



## **COUNCIL, TASKFORCE & WORKGROUP UPDATE**

### **PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL ON AGING**

On November 13, the Pennsylvania Council on Aging (PCoA) held a membership meeting. The PCoA heard from Jamie Dunlap from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts around their Creative Aging program that addresses social isolation. They also heard from Christine Marcos from the Moses Taylor Foundation around their new grant to tackle social isolation in Lackawanna County. Senator Blake spoke to the group around long-term care regulations and the council's legislative priorities around protective services, lottery preservation, and Restore Pa.

The PCoA has sent letters of support for SB 819 to both the Senate and House Aging Committees. The PCoA also attended a hearing on October 30th around potential regulation of games advertised as games of skill. The PCoA is advocating for these types of games to remain clearly illegal through legislation.

The PCoA's next meeting is on January 15th in Harrisburg.

### **PENNSYLVANIA LONG-TERM CARE COUNCIL**

The Pennsylvania Long-Term Care Council (LTCC) met remotely via WebEx on April 16 due to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. During the meeting, council members received COVID-19-related updates from the Departments of Aging, Health, Human Services, Insurance, Military and Veterans Affairs, and Transportation. Click [here](#) to view the PowerPoint presentation provided by the Department of Human Services' Office of Long-Term Living. A COVID-19 Q and A session was also held as part of the meeting in which members and guests had the opportunity to pose questions to the state agencies that serve on the LTCC. In addition, LTCC Executive Director Chuck Quinnan provided members with a [COVID-19 State Agency Quick Links](#) document where they can access the most up to date COVID-19 information as it relates to the long-term services and supports (LTSS), as well as ancillary issues pertinent to LTSS providers, workers, and consumers such as unemployment compensation, business loans, taxpayer information, etc. The council's next meeting will be held on June 4. Due to the current COVID-19 situation, the location/format is to be determined.

### **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, 2019 at 10 a.m.

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

The task force, committee members, and PDA staff are meeting on August 1 for a special training on becoming Dementia Friends Champions.

### **GRANDFAMILIES WORKGROUP**

The Grandfamilies Workgroup convened for a third and final session on July 25 to discuss education and childcare. In addition to stakeholder groups, our grandfamilies were joined by Secretary of Aging, Robert Torres; Secretary of Education, Pedro Rivera; and Secretary of Human Services, Teresa Miller; as well as policy representatives from the Department of Health and Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs.

Representative Eddie Day Pashinski of the 121st Legislative District in Luzerne County, a long-time advocate for grandfamilies in the commonwealth, also joined the discussion.

Secretary Rivera updated the group on three new Department of Education initiatives that are designed to be responsive to the needs of all families, including grandfamilies. The Family Engagement Framework, the Community Schools Model, and Trauma-Informed Practices provide support to schools and families. Each of these programs address the unique circumstances of grandfamilies, as well as the trauma and stress children face as a result of the opioid crisis.

Secretary Miller discussed the need to have multiple resources available for grandfamilies to navigate to family-serving systems. The recently launched KinConnector can be reached at 1-866-KIN-2111, or via the Facebook page by searching @KinConnector. The website is expected to be operational later this year.

Although this was the last planned workgroup meeting, Secretary Torres assured the group that efforts initiated to remove barriers for grandfamilies through the raising of voices during these sessions will continue. Updates will be shared as work moves forward.