared his hopes that the committee will look at the needs of the Human Services Department and that plans to ask Bill Toepel and Mark Harris regarding needs that may have gone unfunded in the past. Mike's hope is that there is a creative way that people can be served with these upcoming funds. **Larry Lautenschlager** stated that per the legislative conference in Washington, these funds are earmarked and can only be used for specific things.

Beth Roberts reported that there are additional funds through the ADRC for outreach regarding vaccinations which will be used for fliers and putting information on Facebook and their webpage. If anyone has specific ideas that are bigger ticket items for outreach, contact her directly in regards to those.

Peter Christianson indicated that he had received a letter from Liz and will pass it on to the legislators. In addition, he will send it to Beth Roberts to forward copies to anyone who wants a copy.

Tanisha Alvarado reported that tomorrow the State is holding a public meeting of the Long-Term Care Advisory. There is an agenda available to show what they have been talking about with regards to the long-term care solutions that they are creating right now. If anyone is interested in that information, Tanisha has forwarded an email to Beth Roberts with the link.

7. **Next Meeting – April 12, 2021 via Zoom.**

With no further business, Paul Janty adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted: Beth Roberts