

Commission on Aging

Minutes

Wednesday, November 4, 2009

10:00am – 12:00pm

Call to Order

Chairperson Warren-Williams called the meeting to order at 10:05 am.

Roll Call

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

Commissioners Absent: Commissioner Nguyen

Staff Present: Tracy Jensen – Senior Services Administrator, Myisha D. Steward – Commission Administrative Support

Approval of Minutes

Draft minutes of the October Commission on Aging Meeting were approved after a motion by Commissioner McCoy and seconded by Commissioner Anderson.

MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLEMENT

David Sayen, Regional Administrator for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services presented the Commission on Aging with information on the Medicare Open Enrollment Period. Each year Medicare managed care plans are permitted to change their charges and coverage. The open enrollment period to enroll in a different Medicare managed care plan begins on November 15, 2009 and goes through December 31, 2009. Coverage will begin January 1, 2010. During the open enrollment Medicare beneficiaries can add, drop or change their prescription drug coverage. They can also select a health plan for their 2010 coverage. There are two options to get Medicare coverage for prescription drugs.

If someone has Original Medicare, they can choose and join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan. Or they may join a Medicare Advantage Plan (like an HMO or PPO) that includes Medicare drug coverage. Prescription drug coverage can vary by cost, coverage, and convenience. Some of these factors might be more important than others, depending on the situation and prescription drug needs. Each year in the fall information will be mailed out about plan changes. Each individual should review their prescription drug needs and compare Medicare drug plans.

For assistance with comparing Medicare Drug Plans, read the “Medicare & You” handbook, which is mailed out each year. It has information about Medicare prescription drug coverage, including which plans are available in which area. Another option is to call 1-800-Medicare or Visit www.medicare.gov, and select

“Compare Medicare Prescription Drug Plans.” To get personalized drug information, all that is needed is the following information: –Medicare card with the Medicare number and Medicare effective date (Part A or Part B) – Date of birth – Last name – ZIP code. To get general Medicare drug plan information or to find out what plans are available in which areas, just answer a few simple questions. Current prescription drug information can be provided in order to get more detailed cost information. This tool provides useful information to help review Medicare drug plans based on your current drug needs. The drug costs displayed are estimates and may vary based on the specific quantity, strength and/or dosage of the prescription, whether prescriptions are purchased at the pharmacy or through mail order, and the pharmacy used.

Commissioner Donna Griggs Murphy asked if the Part B premiums will increase. David Sayen responded that it will be increasing to \$110.15 and the higher Part B premium is due to the fact that the Medicare Part B Premium is a projected cost of the medical costs. There has been a significant rise in medical costs.

Commissioner Sherwood asked what effect Health Care Reform will have on Medicare. David Sayen responded that the Health Care Reform proposals would reduce Medicare costs and potentially reduce the premiums paid to health care professionals.

Commissioner Warren-Williams asked if we have enough of the H1N1 vaccine to cover the public. David Sayen responded that we have 32 million doses and will probably be getting more to address the public demand.

LINCOLN COURT SENIOR PROGRAMS

Beverly Karnatz, Facility Manager for Self Help for the Elderly, Inc. presented the Commission on Aging with information on Lincoln Court and the programs offered for seniors. Located at the site of the former Hillcrest Motel, the new affordable senior complex has revitalized a once blighted corner. Lincoln Court Senior Apartments is three stories, includes 82 apartments, parking, central courtyard, computer learning center, library, and supportive services. The project is designed with sustainable technologies, including solar energy panels, active and passive energy conservation features and green materials. Some of the daily activities and programs offered to the seniors include: Tai Chi, Brain Fitness, Power Point Instruction, Computer Lab, Photoshop, Line Dancing, various field trips and so much more. Pleasant Valley Adult School continues to provide some of the classes, such as the popular Brain Fitness classes at Lincoln Court.

