



Ohio Advisory Council for Aging
Meeting Minutes
October 14, 2020
10:00am to 12:00pm

PRESENT:

Governor's Appointments: Chair Lori Wengerd, Vice Chair Phil Walton, John Begala, Louis Borowicz, Semanthie Brooks, Misty Crosby, Stephanie Garrett, Diane Redden, Marian Schuda, Denise Shockley, and Manish Srivastava

Ex-Officio Legislative Appointments: Sen. Craig, and Sean McCann representing Rep. West as proxy

Ex-Officio Cabinet Agencies: Earnika Pitts (ODM), Adreana Tartt (MHAS), Stacy Collins (DODD), Dr. Will McHugh (ODH), and Heidi Turner (JFS)

ODA: Director Ursel McElroy, John Ratliff, Beverley Laubert, Jennifer Stires, Beth Gianforcaro, Ashley Davis, and Alex Lapso

The meeting was called to order at 10:01am.

Chair Wengerd welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

Alex Lapso called the roll and a quorum was present.

Director McElroy provided the Director's report. Dir. McElroy addressed themes for the Department's approach to the pandemic and beyond: position the department to effectively be the state unit on aging; and, position the state and its communities to meet the needs of older Ohioans. The Director called for the need to strengthen aging network infrastructure and reiterated the department's priorities:

- Health, Quality, and Protection;
- Responsive Communities; and,
- Economic Security.

Director McElroy addressed department priorities and strategies as they relate to the impact of the pandemic as well as the challenges and opportunities the pandemic has created.

- The department continues to communicate and work with stakeholders and related groups to manage the response to the pandemic. Relationships are being strengthened.
- Effective July 20, outdoor visitation was authorized for nursing homes and indoor visitation was authorized October 12. Testing is available and required, with specific cadences based on positivity of the virus. This also extends to assisted living, with a variance in testing cadence. The

Director added that long-term care facilities will need to continue to self-assess, or perform a risk benefit analysis, when increasing access to their facilities to accommodate visitation.

- Effective September 21, adult day services and senior centers were authorized to provide congregate services as a reduces capacity. As previously authorized, their ability to provide non-congregate services continues under the new guidance.
- Flexibilities and expanded options were made available for home and community-based services, specifically with regard to nutrition services. Necessary contact has been maintained for individuals who require certain home care and personal care services to support their quality of life.
- Director McElroy asked for the advisory council to stay the course and to not let fatigue set in.

Director McElroy responded to comments and questions from the advisory council:

- The pandemic has created opportunities to become more innovative and to try new initiatives, such as the broader implementation of tele-medicine.
- Director McElroy has heard from older Ohioans and their families. They have provided feedback and expressed their expectations during this crisis.
- Director McElroy participated in an AARP Ohio tele-townhall series on caregiving and provided administration, department, and aging network updates and information on the response to the pandemic.
- A question was asked as to whether “pods” were being utilized in long-term care to help reduce risks. The Director responded that cohorting has been implemented. She will look into the “pod” structure.
- A question was asked about intermediate and long-term vaccine planning, access, priority, and protocols. Director McElroy has been engaged in the vaccine discussions. She offered that the advisory council can serve as a springboard to be engaged in vaccine preparation.
- It was asked how the department has been engaged with ACL regarding COVID-19 and long-term pandemic planning. Director McElroy said that regular communication is occurring between ACL and ODA—updates will be provided at the next advisory council meeting.
- There was additional conversation about the implementation of “pods.”

Review of the previous meeting’s minutes was brought up for consideration. Vice Chair Walton moved to accept the previous meeting minutes as-written. The motion was seconded by Denise Shockley. Without objection, the minutes were approved.

Alex Lapso provided a legislative update for the department. He said that the legislature remains on break and will return after the election. On September 14, the Governor signed HB 606, Rep. Grendell’s bill that provides and extends qualified immunity to certain healthcare providers during the COVID-19 crisis. On September 30, Reps. Richardson and Fraizer introduced HB 770 to authorize designated essential caregivers to provide certain types of care in long-term care settings. Lastly, he provided that on September 28 the Ohio Controlling Board approved a request to designate \$15.2 million in CARES Act CRF dollars to support adult day and senior centers during the pandemic. A webinar is scheduled for October 16 to educate eligible providers on the process to register through the OBM portal, be certified by OBM, and have the funds released to them.

Ashley Davis provided an update on the SAPA. She provided background on the process and indicated that HPIO is close to publishing the final product. She further highlighted the priorities of the plan and expressed that opportunities to collaborate in the future will be provided. The November SAPA meeting has been moved to December, allowing more time to review the plan. Additional information will be provided.

Chair Wengerd proceeded to New Business.

Alex Lapso addressed the committees that have been established to support the work of the advisory council:

- **Policy**—Review and provide input on pending legislation (predominantly state legislation) and offer recommendations on prospective initiatives.
- **Best Practices**—Focus on ODA priorities and current crisis including: health, quality, and protection; responsive communities; economic security; and pandemic management and relief.
- **Education and Outreach**—Support functions of other committees and work with outside entities (with support for ODA when needed/required) to share advisory council and ODA’s message/priorities. Support priorities of the department and council members including election education, vaccine education, census outreach, etc.

Alex announced who will serve on each committee and asked committee members to determine amongst themselves who would serve as the committee’s facilitator before the advisory council. This will be determined during each committee’s respective breakout session.

The committees’ breakout sessions commenced.

When the advisory council members returned, the meeting resumed.

Vice Chair Walton led the roundtable discussion. Members expressed an appreciation for ODH pandemic updates as well as Ohio’s response to the pandemic compared to other states. Support for adult day and senior centers was encouraged and appreciated. Additional considerations for adult day and senior centers’ testing requirements, new provider certification, and the need to support the aging network workforce was addressed. At the request of the Chair, Ombudsman Beverley Laubert provided updates on behalf of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman. Bev spoke about Ombudsman communication and engagement with providers and state regulators. The office continues to investigate complaints concerning end-of-life situations, compassionate visitations, and exemptions.

Chair Wengerd asked for the committees to announce their chosen facilitators:

- Best practices: Misty Crosby
- Policy: Louis Borowicz
- Education and Outreach: await confirmation

Chair Wengerd made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Misty Crosby seconded the motion. Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 11:56am