

# Strategic Action Planning Group on Aging

July 9, 2018

**Participants:** Karen Brown (chair), John Zabawa (vice chair), Natalie O'Donnell Wood, Steve Child, Sarah Elliott, Coral Cosway, Jim Riesberg, Karin Stewart, Jayla Sanchez-Warren, Dale Elliott, Ben Moultrie, Tony Tapia, Jean Nofles, Josh Laipply, Maureen McDonald, Mindy Kemp, John Barry, Donna Baros (phone), Dave Norman (phone), and Jarett Hughes

**Not in Attendance:** Sharron Williams, Claire Anderson, Christian Itin, and Gabriel Kaplan

**Public Participants:** Bob Brocker (Colorado Senior Lobby), Rich Mauro (DCGOG), Wade Buchanan (Governor's Office), Carolyn Kampman (JBC Staff), Kate Williams (DRMAC), Gretchen Cerveney (former mayor of Wheat Ridge and member of the CCOA), and John Sepich (STEM)

## Action Items:

- Identify SAPGA volunteer facilitators for August 14 housing forum
- Establish a nominations committee by August 15
- Karen Brown, John Zabawa, and Jarett Hughes to meet with Romaine Pacheco to review applications for SAPGA
- Executive Committee exploring 2019 budget request

## Meeting Notes

### *Welcome, Roll Call, and Approval of Minutes*

- Meeting called to order by Karen Brown at 12:04 with a quorum present
- July meeting agenda approved
- May and June minutes approved

### *Public Comment:*

Karen Brown thanked SAPGA members with expiring terms for their efforts and dedication to the group.

Jean Nofles announced SAPGA Chair Karen Brown as the Colorado AARP's 2018 recipient of the Andrus Award for Community Service.

Karen Brown and John Barry offered comment on the Department of Health Care Policy and Finance job posting for an older adult policy advisor and upcoming Medicaid-focused meetings to help direct a 3 to 5-year plan for Medicaid. Once the advisor position is filled, planning meeting will be organized with various stakeholders.

### *Nominations Committee Bylaw Amendment*

Jim Riesberg noted that the bylaws pulled from the SAPGA website did not include an amendment from 10/10/16. With the language updated Tony Tapia made a motion for a vote that was seconded by Maureen McDonald. The amendment passed with all “yes” votes.

#### *Colorado Health Institute*

Emily Johnson from the Colorado Health Institute (CHI) gave an overview of work they will complete on behalf of SAPGA. CHI will be looking into expected state Long Term Services & Supports (LTSS) expenditures, the service mix that makes up these expenditures, expected state LTSS revenue, what is the expected gap between revenue and expenditures, and what changes to state-funded LTSS demand, care settings, and workforce may address this gap through 2030. CHI will not be able to look into private pay or informal caregiving due to available research funds. It has been made clear that CHI will utilize existing research and data while collaborating with various organizations (e.g., Bell Policy Center, Colorado Consumer Health Initiative, DRCOG) to avoid any potential duplication of research and leverage findings.

SAPGA members have indicated the importance of clearly defining what services are including in this analysis of LTSS as it is often a term used to envelope a broad array of services and programs. Jayla Sanchez-Warren also suggested that CHI incorporate funding and services/programs provided through Older Americans Act funding (i.e. Area Agency on Aging services/programs) and the Older Coloradans Fund. Coral Cosway indicated the necessity of projecting the number of older adults that will not be able to receive care in their homes (e.g., those with cognitive impairment) and need continued access to skilled living communities providing the broadest and most in-depth services

#### *Homestead Exemption*

Greg Sobetski, economist with the Legislative Council Staff (LCS), gave a preliminary overview of the Senior and Disabled Veteran Property Tax Exemption. For SAPGA purposes, primary attention has been paid to older adults receiving the tax exemption as opposed to veteran’s which constitutes a significantly smaller portion of beneficiaries and is less likely to be changed statutorily.

Passed by ballot initiative in 2000 and effective in 2002, the senior property tax exemption is available to adults aged 65+ who have continuously owned and occupied their primary residence for at least 10 years. Fifty percent of the first \$200,000 is exempted from property tax. Since local governments collect property tax, the Colorado state Constitution requires the state government to reimburse counties for their lost property tax revenue. While the overall cost of the program to the state has increased markedly – \$61 million in 2002 to an expected \$144 million in 2019 – the overall individual benefit has remained relatively static – \$499 in 2002 and an expected \$560 for 2019.

Statutorily, the state can adjust the \$200,000 cap on property value. In years where the state experiences a budget shortfall, this cap has been reduced to zero which effectively eliminates the benefit for eligible older Coloradan’s. The Colorado Constitution restricts the General Assembly or local governments from creating new property tax expenditures (e.g., property tax credit), adjusting the ten-year residency requirement, and the age threshold. Imposing additional eligibility requirements (e.g., means testing) without voter approval is constitutionally complicated and may be unconstitutional. Attempts to alter the property tax exemption have sometimes involved setting the cap to zero and

creating an alternative benefit program. This method eliminates constitutional and ballot complications.

### *Homestead Exemption Overview*

SAPGA members broke off into three groups which were facilitated by Karen Brown, John Zabawa, and Jarett Hughes. Public participants were welcome to join groups and provide input. Talking points were to be: Does the senior property tax exemption seek to address affordable housing concerns? What are our feelings about means-testing? Is the value of the benefit something we would like changed in the future?

#### Group One – Jarett Hughes

Discussion led group one to conclude that the homestead exemption was not created to address affordable housing and that it currently does not do so. There were two reasons speculated for the creation of the tax exemption. One being that it really was designed to help older adults cope with increasing property taxes and that it was simply viewed as a tax benefit for older Coloradan homeowners. Means-testing was discussed less but viewed as a necessary component if a new benefit is intended to address affordable housing for those most in need. The exempted value is directly related to the value of the benefit and it was brought up whether the current value of the benefit is enough for older adults on limited incomes.

#### Group Two- John Zabawa

This group agreed that the Homestead Exemption does little to address affordable housing for older adults. They posed the question: Is there a better way to redirect funding to existing or new programs that will have more significant impact? Means-testing was viewed as necessary component to help those in need. Discussion on the value of the benefit recognized the value to existing homeowners and then moved towards how can this also benefit renters as many older adults, especially lower income and the oldest of the old tend to rent vs own a home? Given housing market trends across Colorado, a significant issue is how to best support older adults who are renting?

#### Group Three- Karen Brown

Group three, just as the others, decided the homestead exemption does not address affordable housing. It was also mentioned that if given the opportunity, the group would not endorse creating the exemption as it is currently structured. Means-testing was viewed as a way to help those who need it the most. Group three also brought up the fact that providing assistance to older adults who rent needs to be addressed.

### *Update on Homestead Exemption Forum*

SAPGA, Colorado Senior Lobby, and Colorado Gerontological Society will host an educational/public input forum on the senior property tax exemption on August 14 at the Police Protection Association located at 2105 Decatur, Denver, from 8am-12:30pm. All SAPGA members have been asked to attend with a need to have at least seven willing to provide support and group facilitation during the break out session

**Meeting adjourned at 2:57**