



Ohio Advisory Council for Aging
Meeting Minutes
December 9, 2020
10:00am to 12:00pm

PRESENT:

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

Ex-Officio Legislative Appointments: Margaret Simmons representing Sen. Craig as proxy, Megan Richwine representing Rep. Ginter as proxy, and Sean McCann representing Rep. West as proxy

Ex-Officio Cabinet Agencies: Adreana Tartt (MHAS), Stacy Collins (DODD), and Dr. Will McHugh (ODH)

Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman: Beverley Laubert

The meeting was called to order at 10:00am.

Chair Wengerd welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

Alex Lapso called the roll and a quorum was present.

Review of the previous meeting's minutes was brought up for consideration. Vice Chair Walton moved to accept the previous meeting's minutes. The motion was seconded by Louis Borowicz. Without objection, the minutes were approved.

Director McElroy provided the Director's report. Dir. McElroy addressed the following matters:

- The status of the pandemic (specifically with regard to the influx of COVID-19 cases), increased hospital and ICU admissions, the strain on the healthcare and long-term care system, and the general impact on older Ohioans' lives.
- Announced the state's rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine and elaborated on the process by which the vaccine will be distributed, partnerships forged with pharmacies to assist in the process, and priority populations that will be offered the vaccine first.
- The department continues to be very much involved in COVID-19 testing initiatives.
- Per a previous request approved by Controlling Board that extends financial relief to adult day and senior centers, the Director announced that \$4,675,000 in CARES Act CRF dollars was released to 134 facilities.
- On November 23, the Controlling Board approved a \$30 million request to support air quality efforts for long-term care facilities and older adults living independently in their communities.

- Also, on November 23, the Controlling Board approved a \$7 million request to support the state's Rapid Response Teams efforts during the pandemic, particularly during an outbreak of the virus.
- The department is coordinating the distribution of masks to older Ohioans. The Director announced an initiative led by ODA and coordinated through the AAAs, where masks were distributed to older Ohioans before Thanksgiving. The Department of Aging is also coordinating with the Department of Public Safety, Bureau of Motor Vehicles to provide masks to those 65 and older with a drivers license or state I.D. by Christmas.
- The Strategic Action Plan on Aging will be released in the near future.

Director McElroy addressed questions related to Phase 1A of vaccine distribution and priority populations, senior centers' state sponsored testing frequency and coordination with provider associations and FQHCs, provider relief, and CARES Act CRF funding extensions.

Tessie Pollock, ODA's new Communications Chief, was recognized by Chair Wengerd. Tessie provided a few remarks.

Alex Lapso provided the following legislative update:

- The General Assembly is currently in the lame duck session. All legislative activity will cease at the end of the calendar year or if there is a formal motion from the legislature to *sine die*. The 134th GA will commence in January.
- On November 23, the Governor signed HB 404. The bill contains language that extends certain provisions of SB 197 to maintain functions of state government during the pandemic, including a reauthorization for public meetings to be held virtually.
- The Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee continues to hold hearings on HB 13, Reps. Carfagna and O'Brien's bill to expand broadband in underserved areas.
- HB 498, Rep. Fraizer's bill to authorize a one-time refundable tax credit of up to \$5000 (not more than \$10 million total) for disability-related home expenses, was reported out of the House Aging and Long-Term Care Committee on November 19.
- HB 770, Reps. Richardson and Fraizer's bill to codify CMS guidance and public health orders to further authorize access to long-term care facilities, continues to be considered by the House Aging and Long-Term Care Committee.

Alex responded to questions related to the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Task Force and COVID-19's impact on the legislative process.

Committee facilitators provided updates on recent committee meetings. Committee notes are available in the sharefile and members are encouraged to review them.

- Best Practices: Misty Crosby thanked the members of the committee and ODA staff for their participation. The SAPA will be a priority. The committee will also review other states' policies and identify experts in the field. The committee plans on meeting bi-monthly, with the next meeting planned for January.
- Education and Outreach: John Corlett said the committee is discussing its purpose to determine expectations. The committee is interested in learning more about the department to identify potential areas of focus. The committee will reach out to other committees to address expectations.
- Policy Committee: John Begala said the committee has met twice. During the meetings, the committee addressed hopes and expectations, and received updates on policy areas of impact.

The committee will meet the first Thursday of odd-numbered months, which special meetings being scheduled when necessary. John provided expectations for the January committee meeting.

The council engaged in a roundtable discussion. Members reiterated the current strain on the healthcare system and discussed the evolution of the virus and vaccine distribution. In addition, members spoke about ways Ohio's rural and Appalachian communities are coordinating with clinicians to address spread of COVID-19. Members raised concerns about food shortages, food insecurity, and spikes in the number of kinship caregivers in Southeast Ohio. Local updates were also provided, noting efforts to support nutrition services. Lastly, a member of the advisory council was interviewed for a newspaper article on the topic of isolation. The article was recently published.

Chair Wengerd asked the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman to provide an update. Beverley Laubert said that inquiries have increased 135% compared to around Thanksgiving last year. The office is actively engaged in compassionate care visits. Clarification was provided that compassionate care visits are based off federal guidance and applies to all facilities. Beverley is actively engaged on legislation that addressed the topic of compassionate care visitation.

The roundtable discussion continued. Comments were offered from the perspective of home health providers. Additional conversations related to COVID-19 vaccinations ensued.

The council addressed next steps for committee meeting notifications and next year's full council meetings.

Chair Wengerd asked if there was a motion to adjourn. Misty Crosby moved to adjourn. Stephanie Garrett seconded the motion. Without objection the meeting adjourned at 11:47am.