

**Commission on Services to the Aging (CSA) Meeting  
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS)  
Bureau of Aging, Community Living, and Supports (ACLS Bureau)  
Capitol Commons Center, 400 S. Pine Street, Lansing, MI**

**February 16, 2024  
APPROVED MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Meeting of the Commission on Services to the Aging was called to order at 9:0 a.m. by Commission Chair Bob Schlueter.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**ROLL CALL**

Commission roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT**

Bob Schlueter, Mark Bomberg, Nancy Duncan, Walid Gammouh, Arjan Kallou, Joy Murphy, Mike Pohnl, Shirley Tuggle, and Kristie Zamora

**COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED**

Jimmy Bruce, William Bupp, Jennifer Lepard, Guillermo Lopez, Tene Milton-Ramsey, and Dennis Smith

**STAFF PRESENT**

Katie Alexander, Lisa Beyer, Kelly Cooper, Cynthia Farrell, Sophia Hines, Curtis Johnson, Tammy Lemmer, Kristina Leonardi, Cindy Masterson, and Scott Wamsley

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chair Schlueter requested a motion to approve the CSA meeting agenda.

Motion was made by Commissioner Duncan and Commissioner Zamora seconded the motion; minutes were approved by voice vote.

**APPROVAL OF CSA MEETING MINUTES**

Chair Schlueter requested a motion to approve the December 15, 2023, CSA meeting minutes.

Motion was made by Commissioner Bomberg and Commissioner Murphy seconded the motion; minutes were approved by voice vote.

**COMMISSION CHAIR REPORT**

Commission Chair, Bob Schlueter, reported the following:

- A new CSA committee is being formed to look at the Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO) Funding Formula. Chair of this committee is Commissioner Bomberg and Commissioners Bruce, Lepard, Smith, Tuggle, and Zamora are the other members.

- The CSA is interested in increasing advocacy efforts and communication with MDHHS leadership in order to strengthen their partnership, increase visibility and awareness of senior issues, and coordinate the collective efforts. They will be pursuing a more regular schedule of communication meetings with the department.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS RELATED TO THE STATE PLAN ON AGING OR ACLS BUREAU PROGRAMS, SERVICES, POLICIES, OR ISSUES IMPACTING OLDER AND VULNERABLE ADULTS**

Katie Wendel, Director of Planning and Advocacy for Area Agency on Aging (AAA) 1-B addressed the commission to let them know that as of January 2023, AAA 1-B is now **AgeWays Nonprofit Senior Services**.

She also wanted to emphasize and appreciate the importance of the commission's commitment to addressing the LTCO Funding Formula. The ombudsman who works in AgeWays region serves over 11,000 beds. AgeWays received a grant from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund (MHEF) to provide some immediate relief for the critical ombudsman shortage in their region. As a result of this grant, they have been able to hire three additional ombudsman staff.

### **CSA ADVOCACY COMMITTEE REPORT**

Commissioner Duncan, Advocacy Committee Chair, provided an update on the work of the committee:

- Advocacy Committee members - Commissioners Bomberg, Duncan, Lopez, Murphy, and Tuggle. Chair Schlueter; and Adam Burck and Jo Ver Beek, State Advisory Committee (SAC) member liaisons, also attend meetings. Tammy Lemmer is the ACLS Bureau liaison.
- The commission sent two letters in January 2024:
  - A letter to the Senate to recommend passage of the guardianship bills that passed the House.
  - A letter to Director Hertel asking that the department find additional funding for informal caregivers.
- Governor Whitmer proposed her Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Budget. As a reminder, the CSA officially asked for \$2M in increased dementia services funding, \$3M in additional funding for the LTCO program, and increased wages for Direct Care Workers (DCWs). While none of these priorities were directly included in the Governor's proposed budget, the CSA will continue to advocate with the Legislature for these priorities.
- Reminder that Older Michigania's Day is May 1, 2024, and they are hoping commissioners will attend if they are able.
- The committee is hoping they can again request that November be designated as Caregiver Month, and that it can be confirmed earlier this year so that there can be more coordination and advocacy with other groups who utilize caregivers.

