

Commission on Aging

Minutes

Wednesday, August 5, 2009

10:00am – 12:00pm

Call to Order

Chairperson Warren-Williams called the meeting to order at 10:07 am.

Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Commissioner Anderson, Commissioner Griggs-Murphy Commissioner Hardmon, Commissioner Sherwood, Commissioner Nguyen, Commissioner Warren-Williams

Commissioners Absent: Commissioner Galloway, Commissioner McCoy, Commissioner Miller

Staff Present: Tracy Jensen – Senior Services Administrator, Myisha D. Steward – Commission Administrative Support, Andrea Turner - DHS/Senior Services Supervisor – Senior Companion/ Foster Grandparent Programs

Chairperson Warren-Williams made the announcement that Bobby Chatman resigned his position as a Commissioner with the Commission on Aging as of July 2009.

Approval of Minutes

Draft minutes of the June Commission on Aging Meeting were approved after a motion by Commissioner Griggs-Murphy seconded by Commissioner Hardmon.

IMPACT OF STATE AND LOCAL BUDGET TO OAKLAND SENIORS

Wendy Peterson, Director of the Alameda County Senior Services Coalition presented the Commission on Aging with information about the impact of state and local budget proposals on Oakland seniors. On July 28 the Governor signed a revised budget for California's 2009-10 fiscal year. In doing so, he made line item veto cuts that were far beyond the "Big Five" deal and the earlier Conference Committee versions. The final Budget closes a \$23.2 billion shortfall with \$16.1 billion in cuts, plus revenue accelerations, borrowing and fund shifts.

A great deal remains up in the air around this new Budget. Legislative leaders are questioning the legality of the Governor's use of line item veto power for budget revisions (when that power is normally applied to appropriations). In addition, legal actions are being planned to block some of the cuts. Questions about how some of the

new budget's policy changes will be implemented will take time to answer. And we don't know if California's economy will continue to head down, requiring yet more budget negotiations.

We do know that many of the cuts and program eliminations will put vulnerable elders and people with disabilities at great risk. **The following summarizes the budget decisions that will impact seniors:**

Adult Day Health Care

The Budget caps ADHC program participation to 3 days per week beginning on September 1. This cap will mean that Medi-Cal recipients who attend an ADHC four or five days a week will have their days cut. The budget includes some accommodation for participants with high level needs, but the policies and procedures will be developed and implemented after September. The combination of therapeutic care in a safe setting and respite for caregivers makes ADHC programs a viable alternative to nursing home care, especially for those suffering from Alzheimer's and other dementias. Over 1,600 frail seniors and adults with disabilities currently participate in ADHC programs in Alameda County.

In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)

The Budget eliminates domestic services for IHSS recipients with a functional index score less than 4. This cut will affect approximately 14,000 IHSS recipients in Alameda County. The Budget also eliminates IHSS for recipients with a functional index below 2. In Alameda County, this cut will mean that approximately 1,800 people will lose their in-home care, and will restrict access for future applicants. In the budget sent to the Governor, the legislature had included exceptions to both of the above cuts for those who need paramedical services or who need protective supervision. The Governor used his line item veto to erase funding for those exceptions.

Public Authority for IHSS

The Budget cuts funding for the Public Authority by about 60% – the legislature passed a \$4.6 million cut and the Governor used his line item veto to cut an additional \$8.7 million. In Alameda County, the Public Authority provides consumer support services, training for providers and consumers, a registry of screened workers, and administers the health care plans for IHSS workers.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI/SSP)

The Budget imposes the third cut to SSI in 2009, a \$5 month cut for individual recipients and a reduction for couples down to the minimum level allowed. On October 1, monthly incomes for individuals on SSI will be cut to \$845/month; for couples, \$1,407 a month.

The Budget also permanently eliminates the state Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA).

California's SSI Program recipients are disabled, blind and/or aged. More than 54,000 seniors and people with disabilities in Alameda County survive on SSI/SSP income. Cuts to SSI/SSP recipients are particularly cruel, as recipients have few options to mitigate a loss of income.

Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI)

The Budget cuts the Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants, in step with the cuts to SSI. CAPI is the state-funded assistance to elderly and disabled legal immigrants who are not eligible for SSI/SSP. Over 930 Alameda County seniors depend on CAPI.

Linkages

The Governor used his line item veto to eliminate all state funding for this program. Linkages provides care management for frail adults with disabilities and frail elderly who need assistance to live independently in the community and avoid hospitalization and nursing home placement. In Alameda County, the Linkages program is run by City of Oakland, and the city's Department of Human Services staff is working to find alternative funding to preserve the program.

