

Commonwealth Council on Aging

**Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services
1610 Forest Avenue, Suite 100
Henrico, VA 23229**

April 28, 2021

Electronic Meeting

Due to the active state of emergency, this is an electronic meeting pursuant to Item 4-0.01 of the 2020 Appropriations Act.

Members Present: David Broder, Harvey Chambers, Jennifer Disano, Amy Duncan, Joni Goldwasser, Carter Harrison, Carla Hesseltine, Tresserlyn Kelly, Diana Paguaga, Debbie Preston, Kathryn Reid, J. Tina Savla, Beverley Soble, Deborah Taylor, Michael Wampler, Jay White, Roland Winston, Erica Wood, Kathryn Hayfield, Ex-Officio, Tara Davis-Ragland, Ex-Officio, and Terry Smith, Ex-Officio

Absent: Deborah Davidson and Thelma Bland Watson, Ex-Officio

Staff Present: Charlotte Arbogast, Betsy Civilette, Marcia DuBois, Catherine Harrison, David Mackenzie, Kathy Miller, Elizabeth Patacca, and Cecily Slasor

Guests: Secretary of Health and Human Resources Daniel Carey, MD, MHCM and Deputy Secretary Catherine Finley

Welcome and Member Introductions

Beverley Soble, Chair

Charlotte Arbogast provided Zoom instructions and meeting information to members. She noted that this is electronic meeting is being held in accordance with the state of emergency necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Chair Beverley Soble welcomed members and announced that Secretary Carey will be joining the meeting this morning. Beverley Soble also introduced new council member Deborah “Debi” Taylor. Debi Taylor introduced herself to the group and provided information on her background. Ms. Arbogast shared the meeting instructions and called for a roll call to ensure a quorum was established.

Review Proposed Agenda

Proposed Action: Approve Proposed Agenda (Roll Call Vote)

Chair Beverley Soble presented the proposed agenda. Members did not raise any objections to the agenda and it was approved by unanimous consent.

Remembering Former Commissioner Jim Rothrock (Video)

Beverley Soble

Chair Beverley Soble shared some remarks and introduced a video that was put together in

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memory of former DARS Commissioner Jim Rothrock. Commissioner Rothrock passed away in March 2021.

Secretary of Health & Human Resources Update

Daniel Carey, MD, MHCM

DARS Commissioner Kathy Hayfield thanked Council members and introduced Secretary of HHR Daniel Carey.

Secretary Carey thanked Commissioner Hayfield for her leadership and service. Secretary Carey noted that older Virginians are our most vulnerable citizens and it is an honor to serve them. He highlighted that May is Older Americans Month and Older Virginians Month. The Governor looks forward to issuing a proclamation observing May as Older Virginians Month at the upcoming Virginia Governor's Conference on Aging.

Secretary shared some of the success of the last General Assembly Session, including:

- Received funding for Dementia Specific Case Management
- Funding for Demographer
- Restored funding for the Virginia Center on Aging
- Medicaid rates increased and sick leave was added for Medicaid direct care workers
- Beginning July 1, Medicaid will provide adult dental benefit which is critical to good health.

In reflecting on COVID-19, he noted that older citizens in Virginia were prioritized during the COVID pandemic as the administration acknowledged their unique needs and the isolation for many. COVID-19 vaccine rollout in Virginia has been exceptional and better than many states. Virginia has a statewide call center run by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) for information on COVID-19 and vaccinations.

He highlighted the important work of the area agencies on aging (AAAs) and DARS as well as other providers and community organizations who provided home delivered meals to thousands of seniors particularly those who were food insecure.

He shared information about the upcoming study on elevating ageing services in Virginia. His office will be working with DARS and the Department of Planning and Budget (DPB) to study current services and propose improvements.

Secretary Carey talked about the lessons learned from this past year, which included knowing when and how to ask for help when needed, taking time to practice self-care, and lastly, how important organizations are to serving Virginians and how to best work together to meet the needs.

Council members then asked questions.

Erica Woods thanked Secretary Carey and told him about the Council's Nutrition Special Committee. She asked Secretary Carey about the Governor's Roadmap for Hunger. Secretary

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Carey said he was open to looking at the Roadmap as it relates to improving older adult nutrition and food security.

