

MICHIGAN COMMISSION ON SERVICES TO THE AGING
East Lansing Hannah Community Center
819 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI
November 19, 2010

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Jerutha Kennedy called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Commissioner Kennedy welcomed the Commissioners and thanked them for participating and for their concern for seniors. The welcome was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

The Commission roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Jerutha Kennedy, Chair, Cheryl Bollinger, Joan Budden, Valerie Lafferty, Donald Newport, Thomas Rau, Michael Sheehan, Amne Talab, Ramesh Verma, Janice Wilson and James Wright.

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT (Excused)

Owen Bieber, Mary P. Gardner, Kathleen Johnston-Calati and Anthony Pawelski.

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT (Un-excused)

None.

OFFICE OF SERVICES TO THE AGING (OSA) STAFF PRESENT

Sharon Gire, Jane Church, Carol Dye, Bonnie Graham, Lauren Swanson, Lynne McCollum, Wendi Middleton, and Sally Steiner.

VISITORS/GUEST PRESENT

Ann Davis, Detroit Area Agency on Aging, Angela Willis, Director, Macomb County Dept. of Senior Citizen Services, Mary Ablan, Executive Director, Area Agency on Aging Association of Michigan, and Mark Giroux, Director, IBU Senior Markets, Blue Cross Blue Shield Blue Care Network of Michigan.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Wright made the motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Wilson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MINUTES

Commissioner Bollinger made the motion to approve the minutes of the October 15, 2010 meeting. Commissioner Newport seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

INFORMATION FROM INDIVIDUALS CONCERNING AGENDA ITEMS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mary Ablan, Executive Director of the Area Agency on Aging Association of Michigan, gave a brief overview of her role, and provided an update on a proposal submitted by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan for means testing subsidies that are discounted from premiums for Medicare supplemental insurance products, as was discussed in depth at the last meeting. Ms. Ablan provided the Commission with a document from the Michigan Senior Advocates Council, who studied the issue and took a position against the proposal of means testing the premiums.

Commissioner Verma asked about a recent Ingham County Circuit Judge's preliminary injunction to stop Blue Cross Blue Shield's proposal. Ms. Ablan stated that she testified at this hearing, but it was a different proposal from what she's currently presenting on and she provided a brief overview of that issue.

OSA DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- ❖ Director Gire stated Commissioners asked about the transition process with the Governor elect Snyder. She said they are moving quickly, but noted that none of the Commissioner's would be removed and would be expected to finish their three-year term. Director Gire, as an appointee of the Governor, along with other Governor appointees, will be asked to submit her resignation before the end of the year. She gave heartfelt thanks and praised the Commissioners for their dedication, noting the passion they have for the Commission and the seniors they serve.
- ❖ Director Gire is in the process of reviewing the ADRC grants, reviewer's materials and applications, and will provide her final decision and make recommendations for the allocation of funding once the selections are made. They will be decided upon by the Commission at the December meeting.
- ❖ Director Gire talked about the Hard Times conference and stated they had very exciting resources to help the non-profit world in terms of reinventing themselves and building a broader base of funding streams, as well as many other exciting possibilities. There were 110-120 folks who signed up for this conference at the Older Person's Commission in Rochester.
- ❖ Director Gire stated in years past, she's done interviews and talked about seniors and safety in the winter for frail elders including challenges like hypothermia, paying for heat bills, etc., noting she'd send information used for her recent interview.
- ❖ Director Gire participated in Michigan Society of Gerontology's program in which she served on a panel related to Health Care Reform. She was also presented with an award at this event.
- ❖ Director Gire stated OSA had a soup contest event and raised \$550, and 6 boxes of food for the Michigan Harvest Gathering for Michigan's food banks, a real tribute to OSA staff.
- ❖ Director Gire stated OSA held its eighth Cultural Diversity event and Commissioner Gardner was helpful in presenting on LGBT, providing informative dialogue designed to educate staff who may work with LGBT elders.
- ❖ Director Gire presented to the Michigan Directors of Services to the Aging on Health Care Reform.
- ❖ Director Gire stated some of the Commissioner signed up for the Administration on Aging Fraud Prevention seminar and asked those who received their invitation to respond and register for this event on line as requested.

Commissioner Verma asked about the Chairperson's role and what might happen there.