Senior Companion Program

The Budget eliminates all state funding for the Senior Companion Program. Senior Companions make a difference by being a friend to other older adults, visiting and helping with grocery shopping and other daily tasks. Volunteers who are income-eligible receive small stipends and community recognition for their dedication and service. In Alameda County, the City of Oakland supports a Senior Companion Program and a Foster Grandparent Program using a number of funding sources. While the program will lose "slots" it will not close.

Brown Bag

The Governor used his veto power to eliminate state funding for this life-line program that provides groceries and fresh produce to very low income seniors. This cut comes at a time when many more seniors find themselves without enough money to make it through the month. In Alameda County, the Mercy Brown Bag program will lose about \$20,000 from the state cut. The program is working to secure donations and other funding to continue to meet the need in the community.

Medi-Cal

The Budget reduces state funding for Medi-Cal by \$323.3 million in an unallocated cut, and reduces funding by \$1 billion upon receipt of increased federal funds. We don't yet know what the unallocated means for the over 34,000 seniors in Alameda County who rely on full-scope Medi-Cal for much of their health coverage.

The Budget adopts the Governor's proposal to "improve care coordination for vulnerable Medi-Cal populations," including seniors and people with disabilities. The reform requires an application for a new federal waiver, and could incorporate systems of care delivery such as mandatory managed care, "medical homes" and "enhanced primary care case management." The target date for waiver approval is September 2010.

Community Health Centers

The Governor used his line item veto to eliminate all state funding for community clinics, a \$35.1 million cut that includes Rural Health Services, the Indian Health Program and the Expanded Access to Primary Care program.

Skilled Nursing Facilities

The Budget suspends the 5% cost of living increase scheduled for August 2009 for skilled nursing facilities.

Local Property Tax Revenues

The Budget shifts \$1.935 billion in property tax and \$2.05 billion in redevelopment dollars away from cities and counties – a move that will undermine local governments' ability to address local needs.

Commissioner Hardmon asked how an IHSS recipient would know if their functional index was less than two. Wendy Peterson responded that the IHSS worker would know because it is listed in the clients file. The client is assessed on various activities and all of those scores are averaged to determine the functional index.

Commissioner Griggs Murphy asked if the Brown Bag Program in Alameda County has other funding sources than the state and if so, will the program be impacted by the elimination of state funding. Wendy Peterson responded that yes the program will be affected because any loss of funding now especially when the brown bag program is stretched to the maximum with many new requests for food. There are many diverse funding sources for the program (private & federal), the worry is not about the program closing but instead will the program be able to meet the demands and provide food to those who need it.

Commissioner Griggs Murphy also asked about the funding of the Community Health Centers and if there was stimulus money being funneled into some of the centers. Wendy Peterson responded by saying that stimulus money has a targeted place to go. They do not always fill the gaps that you want them to fill. Commissioner Griggs Murphy also asked if there is some advocacy that can be done around the Medi-cal issues before the September 2010 cut off date. Wendy Peterson responded that every state is required to have stakeholders meetings which are large open forums to discuss a better way to serve the medical needs of vulnerable populations. The Senior Services Coalition will be getting out the information about the upcoming stakeholders meetings and also information on how to receive upcoming stakeholder meeting information via email.

Commissioner Sherwood asked what the impact on the people that have had their services that allow them to stay in their homes eliminated; how many will end up in hospitals or skilled nursing facilities or worse in the morgue. Wendy Peterson responded that for Adult Day Health programs estimate that 30% of the clients who drop from 5 days a week to 3 days a week can end up in a serious health crisis and that is also the case for IHSS clients.

Commissioner Warren Williams asked if there was an indication of when people will be affected by the cuts. Wendy Peterson responded that there is a date of September 1, 2009 & October 1, 2009 and because the budget is effective as of July 1, 2009 there

are organizations that have been operating for a month with money that they didn't have and won't be coming to them. There is no money in the budget for transition.

Betty Mullholland asked if the legislature is considering taking legal action against the Governor. Wendy Peterson responded that it is around the governor's line item veto power and whether or not he has the power to veto a revised budget which he may not.

Wendy Peterson encouraged everyone to go onto the KALW's website and tell their personal stories. There is a speak out facility you can blog or call the number and record two minutes about how the budget is affecting you. KALW is putting these stories on the radio.

CENTER FOR ELDER'S INDEPENDENCE NEW PACE CENTER

Dianna Garrett, Director of Planning & Communication and Marvin Gibson, Director of Outreach & Intake for the Center for Elder's Independence (CEI), Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) Program presented the Commission on Aging with new information about the center. PACE is an all inclusive care center for the elderly 55+ who are eligible for a nursing home care and provides various services to them in the community.