Carter Harrison asked about the upcoming study related to persons with dementia and access to state facilities run by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS). He encouraged the Secretary to ensure organizations representing individuals with dementia and the DARS Dementia Services Coordinator are part of the study and work. Secretary Carey noted that dementia is personal to him and that he has a family member living with dementia right now. He noted that his door is open and he has great confidence in DBHDS in doing the study. Commissioner Hayfield shared that DARS and DBHDS are meeting on Friday to talk about and will relay that feedback as well.

Beverley Soble asked about the budget amendment regarding the workgroup to elevating aging services and possibly create separate aging agency. She asked if there could be consideration for someone from the Commonwealth Council to serve on this workgroup. Secretary Carey noted that Deputy Secretary Finley is working on that study. His office will perform a thorough analysis and look at many options and other states systems. Beverley Soble commented that Deputy Secretary Finley has been very supportive of the council in past communications.

Jennifer Disano noted the importance of prevention and engagement in reducing social isolation. Lifelong learning can be a part of that. She noted that at her lifelong learning institute, they have pivoted to reaching out and providing more contacts and we have more people joining remotely as a result of pandemic. She said it will be important to sustain the innovations beyond the pandemic.

Secretary Carey highlighted the work being done in telehealth. He thanked everyone for the opportunity and for their work.

Commissioner Hayfield said there were two more questions from the group and asked Deputy Secretary Finley if she could try to answer them.

David Broder inquired about how funds from the American Rescue Plan Act will be used. Deputy Secretary said the administration will be working with the General Assembly, and it is important to remember that these are one-time funds so we are trying to be strategic with the current needs and short-term goals. Commissioner Hayfield said that Marcia DuBois can provide comments on the funding coming to DARS in her report.

Harvey Chambers thanked Commissioner and Deputy Secretary Finley and asked about older adult homelessness and the rising cost of housing and rent. Deputy Secretary Finley responded that the housing issue is definitely a conversation that the administration is having. She highlighted the intersection between housing and health care. She is working with the Department of Housing and community Development (DHCD) on some housing initiatives.

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes

Joni Goldwasser, DNP, NP, Secretary

Proposed Action: Adopt January 27, 2021 Meeting Minutes

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(Roll Call Vote)

Secretary Joni Goldwasser presented the draft meeting minutes from January 27, 2021. Members did not raise any objections to the draft minutes and the minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

Public Comment Period

Charlotte Arbogast, Council Staff

Charlotte Arbogast reported that there were no public comments received. Beverley Soble stated that Michael Martin had provided thoughtful comments about COVID-19 vaccinations at the January meeting. Due to his comments, the Council did provide a letter to Secretary Carey.

DARS Division for Community Living Report

Marcia DuBois, Deputy Commissioner

DARS Deputy Commissioner Marcia DuBois welcomed members.

She highlighted the great work that the AAAs have been doing with regard to supporting COVID-19 vaccine efforts. DARS surveyed the AAAs recently and asked how they were involved in sharing vaccine information with their communities. Many responded that they were working with local agencies, hosting call centers, answering calls at their offices, hosting clinics. Marcia DuBois thanked Kathy Miller, Director of Aging Programs at DARS, who has been working with staff from other agencies on getting the vaccine safely to those who are homebound. Marcia DuBois also noted the impact of the American Rescue Act funds. DARS received over \$1 million that will go to the AAAs for disseminating information about the vaccine, identifying people who may need help getting vaccine, helping with scheduling of vaccine appointments, transportation, tech assistance, and personal support if needed.

Regarding Older Americans Act (OAA) services, Marcia DuBois shared that DARS is expecting over \$31 million any day now for Title III C Nutrition, IIIB In-Home Services, and Ombudsman services.

DARS is currently in the process of apply for a federal Older Adults Home Modification grant \$500,000 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This would target rural areas. DARS is also pursuing a Falls Prevention grant from the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL). Lastly, she provided an update on the Lifespan Respite Voucher grant. DARS has a new opportunity to apply for a five-year grant for just over \$1 million. This would allow DARS to reach underserved populations and increase amount of grant from \$400 to \$600 per caregiver.