Self Help for the Elderly’s Mission is to promote the independence, dignity and self-worth of seniors. We will achieve this mission by empowering seniors to help themselves and by providing a comprehensive range of multicultural and multilingual services. Self-Help provides inclusive services along a continuum of care for seniors and offers most of these services free of charge or at low and subsidized rates. The organization is able to continue providing these services by partnering with other organizations.

Commissioner Sherwood asked with the numbers of monolingual seniors at Lincoln Court is there an ESL program. Beverly Karnatz responded that they had ESL classes in the past

but the residents did not like the format of the class. They are planning a conversational style class for next year and the residents have expressed a great interest. Lincoln Court is located at 2400 MacArthur Blvd and the number is (510) 336-0144.

LAVENDAR SENIORS OF THE EAST BAY

Dan Ashbrook, Director of Lavender Senior of the East Bay, presented the Commission on Aging with information about the center and all of the work that it does. Lavender Seniors of the East Bay was founded in November 1994 by about 20 women and men. Some who attended that first meeting were long-time activists who were eager to organize as East Bay lesbian and gay seniors. The 1994 Alameda County Senior Needs Assessment had identified older lesbians and gays as an under-served special needs population. Organizers felt it was time for a grass-roots senior-run group to advocate for our needs to the general public and to government agencies and mainstream providers of senior services. Lavender Seniors is a member of the East Bay LGBT Aging Coalition which promotes advocacy and community support throughout the counties of Alameda and Contra Costa on behalf of LGBT elders for the development and expansion of senior services to improve the accessibility and quality of care for this underserved older adult community.

The Emblem Project, also known as LGBT Elder-Friendly Project, is a program that has agencies that are LGBT friendly display the LGBT emblem below in their front window, reception desk or another visible and public location in their agency. These agencies must have statements or policies on record of non-discrimination, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity and one or more of the following:

- a. Specifically state that they serve LGBT's,
- b. Display LGBT literature and other LGBT welcoming materials
- c. Has "out" LGBT staff members
- d. Has recently trained the staff in LGBT cultural competency, or
- e. Has LGBT-sensitive forms and publicity

For more information about the Emblem Project, call Lavender Seniors at 510-667-9655, email: barbara@lavenderseniors.org. Lavender Seniors is located at 1395 Bancroft Avenue, San Leandro, CA 94577. (510) 667-9655-ph, (510) 667-9909-f web: www.lavendarseniors.org .

Commissioner Anderson asked what the Commission on Aging can do to assist Lavender Seniors. Dan Ashbrook responded that they always need help in education efforts as well as outreach to service providers and agencies to let them know they are indeed serving LGBT seniors and changing programming to support that.

Commissioner Griggs Murphy asked how one can become a friendly visitor to help those seniors which are isolated. Dan Ashbrook responded that they can call (510) 667-9655, ext. 3 or visit the website.

OAKLAND BUDGET UPDATE

Tracy Jensen, Senior Services Administrator with the City of Oakland, Department of Human Services gave an update on the current budget of the City of Oakland. There

was a recent report to the finance committee which stated that the City is currently having a \$16-20 million mid-year shortfall due to the economy and reduced revenue. City Council will be discussing in a special Budget Workshop November 17, 2009 in council chambers from 4-7PM.

REORGANIZATION OF COMMISSION ON AGING

Tracy Jensen gave a report on the re-organization of the Commission. During next month's meeting we will be discussing the by-laws and the structure and meeting schedule. Tracy also re-visited the idea of collaborating with the Commission on Persons with Disability. In the next couple months we will be hearing from agencies we have not seen present in awhile.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Tracy Jensen presented the Commission on Aging with information about the By-law process and the changes that were made. The major changes being the grievance procedure and how and when grievances will be heard and the complaint process. If a member has a complaint they would go to the Senior Center Director and the Director would have 10 days to respond. If a member had a complaint about a director would go to the Senior Services Administrator which is Tracy Jensen.

Open Forum – 3 minutes per speaker

Adjournment

Motion – Commissioner Galloway, second – Commissioner McCoy, meeting adjourned at 11:30 am.

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