

Maryland Commission on Caregiving

February 01, 2024

10:30 AM -12:00 PM

Virtual Meeting Minutes

Commission Member Present: Larry Bram, Chalarra Sessoms, Jennifer Eastman, Kathy Wehr, Terri Johnson, Kate Farinholt, Mary Anne Kane Breschi, Theresa Robertson, Yetunde Olobatuyi, Trina Townsend, Esther Ward, Patricia Morris,

Guests: Amanda Distefano, Betty Romero, Erica Fowlkes, Erin Barry-Dutro, Greg Seseck, Joan Davitt, Kelly Charles, Liz Woodward, Mark Tesoro, Megan Peters, Peter Ansong-Manu, Shemerrian Smoot,

Welcome & Introduction: Kate Farinholt, Commission Co-chair

Review and approval of January's minutes:

Motion to approve January's meeting Minutes: Yes

Legislative Updates (Jennifer):

Jennifer provided an update on the caregiver tax credit, reporting that Dorinda Adams, a former DHS employee now volunteering with AARP Maryland, has been promoting the tax credit. The Senate Bill 202 hearing was held on January 17th. Jennifer reported that the commission submitted a letter of support for it and our chair Theresa Robertson provided an excellent oral testimony for it. Jennifer shared the hearing recording in the chat for anyone who wants to go directly to it and listen. The House Bill 32 hearing is scheduled for today at 1 pm. While the commission did not provide written testimony, commission member Patricia Morris reported that caregivers from Hands of Hope will be speaking in support of HB32 as well. Additionally, Jennifer shared that some bills from previous years are being reintroduced, and the commission's letters of support only needed minor tweaks. Dave Rodwin from the Public Justice Center also requested the commission submit legislation, including the Home Care Workers Employment Act (HB 189) and the Home Care Worker Rights Act of 2024 (HB 39). Additionally, HB 39, the Home Care Workers Rights Act of 2024, was introduced by Delegate Robin Lewis and had a hearing on January 24th. This bill aims to ensure that Medicaid only reimburses services provided by qualified employees, not contractors, in the personal care sector. While residential service agencies oppose this bill, the Department of Labor's definition of a contractor, someone who can choose their hours and set their pay rate - does not align with the current classification of contractors or employees in these agencies. This bill seeks to

establish fair wages and compensation for overtime and travel for those providing personal care in home and community-based settings.

Next week, there are two bills that are cross-files. Jennifer reported that the Senate Bill version of HB 39, which was just discussed, is scheduled for a hearing on Thursday, February 8th. The commission plans to adjust and submit a letter of support. Additionally, Senate Bill 371 is scheduled for a hearing on Tuesday, February 6th, and MCC will submit a letter of support. This bill is similar to the one requiring the Department of Labor to report on wages for personal care workers, with a few additional enhancements.

Mary Kane inquired about whether individuals receiving Community Pathways family support community waiver services through the Developmental Disability Administration (DDA) have the option to self-direct their services and hire their own employees. Jennifer clarified that this applies only to residential State service agencies providing personal care services to individuals in Community First Choice and the Community Options waiver, for which Medicaid sets a payment rate. Some RSAs misclassify employees as contractors, which this bill aims to address by requiring RSAs to employ personnel directly to bill Medicaid, excluding DDA waivers. Jennifer also mentioned her involvement with SB226, overseeing Maryland's attendant care program, a \$1.6 million state-funded reimbursement program for individuals paying out-of-pocket for personal care services. The department will expand reimbursable services beyond personal care, and Larry offered to testify in support if needed.

Updates on Expired Term Commission: (Yetunde/Greg)

Greg provided an update on his conversation with the secretary of the governor's office of appointments, stating that a meeting is scheduled for tomorrow. He mentioned that there are currently no updates, but that our matter is on their radar. Greg also noted that the office has been experiencing a backlog, but he will continue to follow up and expects to have an update for the group soon.

Updates on 2023 Caregiver's Survey: (Dr. Joan Davitt)

Joan explained that the survey aims to gather insights on the needs and challenges faced by Maryland's caregivers. She expressed gratitude to all those involved in the project. The University of Maryland Baltimore School of Social Work (UMB SSW) collaborated with the Maryland Caregivers Coalition (MCC) and the Department of Human Services Office of Adult Services to launch the survey, which has received an impressive 4000-4500 responses. Today's objective is to analyze the data and gather feedback from members on priorities and areas of focus. The SSW researchers aim to produce a comprehensive report covering all aspects of the data, but welcome input from MCC members to ensure a thorough analysis. Yetunde has

distributed a table of variables and a survey questionnaire for reference. The SSW will analyze the data and value the MCC members' feedback in shaping the analysis.