Governor's Conference on Aging Update

Martina James Nalley, V4A

Martina James Nalley is the Coordinator of the 2021 Virginia Governor's Conference on Aging. She provided an update on the upcoming virtual conference, and highlighted the conference

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programming and website. Due to COVID-19, the conference will be held virtually from May 24 through May 27. The website is: www.vgcoavirtual.com. Some CEU's will be available.

DARS Deputy Commissioner Marcia DuBois thanked Ms. Nalley for her work on the conference. She also told Council members that if they would like to participate in the conference, DARS can cover their registration fee if they do not have an organization that will pay it for them. Members interested in participating should contact Charlotte Arbogast or Cecily Slasor at DARS.

Legislative Update:

Report on General Assembly Special Session Outcomes

Budget Update

2021 Legislative Session Update

Erica Wood, JD, Committee Chair

Erica Wood offered thanks to Secretary Carey for his remarks and provided updates on recent legislation. There were 7 key items in the Council legislative platform.

Erica Wood noted four of those items were passed/achieved. These included: General Assembly restored the Medicaid Adult Dental Benefit; Mandated sick leave for direct care workers (LTC facilities, ALFs); Restore funds for the Dementia specific Case Management; and Restore funding for the VA Center on Aging.

Another item on the platform was report language to the Council's duties. That might be something to look for next General Assembly session.

Erica Wood also noted other bills and budget items including:

- Nursing facility add-on rate,
- Increase in rate for Medicaid home care providers,
- DARS demographic services for statewide aging network, and
- Virginia Saves Retirement Program, which directs the Virginia 529 Board to set up retirement planning options for Virginians.

Erica Wood also noted several studies and work groups initiated by the General Assembly. These included:

- Joint Commission on Health Care (JCHC) - NH impact on LTC nursing needs;
 - JCHC - Strategies to support aging Virginians in their communities;
 - JCHC – Study of the Auxiliary Grant system and to develop a blueprint for a more realistic program regarding housing;
 - Joint Legislative and Audit Review Commission (JLARC) - Study looking at all aspects of public & private guardianships;
 - Secretary of Health and Human Resources - Creation of a workgroup to consider elevating aging services in Virginia;
 - (DHCD - Study affordable housing and detached housing (accessory dwelling units); and

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- Secretary of Health and Human Resources – Dementia and Behavioral Health study, which included a review of the RAFT model in use in northern Virginia.

Beverley Soble commented that the Council should consider sending a letter to Secretary Carey that suggests a member of the Council serve on the workgroup to be developed to study aging services in Virginia or the Council be consulted for input and noting the importance of aging services as a priority in Virginia. Beverley Soble made a motion to send a letter to Secretary Carey to this effect. Diana Paguaga seconded the motion.

Motion to send a letter to Secretary on the upcoming aging study to include opportunities for inclusion of the Council on Aging the importance of aging services:

- Yay: David Broder, Harvey Chambers, Amy Duncan, Joni Goldwasser, Carter Harrison, Carla Hesseltine, Diana Paguaga, Debbie Preston, Kathryn Reid, J. Tina Savla, Beverley Soble, Debi Taylor, Michael Wampler, Jay White, Roland Winston, and Erica Wood
- Nays and abstentions: 0
- Not present: Jennifer Disano

The motion passed. The letter is approved. Staff will work with Chair Beverley Soble to send the letter.

Officer Elections

Beverley Soble

Proposed Action: Elect Chair & Vice Chair (Roll Call Vote)

Proposed Action: Confirm Secretary (Roll Call Vote)

Chair Beverley Soble explained the terms of officers and the process of election. The term will be for two years. The newly elected Chair will appoint a Secretary whose term will also be for two years and subject to confirmation.

Nominating Committee Chair Carter Harrison presented the slate for Chair and Vice-Chair. The Nominating Committee recommended Beverley Soble as Chair and Jay White as Vice-Chair. Mr. Harrison asked if there were any additional recommendations for the positions. There were none. Nominations from the floor were closed with no objections.

On the vote for Beverley Soble as Chair and Jay White as Vice-Chair:

- Yay: David Broder, Harvey Chambers, Amy Duncan, Joni Goldwasser, Carter Harrison, Carla Hesseltine, Diana Paguaga, Debbie Preston, Kathryn Reid, J. Tina Savla, Beverley Soble, Debi Taylor, Michael Wampler, Jay White, Roland Winston, and Erica Wood
- Nays and abstentions: 0
- Not present: Jennifer Disano

Beverley Soble was elected as Chair and Jay White was elected as Vice-Chair.