.Danna Garrett went onto say that the state has also tried to cut the rates of the PACE Center program as well as optional care services. But because PACE has a 3-way contract the state could not cut those services. The state has proposed a 15% cut over 5 years which would not go into effect until January 2010, which PACE is fighting and if passed could possibly close down PACE centers in the state of California. The state is also narrowing the qualifications of the people who can qualify for the PACE program. However, there is some great news about PACE. Pace has been trying to get a new PACE program in the Eastmont Town Center for about a year. Two months ago a new care center was opened downstairs giving PACE the ability to serve between 160 and 170 new clients per year.

Marvin Gibson, Director of Outreach & Intake presented the Commission on Aging with the specific care services offered by CEI's PACE Program. The Center for Elder's Independence mission is to provide high quality, affordable, integrated health care services to the elderly which promote autonomy, quality of life and the ability of individuals to live in their communities. PACE is Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly. It's a relatively new Medicare benefit of comprehensive community-based medical, social care. The purpose is to keep seniors living at home with integrated care. There are almost 70 PACE programs in USA. We manage all our participant's care needs with the goal of maximizing their functionality and independence. We provide all care in whatever setting the senior needs: PACE center, home, hospital, recreational, transportation, and more.

Some of PACE's services include:

- Primary/Nursing Care
- Hospital Services
- Emergency Services
- Nutrition & Hot Meals
- Social Services
- Home Health Care
- Recreational & Social Activities
- PACE Day Center
- Medications included
- Transportation
- Medical Specialist (cardiologist, etc.)
- Rehabilitation Therapies (Physical, speech, massage, acupuncture)

PACE is still providing recently cut services of dentistry, podiatry, speech therapy, audiology services, chiropractic services, acupuncture services, optometric services, psychology services, incontinence creams and washes.

PACE helps seniors and their families by simplifying the process of finding needed services – one contact for all care. PACE aims to keep its participants healthy and in their communities. CEI partners with affordable senior housing, Board & Cares and Families as part of the care team.

CEI provides transportation to and from the PACE centers and to all Medical appointments and Day Center field trips. CEI uses an interdisciplinary team approach comprised of physicians, nurses, rehabilitation, therapists, nutritionists, social workers and geriatric aids to develop individual care plans for each participant.

CEI is funded by Federal Medicare and State Medi-Cal. There are some participants who have a share of cost that is the same as their share of cost for regular fee-for-service Medi-Cal coverage. Or, participants can also pay an out-of-pocket "private-pay" fee.

To be eligible for CEI's services one must be: 55 years of age or older, A resident of CEI's service area, Assessed by the CEI interdisciplinary team to require nursing home level of care (and certified by the CA DHS as such) and able and willing to live in the community w/o jeopardizing their health or safety. CEI serves from El Sobrante to South Hayward with one CEI Site located in Berkeley and two located in Oakland. The hours are Monday-Friday 8:00A-5:00P and Downtown Oakland site 8:00A-4:00P Saturday as well.

Now open at the lower level of the Eastmont Town Center is the Josie Barrow PACE Center. The Center is named after Ms. Josie Barrow a long time Oakland community activist and CEI founding board member. This new PACE center has the ability to serve 150+ seniors, with a new dental suite, a full rehab suite, and a geriatric health clinic.

Commissioner Sherwood asked typically how long does a participant stay in the program. Marvin Gibson responded that most participants are with the program throughout the rest of their lives.

SENIOR CENTER BYLAWS REVIEW AND UPDATE

The Commission agreed to schedule a meeting for the **Steering Committee 8/24/2009 at 1:00PM** to discuss the senior center bylaws. The senior centers have mostly all established the changes to the bylaws and submitted them to their advisory boards or are in the process of doing so. Once all of the advisory councils have approved the bylaw recommendations, then those bylaw committees from the advisory boards will meet with the Community Support committee to discuss the bylaws and recommendations for the Commission on Aging. **Community Support will meet 9/24/2009 @10:00AM.**

SENIOR COMPANION AND FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM UPDATE

Andrea Turner, Senior Services Supervisor of the Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent Programs (SCP/FGP) presented the Commission on Aging with update on both programs. Andrea Turner and Tracy Jensen proposed that the Commission on Aging's Community Support committee would be the Advisory Board for the Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent programs.

Senior Companions make a difference by being a friend to other older adults, and helping with grocery shopping and other daily tasks. Foster Grandparents help at-risk children and youth by giving them much needed attention, advice on life issues, and help with their studies. Volunteers who are income-eligible receive small stipends and community recognition for their dedication and service. Senior Companions and Foster Grandparents are over 55 years of age, can volunteer an average of 15 – 20 hours per week, have a limited income and

have a enjoy working with children/youth and seniors. Become a Senior Volunteer Today: City of Oakland, 150 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza #4340, Oakland, CA 94612
PH: 510-238-3080, FAX: 510-238-7207, www.seniorcorps.org

Andrea also spoke about the Taxi Up & Go program. In July 2008, the Senior Companions Program (SCP) received a two year Measure B Gap Grant through the Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority (ACTIA) to collaborate with Oakland Paratransit for the Elderly and Disabled (OPED) to expand paratransit services to SCP clients who are mono-lingual, frail and or socially isolated with limited access to health care and daily activities.