### **STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC) UPDATE**

Commissioner Pohnl, SAC Chair, provided the following updates:

- The last SAC meeting was February 15, 2024. There were informational presentations on several evidence-based disease prevention programs and GetSetUp, an update on

ACLS Bureau activities, and discussions on possible research subjects for SAC to explore for CSA approval at a later date.

- He introduced the new SAC liaison from the Bureau of Aging, Community Living, and Supports, Curtis Johnson.

## **BEHAVIORAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH AND AGING SERVICES ADMINISTRATION UPDATE**

Meghan Groen, Senior Deputy Director, introduced herself to the group and shared a little about her background. She also indicated that she would like to hear more about the work of the commission and what they do as well as how she can help support the commission efforts. She shared some of the goals of the department as a whole. Discussion ensued including how the department and the commission can continue working together collectively to enhance services to seniors.

## **ACLS BUREAU UPDATES**

Scott Wamsley, Director, provided the following updates:

- Effective April 1, 2024, MDHHS will require the use of Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) for Home Health Care for Medicaid Fee-for-Service providers serving Medicaid beneficiaries. This will be the first program to implement EVV in Michigan. The Home Help Program will require EVV starting in July 2024 and managed care will start in September 2024 (managed care programs include MI Choice Waiver, Community Transition Services, and the MI Health Link Programs).
- Work recently concluded on the Home and Community-Based (HCBS) Health Equity Project (funded by MHEF) which included Home Help, MI Choice, MI Health Link, PACE, and Home Health Care programs. The project looked at health equity issues across the programs and focused on Grand Traverse, Wayne, Chippewa, and Kalamazoo Counties as they operate all the programs mentioned. The team is analyzing the data collected and will be putting together some action strategies to address identified challenges among the programs.
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved a 25% rate increase for the Community Transition Services (CTS). The CTS program helps individuals move from nursing facilities back into the community and has not seen an increase in rates since 2018.
- The MI Care Career Portal will be piloted in Region 5 – Valley Area Agency on Aging (Genesee, Lapeer, and Shiawassee Counties). This is an online job matching portal for employers and DCWs. The portal will go live for DCWs at the end of February and for employers in mid-March.
- The process has begun to procure technology for the Senior Project Fresh Program in order to replace the paper-based coupon program. This technology will increase effectiveness and ease of use for participants, farmer's markets, and staff who support the program.
- Work is underway on the 2024-2026 Age-Friendly Plan for Michigan. As a reminder, in 2021, Governor Whitmer kicked off our plan with AARP and declared Michigan an Age-Friendly State. The plan dovetails closely with our State Plan on Aging aims to ensure we are addressing ways communities can be age friendly so people can age where they want - in their communities. It focuses on AARP's Domains of Livability, including

communication and information, health services and community supports, housing, and respect and social inclusion.

- The bureau recently received the new federal regulations on the Older Americans Act and has been working with ADvancing States (the association for state units on aging) to identify ways for states to come into compliance with new requirements in a way that is manageable.

## **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

### **a. Overview of Governor Whitmer's Proposed Caregiver Tax Credit**

Jeffrey Guilfoyle, Department of Treasury Chief Deputy, gave an overview of the caregiver tax credit, referred to as Caring for MI Families, proposed in the Governor's Executive Budget Recommendation. Next, bills will need to be introduced in the legislature. As the bills move through legislative process, there will be opportunity to provide input at committee hearings to provide support or suggest recommended changes. The tax credit proposal is outlined below:

*The credit parameters:*

- Must have at least \$7,500 in earned income
- Provides a credit of up to 30% of expenses that exceed \$2,000
- Is a nonrefundable credit that can be up to \$5,000
- Care recipients of potentially any age are eligible, although it is not a childcare credit, it is a credit for parents who are caregivers of disabled children, and of course, a credit for family members caring for disabled adults
- The credit is estimated to cost \$37.5 million when fully phased in

*The credit is designed to cover goods, services, and support aiding daily activities and eligible expenses include:*

- Assistive devices
- Non-health items such as incontinence supplies
- Transportation of the person needing care
- Lost wages
- Home modifications
- Expenditures for counseling for caregivers, caregiver support groups, or caregiver training to care for person needing care
- Technologies helping to provide better care
- And other similar expenses

### **b. Access and Aging Needs for Michiganders who are Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing**

Annie Urasky, Director of the Division of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing and Alayna Lail, Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Liaison presented information on who they are, what they do, their mission, and what recommendations they have for how to raise awareness and be cognizant of the needs for the deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing community when providing services (presentation attached).