Director Gire stated the new Governor has the option to appoint a new Chair. It's not likely to happen until Commissioner's terms are up in July, but the Chair serves at the Governor's pleasure.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Commission Resolution Concerning Newly Proposed Blue Cross Blue Shield Rate Structure

Commissioner Kennedy noted information related to this issue was provided in detail at the last meeting and asked for input from the Commissioners. Commissioner Budden excused herself from the discussion citing a possible conflict of interest. Discussion followed.

Commissioner Newport made a motion that the Commission adopt a resolution to oppose the BC/BS means testing process; the change in subsidy application that they have specified; the reduction in the subsidy amount; and the elimination of the subsidy for subscribers whose premiums are paid by sources other than themselves.

Commissioner Bollinger seconded the motion.

Commissioner Lafferty asked to add "no rate hike" as a friendly amendment to the motion.

Additional discussion followed and it was decided there should be a draft of the actual language of the resolution prior to a vote.

Commissioner Kennedy asked Commissioner Newport to develop draft language for action later in the meeting.

Approval of Grant Award to Michigan Disability Rights Coalition for State Profile Tool

Jane Church, OSA staff, requested Commission approval of Grant Award to Michigan Disability Rights Coalition (MDRC) for State Profile Tool.

Ms. Church stated OSA requested approval to amend the current contract with MDRC in support of State Profile Tool grant activities by providing an additional \$162,881. These funds will be utilized to continue staff support of committees created to achieve grant activities and support consumer involvement in the committees. In addition, a direct care worker survey will be conducted to inform the development of workforce indicators at the national level. The purpose of this CMS grant, started in 2007 and recently extended, is to develop a profile of Michigan's publicly funded long term care system, and to assist CMS in the development of national benchmarks to track the progress of states in development of a person-centered long term care system.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wilson to approve the amendment of the current contract with MDRC for State Profile Tool and increase it by \$162,881, as presented.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wright. The motion passed with a 10-0-0 vote.

A brief discussion followed.

Approval of FY 2011 Affordable Care Act: Personal and Home Care Aide State Training Program

Lauren Swanson, OSA staff, asked Commission approval of a grant to Michigan State University (MSU) in the amount of \$83,156 and to Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute (PHI) in the amount of \$374,674. The total of both grants is \$457,830 and will support development of a personal and home care aide training program.

Ms. Swanson stated OSA received a \$2.03 million three-year grant from the U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) in the area of personal and home care aide training. Ms. Swanson stated the grant entitled, "Building Training, Building Quality" will train personal care aides serving clients in the MI Choice Medicaid Home and Community-Based Waiver program and will be administered by OSA in partnership with the MSU College of Human Medicine, and PHI, a national non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of direct care worker jobs.

A motion was made by Commissioner Verma to approve the two grants in support of the personal and home care aid training program as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sheehan.

Discussion followed with Commissioner Newport requesting additional information about PHI as a national, rather than Michigan-based organization. He also asked if Michigan organizations had been given the opportunity to be part of the grant given many of our state's institutions of higher learning, including community colleges, have the expertise and capacity to deliver the training services. As such, Commissioner Newport could not support the recommendation.

Ms. Swanson responded that PHI has a Michigan-based office and the majority of grant funds will remain in Michigan. She also stated OSA will work with a wide variety of organizations and build on resources already developed to create the training program

Commissioner Rau stated his understanding was that PHI would not conduct all the training; rather they are going to train the trainers. MI Choice Waiver agents would then contract with local trainers involved in the project.

Additional discussion followed.

The Commission approved with a 9-1-0 vote.

Approval of Office on Violence Against Women Elder Abuse Grant

Lynne McCollum, OSA staff, requested Commission approval of the Office on Violence Against Women Elder Abuse Grant.

Ms. McCollum stated the \$135,000 grant award to Elder Law of Michigan, Inc. (ELM), is for the Calhoun County No Excuse for Elder Abuse Grant. The initial grant period will run from October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2011.

Ms. McCollum stated that OSA, in partnership with ELM, applied for and received this competitive grant through the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Violence Against Women. This will allow the training of law enforcement and direct service professionals in Calhoun County, as well as build a collaborative community response to identify community needs for domestic violence victims, and build the infrastructure to provide services in that community. The \$390,000 grant is for three years and allocated annually. OSA partnered with ELM as they have the expertise in administering this program on a day-to-day basis; involving coordinating trainers; attending out of state train the trainer events; and building a local collaborative response. Ms. McCollum stated she will be actively involved in this grant as a co-project director.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wright to approve the Office on Violence Against Women Elder Abuse Grant, as presented.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sheehan.

