

## **Maryland Commission on Caregiving**

**August 01, 2024**

**10:30 AM -12:00 PM**

### **Virtual Meeting Minute**

Commission Member Present: Yetunde Olobatuyi, Shalini Arora, Jennifer Eastman, Trina Townsend, Patricia Morris, Theresa Robertson, Kate Farinholt, Ann Squire, Chalarra Sessom, Anastasia Edmonston, Kathy Wehr,

Guests: Estelle Brooks, Hilary, Robyn Elliot, Delegate Andrea Harrison (PG County), Dorinda Adams, Lynn Phan, Mike Adams, Ann Ciekot, Deshonell Higgins, Morgan Mills, Michael Gray, Megan Peters, Jennifer Crosbie, Hilary Wiseman (new guest from the VA)

Welcome & Introduction: Theresa Robertson, Commission Chair

Review and approval of June's minutes: Yetunde Olobatuyi

Motion to approve June's meeting Minutes: Yes

#### **Guest Speaker by Delegate Andrea Harrison (PG County):**

Delegate Harrison began by expressing her gratitude to the members for inviting her to speak. She shared her honor in serving the people of Prince George's County and Maryland, where she was born and raised. She discussed her personal experience with caregiving, which motivated her to cross-file the Caregiver Tax Credit Bill with Senator Benson. She recounted her mother's story, a geriatric nurse who suffered a stroke and required hospitalization and subsequent in-home care. Despite her mother's self-sufficiency, the family faced significant expenses for her care, inspiring her passion for the tax credit.

She announced that a version of the bill passed, providing a grant of up to \$2,000 per calendar year for individuals with incomes below \$75,000 or married couples with incomes below \$150,000. An appropriation of \$5 million is allocated for each fiscal year.

Delegate Harrison encouraged caregivers to apply for the grant, emphasizing its potential to make a significant difference. In response to a question from Theresa about whether there has been an issue with this bill, Dorinda explained that the grassroots coalition is working to secure funding for FY26, as the FY25 budget had already been approved when the bill was amended. A meeting is scheduled with the Deputy Secretary of Government Affairs in October to address funding concerns. Dorinda assured that the commission would be represented at the meeting and promised to share further information later. She thanked Delegate Harrison for her diligent efforts, and Delegate Harrison expressed confidence in securing funding for FY26.

Patricia expressed gratitude to Delegate Harrison for attending the meeting and shared her personal experience recovering from a stroke. Kate, a caregiver herself, emphasized the need for interagency

cooperation across the state, stressing that all agencies should work together to provide comprehensive support.

Theresa proposed an initiative to bring together Maryland agencies supporting caregivers during National Family Caregivers Month (NFCM) in November. She suggested inviting representatives from various agencies to share their programs, resources, and services, promoting a comprehensive understanding of available support. This would enable caregivers to access a wide range of resources and services, ultimately enhancing their ability to provide care.

Dorinda, drawing from her past experience, noted that similar efforts had been made previously, while Kathy emphasized the need for updated resources. Theresa's proposal was met with interest, and the group was encouraged to consider her suggestion for the upcoming NFCM. By exploring this initiative, the group can work towards creating a more cohesive and supportive environment for caregivers, ultimately improving the care they provide.

### **Guest Speaker Estelle Brooks from Careforth**

Guest Speaker Estelle Brooks, representing Careforth, began her presentation by introducing herself and her colleagues, Mike Adams and Jennifer Crosbie. She expressed her gratitude to the commission members for the opportunity to present and share valuable information with the group. She commenced her presentation by highlighting Careforth's existing partnerships with various state agencies, including the Maryland Department of Health and Maryland Department of Aging. She extended an invitation to commission members to explore potential collaborations with Careforth, emphasizing the importance of legislative support. Estelle encouraged interested parties to contact her directly to arrange for Careforth representatives to present to their respective agencies. She provided a comprehensive presentation, a copy of which is attached for reference. Additionally, she shared important documents and FAQs that contain crucial information for review and dissemination to respective organizations. These materials are intended to facilitate a deeper understanding of the topics discussed.

Please find attached below:

- Estelle Brook's presentation
- Supporting documents (FAQs) for review and sharing

Following Estelle's presentation, a question-and-answer session ensued. Theresa expressed gratitude for the presentation and inquired about the process for connecting families on Medicaid with Careforth's services. Estelle advised Theresa to direct such families to their designated service planning agency. Theresa further inquired about the appropriate contact for Howard County, to which Commissioner Kathy was identified as a potential point of contact.

Ann thanked Estelle for her presentation and sought clarification on the stipend structure, specifically whether a standardized amount is allocated to all recipients. Jennifer from Careforth explained that the stipend amount varies depending on the state's configuration of services, but typically averages 60% of the full daily rate, with 40% allocated for professional support services, such as nurses and social workers.

**National Family Caregivers Month is November by Theresa Robertson:**

Theresa announced that November is National Family Caregivers Month and shared her vision for commemorating the occasion. She proposed updating the Maryland Caregivers Coalition (MCC) website with current information on resources available to caregivers and solicited ideas from the group. Kathy suggested creating a comprehensive list of caregiver support programs in each Maryland jurisdiction. Trina recommended producing videos with themes such as "Together We Can and Forever We Will" or "We Will Support Caregivers." More discussion at the September meeting.

**Updates on the commission annual report to the Governor by Shalini Arora:**

Shalini provided an update on the 2024 MCC Governor's Report, confirming its completion and submission to Director Greg Seseek this morning, followed by review from the DHS executive director and secretary. She expressed gratitude to Yetunde for her diligent work on the 35-page report and to Jennifer, Theresa, Patricia, and Kathy for their valuable contributions. Shalini emphasized the importance of documenting presentations related to caregivers throughout the year for inclusion in future reports. Shalini shared that the report will be shared with everyone once she gets to go ahead to do so.

Shalini also mentioned an email from the Governor's office regarding a meeting with the commission chair, co-chair, and Jennifer immediately after this meeting. She stated the Governor office reached out asking to meet.

**Future MCC Governor's Report by Yetunde Olobatuyi:**

Yetunde shared examples of presentations suitable for inclusion in future reports, such as those from MCC members addressing caregivers and the commission's work. She offered her availability for one-on-one consultations via email for further clarification. Jennifer and Shalini suggested brainstorming activities and prioritizing content for the next report.

**The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 4, 2024, from 10:30am-12 pm.**