Carter Harrison asked if Beverley Soble had a recommendation for Secretary. Beverley Soble said that she had asked Harvey Chambers and he had accepted. Carter Harrison asked for a motion to accept Harvey Chambers to serve as Secretary. Roland Winston made the motion, which was seconded by Diana Paguaga.

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On the vote to confirm Harvey Chambers as Secretary:

- Yay: David Broder, Harvey Chambers, Amy Duncan, Joni Goldwasser, Carter Harrison, Carla Hesseltine, Diana Paguaga, Debbie Preston, Kathryn Reid, J. Tina Savla, Beverley Soble, Debi Taylor, Michael Wampler, Jay White, Roland Winston, and Erica Wood
- Nays and abstentions: 0
- Not present: Jennifer Disano

Harvey Chambers was confirmed as Secretary.

2021 Best Practices Awards Winners

Kathryn Reid, PH.D., RN, Committee Chair

Best Practices Awards Committee Chair Dr. Kathryn Reid provided an update on the 2021 Best Practices Awards. This year's Committee included Kathryn Reid, Jennifer Disano, Diana Paguaga, J. Tina Savla, and Jay White.

Kathryn Reid noted that the applicants and winning programs this year really spoke to the manner in which local organizations and area agencies on aging have “stepped up to the plate” to meet the needs of older adults during this global pandemic. Organizations pivoted and got creative to help address isolation, housing, health care, and benefit connections, among other areas.

The Committee issued Best Practices Awards to the following organizations:

- Stable Foundations for Older Adults Experiencing Homelessness, a program started in 2018 by Bay Aging in Urbanna, won the \$5,000 first place Best Practices Award. The program offers safe housing options and support services for older adults transitioning from homelessness.
- The second place award of \$3,000 honored Friends in Schools Helping program from the Jefferson Area Board for Aging. Established in 2004, FISH is an intergenerational school-based mentoring program that provides volunteer mentors to students who need individualized attention.
- The third place award of \$2,000 recognized Inova Health System's Medical House Calls program. MHC provides in-home primary care to homebound adults over age 65 in parts of Northern Virginia. In 2020, MHC performed nearly 9,000 patient visits and in 2021, vaccinated 655 older adults and caregivers.

The following programs also received honorable mentions:

- The Art of Healthy Aging Forum & Expo by Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia, Norfolk
- Virtual Center for Active Adults by Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services and ServiceSource, Fairfax
- Home Repair Program by Appalachian Area for Senior Citizens, Cedar Bluff
- Calling Angels Friendly Caller Program by Arlington Agency on Aging
- Benefits Enrollment Center by Senior Connections, The Capitol Area Agency on Aging, Richmond
- Virtual Social Visitor Program by Volunteer Solutions, Fairfax

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Kathryn Reid reported that the Council's website to highlight these programs. Council members received a copy of the press release, program summaries, and contact information for the winning programs.

She noted and thanked Dominion Energy for providing the funding (\$10,000) for the awards each year.

Kathryn Reid reported that the Committee and DARS staff are working now to:

- Issue the award winners their monetary awards,
- Mail out plaques and certificates for the winners and honorable mentions, respectively,
- Coordinate with V4A for recognition of these programs during the Virginia Governor's Conference on Aging, and
- Coordinate a summer webinar with the winning programs and with the Virginia Governor's Conference on Aging monthly webinar series.

Looking ahead, Kathryn Reid shared that the Committee also decided to meet again later this summer to talk about the upcoming 2022 cycle. At a summer meeting, the Committee hopes to look at possible updates to:

- The nomination form,
- The timeline for the 2022 awards, which members commented was very tight, and
- Enhancing dissemination of program information to encourage replication.

Kathryn ended her remarks by thanking the Committee members for their dedication to the process, as well as the 19 programs that applied this year. There were so many programs that made such an impact on older Virginians, especially right now, and it was hard to narrow the list.

Chair Beverley Soble extended her thanks and compliments to the committee members and said that the council should be very proud of their work.

