

**Strategic Action Planning Group on Aging Meeting
March 8, 2021
Agenda**

- 12:00: Welcome & Roll Call
- Approve Agenda and February Minutes
- 12:05 pm: Jarett Hughes, Governor’s Senior Advisor on Aging, Updates
- 12:25 pm: SAPGA Sub-Committee Breakout Groups/Work Time
- COVID: John Emerson, Chair
 - Caregiving & Long-Term Care: Sarah Elliot, Chair & Nancy Schwalm, Co-Chair
 - Disparities Taskforce: Jean Nofles & Aisha Young, Co-Chairs
- Guiding Questions for Subcommittee Breakout Discussions:
- What are the top 3 priorities that the subcommittee would like to address in 2021?
 - What needs to happen this year to meet those priorities?
 - How does this align with the current recommendations?
 - Are there people missing from this conversation that we should invite?
- Guiding Questions for Disparities Taskforce Breakout Discussion:
- What is the top priority for the Taskforce in 2021?
 - Are there specific State Departments that we want to approach for data/information that would further inform the work of the Taskforce?
 - How can SAPGA integrate into our recommendations, taking an intersectional approach, the challenges and issues related to disparities and the older adult population?
- 1:40 pm: Reconvene Large Group & Public Comment
- 1:45 pm: Break
- 1:50 pm: Report Back – Summary of Subcommittee Discussions & Next Steps
- 2:10 pm: Gender Disparities & the Older Adult Population – Presentation and Q & A
- Andrea Kuwik, Policy Analyst, Bell Policy Center
- 2:40 pm: Rural Disparities and Regional Priorities – Presentation and Q & A
- Cathy Shull, Executive Director, Pro 15 (needs, priorities and disparities within the older adult population in Northeastern Colorado)
- 2:55 pm: Public Comment, Chair offers closing comments, Adjourn Meeting

Next Meeting – April 12th – Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Meeting Minutes 3.8.2021

Planning Group Participants: Ed Leary (Chair), Christian Itin (Vice Chair), Andrea Kuwik, Kelly Osthoff, Tony Tapia, Hayley Gleason, Sarah Elliot, Steve Child, Jean Nofles, Dave Norman, Karin Stewart, Gabriel Kaplan, Jim Collins, Aisha Young, John Emerson, Jane Barnes; SAPGA Program Administrators: Karen Brown, Amber Minogue and Andrea Wilkins

Planning Group Participants Not in Attendance: John Zabawa, Claire Cruse, Jayla Sanchez-Warren, Kara Harvey

Public Participants: Jarett Hughes, Bob Epstein, Karen Ramey-Torres, Pat Cooke, Doug Krug, Haley Sanner, Ellen Taxman, Nancy Schwalm, Andrea Suhaka, Lindsay Parsons, Leslie Kalechman, Roberto Ray, Jill Add, Phil Cernanec, Andrew Steward, Jodi Waterhouse, Peggy Stollenberg, Erica Reinhardt, Natalie Deville, Janelle Aune, Teresa Falgrady, Eileen Doherty, Maria Madrid, Dennis Rodriguez, Dymond Roybal, Lee Hull, Pat Kelly, Mike Drake, Haley Sanner, Colorado Spirit Wellness Program, Kathy Schull, Gail Meehan, Cynthia Mills

Meeting Notes

Welcome, Roll Call, and Approval of Minutes and Agenda

- Meeting was called to order at 12:05 pm by Ed Leary
- Ed welcomed planning group members; Andrea Wilkins called roll
- February minutes and March agenda approved (motion to approve February agenda moved by Sarah Elliot and seconded by Steve Child; motion to approve March agenda moved by Karin Stewart and seconded by Tony Tapia.)

SAPGA Sub-Committee & Disparities Task Force Breakout Discussions

Long-Term Care & Care Giving Subcommittee

Committee Participants:

Sarah Elliot, Nancy Schwalm, Andrea Kuwik, Phil Cernanec, Eileen Doherty, Dave Norman, Leslie Kalechman, Karin Stewart, Doug Krug, Ellen Taxman, Peggy Stotenberg, Jill Add, Janelle Aune, Kelly Ostoff, Amber Minogue

Committee Priority Discussion Highlight:

- Changing the narrative around aging
- Technology and how it can support long term care and caregiving/caregivers
- Pathway for educating workforce across long term care and caregiving
- Addressing informal networks and communities
- Funding

Discussion:

What is the future of Longterm Care?

- What will it look like post-CoVID-19? How will visitation continue to change and evolve during and post-CoVID-19?
- Considerations about the shift towards home care and community care. What does assisted living need? Medicaid and assisted living reimbursement rates are not good, causing a shift to skilled nursing. Gap in care setting— on the cusp of skilled nursing and assisted living.

- How do we work towards keeping people in their homes longer?
- How do we address the gap in transition from home to facility with Medicaid?
- Population of skilled nursing has changed—how do we accommodate for co-morbidity of population with things like obesity and mental health? Younger and younger residents in long-term care with co-morbidities.
- Care settings for mental health?

