

Committee on Aging Meeting Minutes March 13, 2015

Committee Members Present: Gene Hysjulien, Marty Heller, Bruce Davidson, Delores Rath, Marsha Lembke, Deborah Melby, and Betty Keegan

Committee Members Not Present: Mary Green, Elaine Keepseagle, Peter Belgarde, and Bonnie Bieber

Presenters: Cindy Marihart - Aging Services; Sheryl Pfliger - Aging Services; Katie Schafer, Region VII RASPA; Karla Backman – State Long Term Care Ombudsman; Pam Mack – Protection and Advocacy

Call to Order: Gene Hysjulien introduced Deborah Melby from Region 1 Crosby. Deb is an RN and has worked at Sunrise Heath Care Center in Crosby.

Welcome & Introductions: The committee members introduced themselves to Deb. An overview of the Committee on Aging's purpose and responsibilities was provided by Sheryl Pfliger. Committee members shared their personal observations about why they serve on the committee on aging.

Pam Mack, Director of Program Services, Protection & Advocacy (P&A) Project provided an overview of the agency. P & A is an independent state agency that protects and advocates for the rights of people with disabilities within established priorities. P & A provides information and referral, and education to individuals and organizations. Training topics include disability-related rights and self-advocacy. The agency serves people from birth to death. Services are coordinated with other agencies to avoid duplication. Priorities for fiscal year 2015 are outlined in four broad categories: institution & facilities; justice; inclusion; and community partnerships & collaboration. Their case load has increased from 2000 to 6000 in the past few years. There are fourteen positions in ten offices throughout North Dakota.

Aging Services Division Report: Cindy Marihart reviewed the testimony she provided to the House Appropriations Human Services Division committee on March 5th concerning the Aging Services budget request for the programs and services provided. The budget request increase is approximately 2.2 million.

Sheryl Pfliger provided information on the following:

Federal Updates - The Older Americans Act (OAA) and the Elder Justice Act have expired and need to be reauthorized in order to guarantee their funding as reauthorization legislation for both laws failed in the last Congress. Legislation for the reauthorization of the OAA was introduced on January 20, 2015 with minimal change to it. The proposed bill would reauthorize the OAA through 2018, and includes appropriations for supportive services, congregate and home-delivered nutrition services (including Nutrition Services Incentive Program funds), disease prevention and health promotion services, family caregiver services, and senior community employment services, and elder abuse services. It includes provisions that strengthen the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program and existing elder abuse screening and prevention efforts. The bill also promotes the delivery of evidenced-based programs, such as falls prevention and chronic disease self-management programs. It leaves intact separate funding for congregate and home-delivered meals and maintains the current operation of the Senior

Community Employment Service by the Department of Labor (not the Administration for Community Living). It was reported to the Senate without amendment on 2/3/2015. As of Monday, 3/9/2015, the Act was still pending for action by the full Senate. The President's Budget contains funding for Older Americans Act programs. North Dakota would receive \$5,059,692.

The Elder Justice Act was introduced in the House on 2/13/2015 and was referred to the Committees on the Judiciary, Energy and Commerce, and Education and the Workforce, for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned. As of Monday, 3/9/2015, no additional action had occurred. The President's Budget includes an appropriation of \$25 million in discretionary resources for Elder Justice Act programs. If approved, this would be the first time the Act (passed in 2009) has been funded

The [2015 White House Conference on Aging](http://www.whitehouseconferenceonaging.gov/) (WHCOA) has announced a series of regional forums aimed to facilitate input from older Americans, families, caregivers, advocates, and experts. The first forum took place in Tampa, FL on February 19. Additional forums will follow in Phoenix, AZ on March 31; Seattle, WA on April 9; Cleveland, OH on April 27; and Boston, MA on May 28. Email: <http://www.whitehouseconferenceonaging.gov/>

Committee on Aging Budget Report: As 2/28/15, the remaining balance is \$8,646.90. The March and June 2015 meetings will be expensed to this budget. Unexpended funds as of June 30, 2015 will revert back to the State general fund.

Karla Backman, State Ombudsman, provided an overview of the ND Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP). Ombudsman is a Swedish word meaning agent, representative, or someone who speaks on behalf of another. The LTCOP program began in the 1970's under President Nixon's initiative to improve conditions and respond to widespread reports of abuse in the nation's nursing facilities. In 1992, the program became a part of the OAA - Title VII. Implementation of the program varies from state to state. In February 2015, rules to give structure and clarification to section 712 of the OAA were published in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), 45 CFR Parts 1321 and 1327. States have until July 1, 2016 to implement the new rules.

Ombudsmen are dedicated to enhancing the lives of long term care residents. It is a non-regulatory program. Ombudsmen represent the resident, not the facility or the family. Along with the State Ombudsman, there are five full-time and one part-time local ombudsman in the state who are required to visit each facility quarterly. Currently there are 34 volunteer Ombudsmen - more are needed. The Committee on Aging was asked to inform others about the Ombudsman program and that volunteer positions are available.

Review of Committee Goals and Objectives Review - Gene Hysjulien: The current the committee goals and objectives were in effect through December 31, 2014. Review and drafting of new goals will be placed on the June meeting agenda.

Next Meeting is scheduled for Friday June 12th at Edgewood Vista and Edgewood Villa.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 3 PM.

Marty Heller, Secretary
Committee on Aging