Nutrition Special Committee Update

Diana Paguaga, Committee Chair

Nutrition Committee Chair Diana Paguaga shared that the Nutrition Special Committee met on April 8, 2021. The Committee heard from:

- Meredith Whitmire with Defeat Malnutrition Today, a national coalition focused on older adult malnutrition. Meredith shared information about the resources available through her organization and efforts underway to advocate on this topic states.
- Kathy Miller, with an update on the Medicaid adult dental benefit, which will roll out on July 1, 2021. The service will mirror the benefit already available to children and pregnant women. Medicaid is currently enrolling providers to meet the new demand. Dental hygiene is key to older adult nutrition.
- Kelly Wright, DARS Nutrition Programs Coordinator. Kelly shared an update on:
 - Recent COVID relief funding for nutrition programs. DARS has seen a trend upwards in home delivered meals, as you can reasonably expect during the pandemic. As funding has been made available through Congress to states, DARS

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has helped get that money out the door quickly and to support AAA nutrition services.

- Legislation for plan for a Produce Rx Program and expansion of SNAP eligibility in Virginia. The expansion of SNAP will be monumental in Virginia and will allow Virginia to tap into \$100 million in federal dollars. An estimated 25,000 new families will be served under the expansion.
- The outcomes of a survey conducted by DARS of the AAAs focused on gathering more information about AAA participation in non-Older Americans Act federally funded nutrition programs, like SNAP outreach, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, the Children and Adult Care Food Program, and the Emergency and Assistance Program. With the feedback collected from AAAs in the survey, where possible, DARS is working to help support AAAs in connecting with these federal programs to better serve older adults in their planning and service areas.
- Kelly also provided an update on the upcoming Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program season, which starts June 1. DARS will be able to distribute \$421,578 in food funds in 2021, which is an increase of \$8,100 from last year. Virginia did receive a small expansion grant from USDA, and Harrisonburg will be joining the SFMNP this year. An interesting partnership has developed in Hampton Roads between the libraries and mobile food markets, and I think Committee member Carla Hesseltine may have had a hand in making that connection.

Following the presentations at the meeting, the Committee discussed possible solutions. The Committee voted to make recommendations that the Legislative Committee consider:

- A Malnutrition Awareness Week (October) Proclamation or Resolution
- General funding to expand the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Programs (SFMNP) statewide
- Funding to add Home Delivered Meals as a Medicaid Covered Service
- And funding for a PR and Marketing Campaign to encourage older adults to access SNAP Benefits

Diana Paguaga noted that, as chair of the Legislative Committee and a member of the Nutrition Committee, Erica Wood will be presenting these to the Legislative Committee when it meets later this summer.

Regulatory Update

Charlotte Arbogast (Handout)

Council staff Charlotte Arbogast provided an update on regulatory announcements. Among the regulatory actions Charlotte Arbogast noted were:

- A Fast Track action to update the regulations for the DARS Public Guardian Program;
- Final regulations for the DARS Adult Protective Services (APS) Division, which included APS, Assessments in Assisted Living Facilities, and Adult Services Standards;
- Other aging-related regulatory actions underway at: the Department of Social Services (DSS), VDH, and the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS);
- Regulatory petitions received by VDH regarding long-term care facilities; and
- Guidance documents posted by DARS and DMAS.

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A handout was provided to the Council.

Announcements

Beverley Soble

Chair Beverley Soble asked if members had any announcements for the group. Beverley Soble wished outgoing members Joni Goldwasser and Kathryn Reid well and thanked them for their years of service on the council.

Meeting Adjournment

Beverley Soble, Chair

Chair Beverley Soble reminded members that the next council meeting is scheduled for July 28, 2021. Beverley Soble adjourned the meeting at 11:25 am.CC

The recording of this electronic meeting can be found here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1arWNjq_zb4.

Meeting Handouts included:

- April 28, 2021 meeting agenda
- January 27, 2021 draft meeting minutes
- General Assembly Handouts: 1) Aging Legislation Summary; 2) Governor's Introduced Budget Handout; 3) Reenrolled Budget Handout
- Nominating Committee Slate Letter
- Best Practices Awards: 1) Press Release; and 2) Program Summaries
- Regulation Update
- Announcements Packet