Long term care planning — advance planning

- Culture shift; perception; changing the narrative

Changing the model: What does that look like?

- Greenhouse home model
- CMS - changing conditions, Federal guidance that drives the CMS limits
- Shared living and multi generational models: Silvernest and Kallimos
- Green building and smart technology that adapts with the aging
- High touch/high tech
 - Accessibility, affordability
 - Addressing privacy issues, philosophical and ethical barriers
 - Data security
- Tech training for elders, caregivers, families

Ensuring support for and sustainability of AAA's.

- How to stabilize funding into the future.
- AAA's address social determinants of health—how do other systems replicate or partner with the triple AAA's to strengthen and expand this approach? Their model of community-based core services have demonstrated cost effectiveness and a central role towards modernizing long term care and community based services. They help communities equip older adults to age successfully in place, which results in lowered Medicare/Medicaid LTC-related spending and also lowered Emergency Department visits and hospitalizations, saves all of us money, while helping people enjoy more quality of life in their own places.
- Prevention & upstream solutions/recommendations

Workforce Issues

- Shortage:
 - Caregivers
 - Longterm care
 - Social work, nurses, CNS, nutrition, etc
 - Professional caregivers are often providing care in the home as well.
 - Need for increase geriatricians and geriatric medical specialists
 - Higher ed, medical school partnerships
 - Caregiving Policy Group - Bell Policy Center — how are we aligned (they are looking at formal and informal caregiving)
- Disparities in the workforce and consideration that workforce is often made up of:
 - caregivers; vulnerable populations; women; BIPOC
- Workforce quality and access
- Education and career pathways

Reimbursement & funding across long-term care and caregiving

- Insurance — what does it cover for people at home

In-home care success and preventative services

- i.e. nutrition, chronic disease management, case manager support, medication support, fiscal planning, physical and cognitive wellness planning, psychosocial support

Care communities and preventative services

- i.e. nutrition, chronic disease management, case manager support, medication support, fiscal planning, physical and cognitive wellness planning, psychosocial support

- Informal caregiver education “care partners” — prevention for caregivers (family, friend, neighbors)
- A Little Help; United Way collective impact - volunteer coordination (Jasmine Garrison)

Facilitating engaging partnerships

- i.e. VA, Housing Authorities, AMDA, Leading Age, AHCA, Alzheimer’s Association, Parkinson’s, insurers

Addressing social support, human connection and isolation

- Consideration for how communities are organized
- Operating through the pandemic and beyond
- Leveraging and supporting informal networks

Colorado specific opportunities and solutions

- Weld County & Jeffco age friendly initiatives

COVID Subcommittee

Committee Participants:

John Emerson, Ed Leary, Hayley Gleason, Andrea Suhaka, Steve Child, Pat Cook, Teresa Falgrady, Jim Collins, Jane Barnes, Gabriel Kaplan, Andrea Wilkins

What are the top 3 priorities that the subcommittee would like to address in 2021?

1. Vaccine and testing access (including consideration of disparities)
2. Public-private partnerships to improve health care availability, including how we re-envision care centers going forward
3. Examination of key issues in which COVID has exacerbated existing problems and disparities including transportation, housing and ageism

Discussion:

- COVID illustrates that states didn’t have the infrastructure to take on COVID initially; priority is vaccine distribution.
- Governor’s Task Force has reached out to the immigrant community to some extent but a more tailored communication strategy is needed.
- COVID will change the way we operate overall. There are many long-term impacts that will be seen in multiple sectors and as a result, the COVID subcommittee should identify areas for collaboration with Workforce and LTC/Caregiving Subcommittees on cross-over issues.
- COVID has exacerbated ageism in the workforce and in society overall.
- Disparities exist in how COVID is impacting different populations and the recovery/speed of recovery too. Public health needs to be more available to older adults. People need to be able to access health care without leaving their homes; need more public-private partnerships. Need to address transportation considerations, especially as a factor in how people access care.
- Counties are very involved in the pandemic response. County-perspective should be considered by subcommittee.
- Other focus areas should include telemedicine and expansion of broadband; technology education for older adults.
- There is the potential for under-utilization of care post-COVID (fear, lack of access, unfamiliarity/distrust, lack of access to telehealth).
- Short-term focus is on vaccines and testing access. Long-term focus should be on how we re-envision care centers; address systems gaps in transportation and housing which COVID has highlighted or exacerbated; consideration of broadband as an essential utility with payment assistance provided through public programs (similar to LEAP); workforce impacts related to COVID.
- Are there segments of the older adult population that have not been vaccinated and what is the reason for this?

- It is going to take a long time to even determine what the long-term, permanent impacts of COVID are.

