



## COUNCIL, TASKFORCE & WORKGROUP UPDATE

### PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL ON AGING

On May 8, the PA Council on Aging (PCoA) met at the Department of Aging. The members became more educated around Older Adult Protective Services, both as it is practiced and the legislation circulating around it. A panel of leaders in the field discussed how protective services operates and how it has evolved recently. Speakers on this topic were:

- Denise Getgen, Director, Protective Services Office, PDA
- Jennifer Wellkamp, York County Protective Services Supervisor II
- Mark W. Shea, York County, Director, Area Agency On Aging
- Christopher Dubble, Temple University-Harrisburg Branch

The council also discussed the Long-Term Care Council's (LTCC) Blueprint for Strengthening Pennsylvania's Direct Care Workforce. Chuck Quinnan, Executive Director of the LTCC, presented the report to the group. The members voted unanimously to support the recommendations outlined in the report. A letter has been drafted to share with the governor and General Assembly that summarizes the support from the PCoA, including how the priorities of both councils are aligned.

Sheri Collins, the Acting Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Broadband Initiatives, spoke. She outlined the intent of the initiative to build infrastructure across the commonwealth. The members' interest in this revolves around increasing internet access for older adults. This aligns with the council's work toward reducing social isolation for older adults. The group will continue to follow the initiative and look for ways to promote increasing access for older adults.

### PENNSYLVANIA LONG-TERM CARE COUNCIL

During its April meeting, the Pennsylvania Long-Term Care Council voted unanimously to adopt recommendations to strengthen Pennsylvania's direct care workforce. This action concludes over a year and half of work by the council and its committees to examine and put forth solutions to address the commonwealth's escalating direct care workforce crisis – a crisis that threatens citizens access to and the quality of long-term services and supports (LTSS) due to high turnover and shortage of workers.

The recommendations approved by the council focus on a number of issues, including wages, training and career pathways, public awareness, data collection, care team integration, technology utilization, and expansion of the labor pool and informal/volunteer supports. The report was sent to the governor and General Assembly and is available electronically by clicking [here](#), as well as on the council's [webpage](#).

The council also received updates at the meeting from the Department of Human Services' Office of Long-Term Living on the following:

- The continued rollout and implementation of Pennsylvania's Medicaid managed-care program Community HealthChoices;
- The April 1 rollout of the new functional eligibility determination tool (FED) for assessing applicants' clinical eligibility for LTSS; and



- The publication of a concept paper (request for information) by the department on reconfiguring the enrollment services process, which includes information and referral, navigation, enrollment in the Medicaid LTSS system, assessments, and beneficiary supports.

Lastly, the council began discussing possible areas of future focus and will be holding a planning session to strategize and gather information.

### **CULTURAL DIVERSITY ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The Pennsylvania Cultural Diversity Advisory Council (CDAC) met on May 9, 2019. Acting Secretary of Aging Robert Torres introduced himself and spoke to the council about the importance of developing and sustaining an aging network that is culturally sensitive, responsive to needs, and inclusive of all older people and people with disabilities in the commonwealth. CDAC serves as a statewide forum, clearinghouse, and advocate for the rights and interests of diverse older adults and advises and provides recommendations on cultural diversity and inclusivity to the department. Acting Secretary Torres addressed questions and emphasized that diversity is a prime goal of the department and reiterated his support of CDAC.

CDAC's top priorities for 2019-2020 are:

- Survey the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) on cultural diversity activities, successes, and challenges
- Fill membership vacancies
- Improve the collection, awareness, and accessibility of cultural diversity materials and resources
- Identify best practices for cultural diversity

A summary of the results of the April survey of AAA directors was presented. AAAs submitted best diversity practices, resources, and challenges in establishing and sustaining a diversity-friendly aging network. Executive directors of the Governor's Commissions on Latino Affairs, African American Affairs, Asian Pacific Affairs, and LGBTQ Affairs attended and provided an overview of their commission.

Three prospective CDAC nominations for membership were approved and recommended for the secretary's confirmation for the NW AAA region, Central AAA region, and a stakeholder representative. The next CDAC webinar meeting is September 12, 2109 at 10 a.m.

### **PENNSYLVANIA'S ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE & RELATED DISORDERS TASKFORCE**

On May 9, the department hosted a meeting of the Alzheimer's Disease & Related Disorders (ADRD) Task Force. The meeting was led by Acting Secretary Torres and Bob Marino (Chair). Following extensive discussion by the task force, the group identified making Pennsylvania dementia friendly as its next priority. The task force plans to hold a training in two months, to be attended by task force and committee members and representatives of the Department of Aging. At this meeting all will receive training on becoming Dementia Friends and Dementia Champions, which will enable them to train people in their communities to be Dementia Friends. Jennifer Holcomb, Cross Keys Village in Hanover, will also do a presentation on Dementia-Friendly Communities. Ultimately, the task force would like to have a Dementia Champion in every county. Also discussed was the upcoming Alzheimer's Forum in November. The task force discussed the proposed agenda, which will also focus on dementia friendly-related topics. Select members of the task force will work with the department to finalize the agenda. Also discussed was the recently awarded ACL Alzheimer's Grant, the recommendations of the ADRD State Plan, and some logistical matters of the task force.



## **GRANDFAMILIES WORKGROUP**

Building upon the Wolf Administration's efforts to combat the opioid crisis and address the needs of grandparents taking on a caregiving role for their grandchildren, the Department of Aging selected grandparents for a Grandfamilies Workgroup—to focus specifically on policies and programs related to Health and Human Services. The grandfamilies participated in the Wolf Administration and Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance's (PFSA) listening tour. The workgroup also includes stakeholders from PFSA, Highmark Caring Place, the NEPA Intergenerational Coalition, AARP Pennsylvania, and the PA Association of Area Agencies on Aging.

During the first meeting, Secretaries of Health, Aging, and Human Services participated along with policy representatives from the Department of Aging, Drug & Alcohol Programs, and Education. In addition to a review of available services, limitations of services were discussed, highlighting the need to categorize roadblocks as regulation or policy related, so that next steps can be determined. Updates included the expected launch of the Kinship Navigator in July and the following [resource](#), authored in-part by the daughter of a Grandfamilies Workgroup member, was shared with the workgroup.

The May 16 meeting focused on courts and the legal system, including judges, a district attorney, and attorneys from the pro bono legal services community, along with Acting Secretary of Aging Robert Torres; Secretary of Human Services, Teresa Miller; and policy representatives from the Departments of Health, Education, Aging, and Human Services. The need for more education for judges concerning reunification and addiction was discussed and action steps were developed. Additional work around grandfamilies' representation in the courts will continue with workgroup participants as a follow-up to the meeting. The Joint State Government Commission Report: [Grandfamilies in Pennsylvania: "The Second Time Around"](#) which was directed by the passage of House Resolution 390 of 2017, was shared with workgroup participants.