

Aging Advisory Council Meeting  
Jersey Shore Center  
February 8, 2017

Members present: Ray Humphrey, David Heiney, Jeff Snyder, Rochelle Keefer, Leslie Houser, Linda Hess, Jack McKernan

Staff: Fred Shrimp

Ray Humphrey called the meeting to order at 1:35

Ray Humphrey reviewed the minutes. Ray Humphrey made a motion to approve that was seconded by David Heiney and approved unanimously.

Mr. Shrimp reported that there is an expectation that the Aging budget for 2017-2018 AAAs is expected to be about the same as 2016-2017. However, in the Governor's budget proposal there is a consolidation of 4 departments (Health, Drug and Alcohol, Aging and Human Services) into one new agency known as the Department of Health and Human Services.

Mr. Shrimp reviewed the facts about the current Department of Aging:

1. The Pennsylvania Department of Aging (PDA) was created by law in 1978 "to establish a cabinet-level State agency whose jurisdiction, powers and duties specifically concern and are directed to advancing the well-being of Pennsylvania's older citizens."
2. Prior to the formation of PDA, services to older citizens were a program in the Department of Public Welfare, currently known as the Department of Human Services.
3. The formation of the Department of Aging provided a cabinet level Secretary to represent the interest of older citizens to all of state government. This office would be responsible for services to older citizens.
4. The Pennsylvania Lottery funds that are dedicated for services to older citizens began to be used for home and community based services through the PDA. The Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract for the Elderly (PACE) program was established and placed under PDA.

Mr. Shrimp presented concerns he had regarding the formation of a new agency and the council discussion centered on these issues.

1. Would the voice for concerns and needs of older citizens be lost in the consolidated department? Now there is a cabinet-level secretary. Under the consolidated department, Aging is not even represented by a deputy secretary solely dedicated to older citizens.
2. Would the lottery funds remain dedicated to older citizens or would they end up being spent on other causes over time? Currently state government has used lottery funds to replace the state's general fund spending for anything that involves older citizens, such as medical assistance nursing home reimbursement, medical assistance transportation for older citizens, funding the staffing of PDA, and other programs that were originally funded by the state's general fund. Since PDA staffing is currently paid for with lottery dollars, how much of this consolidated agency's staffing will be funded with lottery dollars. It may be easier to use lottery funds for other causes when it is mixed into the funding of this consolidated funding.
3. Would this consolidated agency actually make it easier to receive Aging waiver services or would the same procedure be in place within the consolidated agency? This one agency will still require the same process of an application to the independent enrollment broker (IEB), a

level of care assessment by the AAAs through a contract with DHHS, a financial eligibility form that must be processed by a CAO and the selection of a service coordination agency through the IEB if eligible. It appears this process will still exist in the new DHHS. This process can be simplified by greater cooperation between state agencies without consolidation into one very large agency. Prior to 2010, all this process was handled by the AAAs except the completion of the financial eligibility by the CAO, but the AAA assisted in completing the financial form. AAAs could provide service either through waiver or lottery funded services as soon as services could be arranged. Waiver eligibility at that time dated back to the level of care assessment date. An older citizen only needed to contact the AAA to be assisted through the process and receive services. Now it can easily take 3 months and rarely less than two months to get waiver services.

There was a long discussion of these issues including if anything could be gained by consolidation and possible ramifications of opposing the consolidation. Ray Humphrey will schedule a meeting for those members that were interested in providing information on the proposed consolidation to the centers for healthy aging.

Mr. Shrimp reported that the contract has been executed and STEP received 50% of the funds for the senior center grant to install the outdoor exercise equipment near The RiverWalk Center and purchase bicycles for use on the Susquehanna RiverWalk.

STEP and Loyalsock Township are proceeding with having architect Jeff Lefevre perform a feasibility study to determine if an addition can be made at the Loyalsock Community Center that would house the Loyalsock Montoursville Community Center and the township could use for their after-school program.

Mr. Shrimp reported that the use of the 20 ride bus passes per month for people age 60 to 64 is working well. Currently we have made two exceptions for individuals to get more rides per month. One for medical reasons and the other to attend daily the Lincoln Center. STEP Transportation's out of county trips expansion is going well. There has not been a significant increase to the trips charged to aging with the expansion.

Mr. Shrimp reported that not much has changed on the Community Health Choices progress. DHS states it will begin in January 1, 2018 in the southeast.

Mr. Shrimp reported that there has not been much progress in P4A/Aging Well negotiations. A possible rate of \$240 per assessment to the AAAs is being explored.

AARP TaxAide volunteers will be starting to prepare Federal and State Income taxes at the Lincoln Center and the Clinton County Community Center (CCCC).

Commissioner Jeff Snyder informed the council that he had arranged with STEP administration to have weatherization applications accepted at the CCCC. Prior to this they had to be turned in at the main STEP office in Williamsport.

David Heiney moved to adjourn and Linda Hess supplied the second.

Submitted by Frederick Shrimp, Aging Director