SCP Volunteers are issued OPED's taxi scrip in order to accompany SCP clients on medical and daily activity trips to get clients out of the house and into the community.

The Taxi Up and Go program has served about 129 clients through the 2008-09 program year. If you would like to know more about the service, please contact the SCP at (510) 238-3038. To read more about ACTIA, please click <http://www.actia2022.com/>.

The OSCAR Program is the City of Oakland's Senior Companion Assessment and referral project. The OSCAR program is a partnership between the City of Oakland's Senior Companion Program, the Oakland Police Department, the Oakland Fire Department and Community-Based Programs. It provides assistance to frail, neglected and socially isolated seniors in Oakland through case management assessment, assigning senior companions for assistance in locating and securing resources and senior companions assisting with follow-up referrals. This program can be helpful to seniors who are unaware of community-based programs, chronic callers to citywide senior services and 911 repeat callers and those lacking resources to maintain their independence in the community. If you would like to know more about these services please call Sarah Lin at (510) 238-2382 or email slin@oaklandnet.com.

Commissioner Hardmon asked if the Senior Companions receive a stipend. Andrea Turner responded that yes they may receive a stipend if they qualify based on their income. She also highlighted that people can still volunteer to be a Senior Companion or Foster Grandparent and are encouraged to do so.

SENIOR CENTER UPDATES

Glen Wong, Director of the Vietnamese American Community Center of the East Bay (VAACEB) presented the Commission on Aging with new updates about the senior center. Some of their current programs include Wellness & Fitness, ESL, Citizenship, Senior Companion Program, Community Speakers Forum, Recreational activities & fieldtrips and Holiday and Cultural Celebrations. Glen Wong also highlighted the Summer Youth Academy which taught youth various skills such as money management, conflict resolution, community service, cultural enrichment, and focused on bridging the gap between the youth and the seniors. VAACEB ended their presentation with two personal statements from members of the senior center. They both spoke very poignantly about their journey to the United States and how the senior center has helped them in their day to day lives.

Trung Nguyen, Director of the Vietnamese Community Development, Inc. presented the Commission on Aging with new information about the senior center and their program accomplishments for the 2008-09 fiscal year. There were 100 Vietnamese seniors enrolled in the program, over 120 hours of working sessions and activities, over 350 hours of counseling services and at least 60 hours of naturalization/citizenship training. Trung also gave the Commission information about current activities at the center including, karaoke, line dancing class, computer classes, individual counseling and referrals and citizenship and ESL classes.

****The Senior Center update was inadvertently left out of June's meeting minutes please see the update below****

Dorothy Poston, West Oakland Senior Center Director presented the Commission on Aging with new information about the activities and accomplishments of the West Oakland Senior Center. Dorothy began by thanking the Commission on Aging for supporting all the activities at WOSC including the Creative Writing Classes, Healthy Holiday Event and the Pre-Inaugural Ball which were all great successes. The creative writing class has published two books: *The Potter's Clay & Shifting Landscapes* which are both on sale for \$10.00 at the WOSC if you are interested please contact the center at (510) 238-7016. WOSC and the Downtown Oakland Senior Center's creative writing classes will be publishing a book together entitled *A Stepping Stone Anthology of Writing by Seniors*. There are several current programs going on at the WOSC including Millinery Classes, Computer classes (new computer lab w/18 computers, state of the art projector & screen), Line dancing and Spanish. Dorothy ended her presentation by taking the time to acknowledge that many more seniors are coming to the center asking for assistance in these tough economic times. Many are hungry and there to eat a healthy meal and many are traumatized by the budget cuts, seeing the senior center as a second home.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Access Committee had no reports.

Community Support Committee will be meeting September 24th to discuss the senior center advisory council by-law review.

Open Forum – 3 minutes per speaker

Adjournment

Motion – Commissioner Hardmon, second – Commissioner Griggs-Murphy, meeting adjourned at 12:15pm.

Commission on Aging meetings are wheelchair accessible. Text is available in large print, Braille, or on cassette tape. Assisted listening devices for the hearing impaired, sign language interpretation, and/or computer aided real time captioning transcription is available upon request. In order to ensure availability, requests for specific accommodation(s) must be made at least five (5) days in advance of the Commission meeting. In consideration of people with chemical sensitivities, attendees are requested to refrain from wearing strongly scented products to this meeting.

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