## **FINANCIAL UPDATES**

Cindy Masterson, Director of the Operations & Aging Network Support (OANS) Division, provided information related to ACLS Bureau financial updates.

## **BUSINESS ITEMS**

### **a. Request for Approval of FY 2024 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) Funding**

Sophia Hines, Health Promotion & Active Aging (HPAA) Section Manager, provided an overview stating the request is for approval to award coupon books to lead agencies using the FY 2024 USDA SFMNP grant awarded to ACLS Bureau in the amount of \$350,419 for the agreement period of October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024. Each approved lead agency will sign a Memorandum of Agreement and receive an initial allocation of 60 coupon books. Additional allocations will be made as resources become available.

The purpose of the USDA SFMNP, known as Senior Project Fresh in Michigan, is to provide low-income older adults with coupons to purchase Michigan-grown fresh produce at farmers markets and roadside stands. Program benefits are \$25 per participant and are distributed as coupon books. Each coupon book includes five \$5 coupons for a total value of \$25. Eligible older adults receive coupon books from the lead agency within the county they reside.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuggle to approve the request and Commissioner Zamora seconded the motion. Additional discussion followed and the motion was approved by roll call vote 9-0-0.

### **b. Request for Approval of Grant Year 2024-25 State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)**

Katie Alexander, HPAA Section Grant Manager, provided an overview stating the request is for approval to award funding for the 2024-25 SHIP grant from the Administration for Community Living awarded to ACLS Bureau in the expected amount of \$1,591,265 for the agreement period of April 1, 2024, through March 31, 2025.

The purpose of the SHIP grant is to support local SHIP counselors and grant activities conducted through the Michigan Medicare Medicaid Assistance Program, Inc. (MMAPI) and area agencies on aging (AAAs). These include providing objective counseling, assistance, and education to Medicare beneficiaries, their caregivers, and families regarding their health benefits and care. This is year five of a five-year grant.

A motion was made by Commissioner Bomberg to approve the request and Commissioner Gammouh seconded the motion. Additional discussion followed and the motion was approved by roll call vote 9-0-0.

**c. Request for Approval of Updated State Long Term Care Ombudsman Operating Standards**

Cynthia Farrell, Division of Adult Services Director, provided an overview stating the request is for approval to implement updated Operating Standards for the State Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (SLTCOP). These updated operating service standards will allow SLTCOP to provide a higher standard of service delivery to all participants.

The development of the draft SLTCOP Operating Standards for Service Programs is the result of extensive program policy analysis and feedback from a workgroup comprised of subject matter experts. The draft standards were posted for a 30-day public review and comment period from December 11, 2023, through January 9, 2024. All responses have been reviewed and, if appropriate, incorporated into the standard. Upon CSA approval, Area Agencies on Aging and host agencies will begin utilizing the revised SLTCOP Operating Standards.

A motion was made by Commissioner Tuggle to approve the request and Commissioner Murphy seconded the motion. Additional discussion followed and the motion was approved unanimously by voice vote.

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS (continued)**

**c. HCBS ARPA Plan Update**

Kristina Leonardi, Aging & Community Services Division Director, gave an update on the HCBS American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Update (presentation attached to minutes).

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The next Commission on Services to the Aging meeting is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on Friday, March 15, 2024, at the Brennan Senior Center, 1301 Pingree Ave., Flint, MI. Public hearing to follow at 1:00 p.m.

**Please note, these meetings are open to the public, and anyone wishing to attend may do so. Those needing assistance should contact Kelly Cooper at [cooperk6@michigan.gov](mailto:cooperk6@michigan.gov) at least five (5) days prior to the meeting date.**

**ADJOURN**

Commission Chair Schlueter adjourned the meeting at 12:15 p.m. Working session/lunch followed.