Disparities Task Force

Committee Participants: Maria Madrid, Tony Tapia, Bob Epstein, Karen Ramey-Torres, Tony Tapia, Haley Sanner, Aisha Young, Andrew Steward, Roberto Ray, Mike Drake, Natalie DeVille, Erica Reinhard, and Karen Brown

What is the top priority for the Taskforce in 2021?

Aisha indicated that she wanted the committee to focus on:

1. Creating awareness
2. Being fully invested in change
3. Patient – it will take years to change what has occurred over decades

Tony Tapia added that the Task Force should also support:

4. Other Committees – with an eye toward ensuring disparities are addressed

Discussion:

The initial conversation focused on the COVID vaccination program and how it could be improved to reach more People of Color (POC). There was discussion of modifying the process to consider the impact that the virus has on POC and at an early age. A suggestion was made that a weighted index be developed for distribution of vaccines based on race and ethnicity, age (and potentially other factors increasing risk tied to getting COVID). Some offered that the existing distribution system needs to be modified to be equitable. There was concern that the need for technology prevented and/or limited access for older adults and especially POC. Transparency could be enhanced as we continue the vaccine programs.

Additional discussion of items to take into consideration for the Disparities Committee included:

Environmental Justice: Older adult health is negatively impacted for those people living in lower income communities that are often locations for businesses connected to pollution. We need to apply the livable Age Friendly Community concepts to all communities. All communities would be environmentally friendly.

Social Determinants of Health: Factors of the social determinants of health that were mentioned include housing, transportation, health, and access to recreation. (Social determinants of health include these broad categories: neighborhood and built environment, education, health and healthcare, economic stability, and social and community context).

Undocumented Immigrants: Those older adults outside of the safety network many with language barriers.

Digital Divide: Concern over access to wi-fi/broadband, smart phones/iPads/laptops, and then being able to use the devices (technology training/savviness). The question was asked if wi-fi/broadband has reached the level of what might be called a utility. Utilities are generally considered to be necessities of life and are more regulated with a goal of improving affordability and access for all.

Are there specific State Departments that we want to approach for data/information that would further inform the work of the Taskforce?

- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

- SAGE USA
- State Demographer's Office
- State Unit on Aging – they are doing research on how their programs are promoted, the audiences they reach, how it breaks down in terms of POC (possibly urban/rural) to determine if they need to modify their outreach. Looking at equity and Aging Services.
- State Epidemiologist (CDPHE?)
- Colorado Department of Health
- Denver Department of Health
- Department of Treasury (looking at tax records)
- Specific clinics providing services for POC
- Governor's office
- Department of Education
- Department of Regulatory Affairs
- Veterans Department

Gender Disparities & the Older Adult Population, Andrea Kuwik, Bell Policy Center/SAPGA Member

Presentation overview:

- Older women (65+) are the fastest growing segment of the Colorado workforce. Jobs impacted by COVID are disproportionately held by women. Historically, older women are more likely to be among the long-term unemployment in the event of job loss.
- Age discrimination also tends to impact women more than men. Age compounds systemic challenges, especially for women of color.
- Women generally have less access to workforce retirement plans. CO Secure Savings Plan (SB20-200) is intended to help address the problem of lack of retirement savings.

For more details see the meeting [Presentation Slides](#)

Rural Disparities and Regional Priorities, Cathy Shull, Pro 15

Presentation overview:

- Northeastern Colorado is home to a significant population over 65.
- In general, the area has low housing availability and rents can be very expensive. Some communities for older adults have recently been developed.
- Public transportation is difficult to provide given the landscape and diffuse population. A new Bustang route is expected to provide transportation from Sterling to Greeley. Area also has two small transit systems which require 24 hour-advance notice reservations. Provides transportation to health care in Denver, Greeley, and Sterling.
- The transition from a predominantly agriculture-based economy poses ongoing challenges.
- There is not a lot of geriatric health care in the region but COVID has increased availability and use of telemedicine.
- Community is focusing on leadership development within the next generation. Many of the previous/current community leaders are older and Pro 15 is actively considering how to connect with and engage a new generation of leaders; looking to facilitate connection to the older adult population.
- Over time, Northeastern Colorado is becoming a minority-majority region with an influx of a large immigrant population.

Update: Jarett Hughes, Governor's Senior Advisor on Aging

Presentation overview:

- COVID updates – hospitalization rates and ICU stays are doing down and death rates in Colorado are better than in many parts of the country. Vaccination rates are hitting target goals. The Homebound Vaccine Program is close to operationalizing; exploring partnership with mobile providers.
- 2021 Work Priorities – development of Lifelong Colorado state plan, livable community efforts in connection with DOLA; age-friendly public health systems.

For more details see the [Presentation Slides](#).

Next Meeting, April 12th

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.

Save the Dates!

Legislative Caucus on Aging – April 23rd @ 7:30 am via Zoom

Durango/Cortez Regional Meeting – June 22nd 9:00 – 11:00 am via Zoom

Summit County Regional Meeting – August 5th 10:00 – 12:00 pm location TBD