



Strategic Action Planning Group on Aging

Meeting Minutes – March 9, 2020

Participants: Christian Itin (Chair), John Emerson (Vice Chair), Tony Tapia, John Zabawa, Ed Leary, Andrea Kuwik, Claire Cruse, Dave Norman, Jim Collins, Jayla Sanchez-Warren, Steve Child, Karen Brown, Kelly Osthoff, Sarah Elliot, Gabriel Kaplan, Jean Nofles, and Jane Barnes

Not in Attendance: Sophie Shulman, Kara Harvey, Hayley Gleason, and Aisha Young

Public Participants: Gail Meehan, Kari Degerness, Jodi Waterhouse, Bob Murphy, and Janice Blanchard

Actions Items:

- Jarett Hughes will draft a memo capturing the top priority recommendations of the Planning Group to be sent to Janice Blanchard – Christian Itin will review prior to sharing with Janice

Meeting Notes

Welcome, Roll Call, and Approval of Minutes

- Meeting called to order by Christian Itin at 12:04 pm
- February meeting minutes and March agenda approved

Budget Update

Jarett Hughes provided a brief update on the Planning Group's budget. Link to [Budget Overview](#).

Regional Meeting, Aging Caucus, Age-Friendly Workplaces, and Behavioral Health Task Force Update

Planning Group members gave updates on a few work-related gatherings...

The TransAmerica Institute and NextFifty Initiative hosted an Age-Friendly Workplaces Conference to share research led by Brian Kaskie from the University of Iowa. The research is funded by NextFifty and is Colorado specific. The conference was well-attended and there was significant buy-in from the Executive branch with Governor Jared Polis, Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment Joe Barela, and Director of the Office of Future Work Katherine Keegan were all participants at the meeting. The importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion statements pertaining to age was brought up as a key takeaway from one of the presentations.

Christian Itin and John Emerson joined the Behavioral Health Task Force meeting on Monday, March 8. The lack of focus on older adults or consideration of Colorado's demographic shift was concerning. There was also no opportunity for public comment. It was suggested that a follow-up meeting or memo be put together to emphasize the importance of taking older Coloradans.

The next regional Conversation on Aging is scheduled for Friday, March 13 in Sterling, CO at the Colorado State University Regional Engagement Center. The NextFifty Initiative will be hosting a Lunch and Learn following the public input portion of the meeting. Diana McFail, CEO at NextFifty, will be joining for the Sterling meeting. For Salida and Durango, the plan is for NextFifty to send a representative familiar with the grant awardees in those regions who can do site visits, follow-up with grantees, etc. Due to spread and uncertainty surrounding COVID-



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19, all upcoming public meetings may have to be postponed. The plan is to wait for direction and decisions to come down from the Governor's Office and public health department.

The third and final Aging Caucus meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 11 from 7:30-8:30 am. Christian Itin, Karen Brown, and Brian Kaskie will lead a discussion about older Colorado in the workforce.

Prioritize Ranked Recommendations within Categories

At the February Planning Group meeting, members prioritized recommendation categories made from 2016-2019. This was the first step towards prioritizing recommendations Janice Blanchard and the Governor's Office. Small group work during the March meeting was the next step in this process. Members were given a handout that captured the top 5 categories from February with all specific recommendations related to those categories listed below. Link to [Recommendation Handout](#).

After small group discussion, members back to share their top priorities. There was significant overlap and that final decisions to share with the Governor's Office are captured below:

Priority #1

The Governor should create a permanent, high-level office or position within the executive branch to be accountable for and lead the state government's work on aging issues. The Governor should propose and the General Assembly should consider legislation to grant this new office or position the authority and capacity to:

- a. Set consistent statewide policy priorities;
- b. Coordinate the aging-related work of state agencies and workgroups;
- c. Help the state coordinate effectively and consistently with federal and local partners — and learn from the experiences of other states, commissions, planning groups, and other research entities, including the work conducted by and on behalf of SAPGA;
- d. Maximize efficiency and cost-effectiveness and identify potential savings;
- e. Identify gaps and unmet needs;
- f. Identify and help develop innovative new financing mechanisms, including utilizing opportunities for matching funding;
- g. Collect, analyze, and share data across agencies to improve decision-making related to workforce development and participation, health and wellness, and other key areas related to aging policy;
- h. Help drive public education efforts concerning the effects of aging in Colorado;
- i. And oversee the implementation of the state's Strategic Action Plan on Aging as well as appropriate recommendations from other efforts such as the Community Living Advisory Group (CLAG), Colorado Aging Framework, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Healthy Aging Plan, and the Colorado Alzheimer's Disease Plan.