Commissioner Wilson questioned why men were not included in this grant.

Ms. McCollum stated OSA is in agreement with her concern, but the grant is based on the Violence Against Women Act and federal legislation, so they have to use that wording. OSA's program, the curriculum for training, and all efforts acknowledge and recognize there are many older men who are victims of abuse and exploitation, and that is addressed in the training.

Additional discussion followed.

The Commission approved with a 10-0-0 vote.

Approval of Alzheimer's Disease Supportive Services Programs: New Grant Awards

Sally Steiner, OSA staff, requested Commission approval of the Alzheimer's Disease Supportive Services Programs (ADSSP): New Grant Awards.

Ms. Steiner provided an overview of this Administration on Aging ADSSP grant, which is an expansion of the "Creating Confident Caregivers" program. The award is slated to go to Detroit AAA 1-A, AAA 1-B, Region 2 AAA, Valley Area Agency on Aging, Region VII AAA, Senior Resources, MDRC for data entry, and a small percentage goes to UPCAP who pays the trainer fidelity co-developer of the Savvy Caregiver program, Dr. Sherman, for a total award amount of \$260,612.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wilson to approve the Alzheimer's Disease Supportive Services Programs: New Grant Awards, as presented.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bollinger. The motion approved with a 9-0-0 vote.

Approval of Creating Confident Caregivers: Master Trainer Certification

Sally Steiner, OSA staff, requested Commission approval of Creating Confident Caregivers: Master Trainer Certification for Robin Petruska.

Ms. Steiner gave a brief overview of the conditions that must be met to become a certified master trainer, and some background on Ms. Petruska, who was introduced to this program as a caregiver.

Ms. Petruska stated she was very honored as a participant and leader in this program. She stated how beneficial and helpful the program was to her in her caregiving role, and this was a great way to give back in honor of her mother.

Discussion followed.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wright to approve the Creating Confident Caregivers: Master Trainer Certification as presented.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wilson. The motion was approved unanimously with a voice vote.

REVISITED BUSINESS ITEM

Commission Resolution Concerning Newly Proposed Blue Cross Blue Shield Rate Structure

Commissioner Newport made the motion regarding the newly proposed BC/BS rate structure: The Commission on Services to the Aging goes on record opposing proposals by Blue Cross Blue Shield that would: 1) institute a means tested rate structure for Medigap subscribers; 2) propose changes to how the existing rate structure subsidy is applied to Medigap subscribers; 3) reduce the amount of subsidy to Medigap subscribers; and 4) eliminate the subsidy for Medigap subscribers whose premiums are paid by other sources than the subscriber.

Commissioner Bollinger seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Commissioner Newport suggested with the passage of the resolution, that it be communicated to all of the Area Agencies on Aging, the Michigan Office on Financial and Insurance Regulation, and any appropriate Legislative commissions or committees who are considering senior issues and Blue Cross Blue Shield.

Ms. Ablan asked that the motion also be sent to the Office of the Attorney General.

Commissioner Kennedy thanked everyone for their input and concern.

INFORMATION AND COMMENTS

Health Care Reform Overview presented by Director Sharon Gire.

Director Gire provided handouts and showed a slide presentation, developed by the National Council on Aging, which provided an overview of the new health care reform legislation. Discussion followed and Director Gire agreed to provide additional information as requested regarding questions by the Commission.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next meeting of the Commission on Services to the Aging will be held at 10:00 a.m. on December 17, 2010, via conference call.

The next meeting of the State Advisory Council not yet been determined.

Commissioner Newport gave his appreciation and gratitude to Director Gire for her past seven and a half years of service. He proposed a sincere and unanimous resolution of appreciation to her for her marvelous leadership and work on behalf of seniors throughout the State of Michigan. Commissioner Kennedy also expressed thanks to Director Gire on behalf of the Commission, in working with them to represent the needs and interests of older adults in Michigan through many presentations, workshops and advocacy councils. She thanked the Commissioners too, and wished them a happy Thanksgiving.

Ms. Dye noted Director Gire's retirement party will be held Tuesday, December 7, 2010, from 4:00 - 6:00 P.M. in the Capitol View Building, downtown Lansing.

Commissioner Verma echoed Commissioner Kennedy's sentiments, noting that when he came was appointed seven years ago and saw the efficiency of OSA and sent a letter to the Governor expressing his appreciation of the office.

ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Wilson. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Newport. The motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

Commissioner Kennedy adjourned the meeting at 12:09 P.M.