Joan outlined the structure of the report, which will include an introduction, methods, results, and a discussion with implications. The analysis will be guided by Anderson's model of healthcare, which has been applied to long-term care services. The report will provide a comprehensive profile of caregivers, including descriptive statistics on demographics such as age, gender, and race, presented graphically using visual aids like pie charts and bar charts. Additionally, multivariate analysis will be conducted to identify contributing factors, such as coping strategies and stress levels, and how they relate to caregiving needs, while controlling for other variables like education and income. The survey also inquired about caregivers' responsibilities beyond the designated person, providing a more understanding of their experiences.

Kate inquired about whether the survey asked about the receipt of services or the locations where services were received. Joan clarified that the survey asked caregivers if they were aware that services exist, with a yes or no response, and included a section on advocacy. Kate also asked if the survey included an open-ended question about where caregivers received help. Joan confirmed that the survey included a blank space for caregivers to write in any information they wished to share, as well as a generic question at the end for additional comments. Kate also noted that studies have shown that caregivers often prioritize others' health over their own, both physically and mentally. Joan responded that the survey did touch on this, asking about coping mechanisms and activities that have helped caregivers manage their responsibilities, such as support groups, counseling, hobbies, exercise, meditation, spiritual practices, and socializing.

Liz Woodward inquired about whether the survey provided a list of available resources for caregivers. Joan clarified that the researchers relied on the expertise of the members to develop a comprehensive list of services available to caregivers, which was included in the survey.

Jennifer provided additional context on the survey's development, explaining that a work group was formed consisting of interested members. The subgroup reviewed an old survey and the AARP survey, but did not include a list of general resources, instead focusing on state and federal specific resources. Jennifer mentioned that videos were created to highlight common resources across four departments, including the National Family Caregiver Support Program, Attendant Care Program, Assistive Technology Program, DDA lists, DHS Respite Care Program, DHS Project Home, Department of Health CSC or Medicaid Waiver, Adult Medical Daycare, Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs, in-home aide services through DHS, and senior care programs. The survey also inquired about military status and asked an open-ended question about how state or local governments can improve caregivers' experiences, which Jennifer is

particularly interested in analyzing in conjunction with the 2022 Family Caregiver Strategy from ACL.

Patricia and Liz thanked everyone who has worked on this project and requested to see more caregivers resources all across the state.

Joan: A comprehensive full report will be available, but the researcher will also create alternative documents, such as infographics, to provide a more digestible summary. The group can decide what materials to share with their respective networks. Caregivers who prefer the full report will have access to it once it's ready. The survey aims to advocate for improved resources and services in the state and establish a regular survey cycle to gather ongoing information.

Theresa: Noted an issue with the survey layout, suggesting improvements to allow respondents to review and revise answers.

Larry Bram: Emphasized the importance of advocacy and the timeliness of survey results, given the current legislative session.

Mary Kane: Proposed a survey targeting caregivers of family members under 18, acknowledging the lifespan aspect.

Kate: Suggested including the final survey report as an appendix to the commission's annual report, with a deadline of October 1st.

Joan: Additional resources will be necessary to survey caregivers of family members under 18, a goal for the researchers and subcommittee.

Theresa Robertson: Reminded the group of the efforts in January with three bills and emphasized the need for continued advocacy, encouraging individuals to reach out to legislators as citizens. She also suggested enhancing the value of meetings by inviting legislators to share their plans and efforts, amplifying the voices of family caregivers in Maryland. Theresa and Kate requested members to consider potential speakers for future meetings, aiming to schedule speakers for the rest of the year and record some segments.

Anushree Goel: She thanked the organizers for putting together this meeting with Dr. Davitt and her team for the survey.

Announcements:

Anushree Goel: She talked about the longevity ready, Maryland initiative. That they are building an aging dashboard as well as working on creating a longevity index looking at what are the different variables, demographic, health, economic that would get factored into what longevity

looks like in Maryland and approaching it from a whole of life approach. Not just what happens, the challenges the people face as they age but really looking at a whole of life approach and caregiving is one of these aspects that they have been discussing internally and wanted to definitely include some of those aspects of caregiving and how they can impact longevity and how they could place them within these two products that they are working on.

Mark Tesoro: Posted in chat three workshops that DOA is working on. (More information about that, feel free to reach out directly to Mark at mark.tesoro@maryland.gov)

Kate Farinholt: During these busy legislative sessions, there are a number of organizations who are doing things in Annapolis Etc. Thank you all for everything you are doing. Theresa will look into having representatives from the legislative branch attend the MCC meeting not only one time but regularly. Kate and Theresa would also like to know some topics the commission/partners would like to hear, what speakers to help them build on the agenda.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 7, 2024, from 10:30am-12 pm.