Priority #2

Collaborate with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and local health departments to identify state and national funding opportunities to develop, implement, and maintain an age-friendly public health system in coordination with existing community-based organizations

Priority #3 – Consensus was that two recommendations were important enough for inclusion



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Colorado must work to ensure its workforce meets the service needs of its aging population, including nursing homes, assisted living communities, home health agencies, caregivers, and other professionals who support the state's aging population. Colorado should address the employment and skill development needs of workers who serve older Coloradans. The CWDC also should ensure that older workers have access to training and support services required for meaningful employment.

The State of Colorado should identify aging-related worker shortages across the state (e.g., in-home care workers, private/public guardians, geriatricians, paratransit drivers). Based on this analysis, the Governor's Office and General Assembly should assess the feasibility of incentivizing the development or expansion of workers in areas with shortages. This may include, but is not limited to, increased provider reimbursement rates, the development of grants and scholarships, loan forgiveness, and tax incentives.

Priority #4 - Consensus was that two recommendations were important enough for inclusion

In order to improve the accountability of health care spending and support community-based providers as care settings continue to shift towards home and community-based services, the Governor's Office, Office of Saving People Money on Health Care, and General Assembly should take the following steps:

- a. Continue to support rate increases for home and community-based service providers to enhance capacity and ensure continued quality, enabling older adults to age in their local communities.
- b. Encourage and support the development of a secure and bi-directional service referral database accessible and mutually beneficial to community-based, medical, and health insurance providers to determine whether or not individuals are receiving referred services, evaluate community-based provider capacity, and identify referral trends;
- c. Identify and implement strategies that support reimbursement to community-based organizations for services in order to expand community-based provider capacity to meet demand for referrals from medical and health insurance providers.

In order to maintain and increase the provision of a variety of long-term services and supports, encourage aging in community, and delay utilization of Medicaid services, the following steps should be taken to bolster regional Area Agencies on Aging and other community-based provider organizations:

- a. The Colorado Department of Human Services, State Unit on Aging, regional Area Agencies on Aging, local governments, and service providers, should evaluate innovative opportunities (e.g., Medicare Advantage expansion, State Innovation Waivers) and additional funding streams (e.g., private insurance, fee-for-service options) in response to shifting demographics, growing demand for services, and limited availability of state and federal resources to address funding gaps.

Janice Blanchard for a formal memo from the Planning Group capturing these recommendations. Jarett Hughes will draft the memo to be sent to Janice.

State Governance and Structure Discussion

Planning Group members broke into small groups to continue their discussion regarding the coordination of aging efforts and implementing recommendations. Report back notes are below.



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Phone Group: Critical to elevate the discussion, raise awareness, and make aging issues a priority for the state; one drawback may be that other state departments say “well now, aging issues are not our problem” and may upset other state departments that may lose funding or FTE’s; it is important to look at other state models; focus primarily on legal/ombudsman issues and long-term services and supports; push for an office created in statute, similar to the Office of Suicide Prevention within CDPHE

Group One: Department of Longevity – could be relatively small and perhaps have dual appointments centered around multidepartment engagement; create marketing tools including vision and mission; goal would be around innovative thinking and new directions; must include state departments in this discussion

Group Two: Must include the private sector in this discussion as well; other states to look at include Minnesota and Pennsylvania; important to implement a model that touches each relevant state department; suggested to use a matrix type of organizational structure where there are two models of reporting/oversight; life course/life span focus versus only 60+; any new position or office must have the authority to coordinate efforts and prioritize existing services; the individual, or office, should strategically deliver programs and policies with innovative approaches

Working Group Updates – [Link to 2020 Committee Materials](#)

Rural Transportation: First meeting was held at CDOT February 24 and the next meeting is set for March 31 from noon- 1:30 pm at CDOT. Follow above link to view meeting agenda, materials, and minutes.

Long-Term Services and Supports: First meeting was held by phone on February 24 and the next meeting is set for March 24 from 2:00-3:00 pm. Focus points for the group will be: complex cases in institutional settings with behavioral and physical health dual diagnoses; New York State Department of Health Alzheimer’s Disease Caregiver Support Initiative; Washington State Long-Term Care Trust Act; and Wellness Funds. Follow above link to view meeting agenda, materials, and minutes.

Workforce Development: Committee meeting was held prior to the full Planning Group meeting. Representatives from the Leading Age LTSS Center at UMass-Boston joined at the suggestion of Hayley Gleason. Follow above link to view meeting agenda, materials, and minutes.

Public Comment

Janice Blanchard announced to the group that the Aging Summit has been postponed. No date has been set but it is possible the gathering be reimagined to be smaller and in the metro area.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:55 pm