



**Strategic Action Planning Group on Aging Meeting  
September 13, 2021**

**Agenda**

- 12:00 pm: Welcome & Roll Call
- Approve Agenda and August Meeting Minutes
- 12:05 pm: Member & Staff Announcements; Public Comment
- 12:10 pm: SAPGA Membership
- Acknowledgement of Gabriel Kaplan’s service
  - Welcome to Tara Trujillo, CDPHE Representative to SAPGA
- 12:15 pm: SAPGA Executive Committee Nominating Committee - Membership
- 12:20 pm: Review & Discussion of SAPGA 2021 Recommendations
- Workforce Subcommittee Recommendations
  - Disparities Task Force Recommendations
  - Federal Stimulus Spending Recommendations
  - Updates on Draft Recommendations of COVID and Long-Term Care/Caregiving Subcommittees
- 1:05 pm: Break
- 1:15 pm: SAPGA Sunset Review Process and SAPGA Member Survey Results, Ed Leary & Christian Itin
- 1:45 pm: Discussion of the Older Coloradans Act, Jarett Hughes, Governor’s Senior Advisor on Aging
- 2:15 pm: Breakout Group Discussion: Colorado’s State Structure on Aging
- 2:45 pm: Report Back
- 2:55 pm: Public Comment
- 3:00 pm: Chair offers closing comments; Adjourn Meeting

**Next SAPGA Meeting – October 11th – Virtual Meeting via Zoom**

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**Meeting Minutes**

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**SAPGA Members:** Ed Leary, Christian Itin, Dave Norman, Karin Stewart, Sarah Elliot, Tara Trujillo, Steve Child, Tony Tapia, John Emerson, Hayley Gleason, Kara Harvey, Kelly Ostoff, Aisha Young, Andrea Kuwik, John Zabawa, Jane Barnes, Jean Nofles

**Public Participants:** Andrea Suhaka, Bob Epstein, Rita Widman, Richard Blubaugh, Pat Cook, Phil Cernanec, Lorye McLeod, Elicia Lambert, Coral Cosway, State Rep. Mary Young, Ronica Rooks, Diana McFail, Leslie Kalechman, Briony Catlow, Andrew Thomas Davies, Daria Redmond, Carol Cross, Jodi Waterhouse, Gail Meehan, Kari Degerness, Paula Sterns, Erica Reinhard, Sharon Courtney, Paula Sterns, Sue Ronnenkamp, Michael Hare, Laura Ringo, Kathleen Drullinger, Gretchen, Bob Brocker, Peggy Stoltenberg, Karen Brown, Amber Minogue, Andrea Wilkins

**Meeting Minutes:**

- Meeting was called to order by SAPGA Chair Ed Leary at 12:02. Andrea Wilkins confirmed the presence of a quorum.
- Group approved the September meeting agenda (motion by Christian Itin, second by John Emerson); approved August meeting minutes (motion by Karin Stewart, second by Tony Tapia).

**Announcements & Public Comment:**

Ed Leary recognized Gabriel Kaplan's service on SAPGA board as the CDPHE representative; welcomed Tara Trujillo to be the new CDPHE representative to SAPGA.

**SAPGA 2022 Executive Committee Nominations:**

Chair requested that current Executive Committee members provide notice via email if they are interested in continuing their service through 2022; requested that SAPGA members interested in serving on Executive Committee or the Executive Committee nominating committee notify SAPGA administrators by email.

**Review of SAPGA Recommendations; Committee Updates:**

Workforce Committee: Tony Tapia; Karen Brown

- Overview of recommendations was provided by committee chair Tony Tapia
- COVID has exacerbated a lot of workforce issues that have been contemplated/addressed by the committee's recommendations.
- Recommendations are building on generic recommendations from the last 7 years adding tactical and specific elements this year.
- No questions or concerns raised by SAPGA members – expression of gratitude for the great work by subcommittee.

Disparities Task Force Recommendations: Aisha Young

- Address the intersectionality of issues of race, age, gender, sexual identity, etc. and the importance of using an intersectional lens in the consideration of policy development for the aging.
- Committee is recommending a declaration by General Assembly and Governor that racism is a public health crisis; recommending creation of new position – Senior Advisor on Aging, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (ADEI).
- Overview of California Equity tool – CA Master Plan on Aging
- No questions or concerns raised by SAPGA – Planning Group thanks task force for work and recommendations.

Stimulus Recommendations: Christian Itin

- 6 recommendations were presented to Planning Group. All were previously reviewed/approved by SAPGA Executive Committee and are designed to include specifics on funding allocations to support SAPGA recommendations and goals (and based on previous SAPGA recommendations).

COVID Recommendations: John Emerson, Ed Leary

- First draft of recommendations reviewed by committee, incorporating feedback, will present to EC for review, present to SAPGA for approval during November meeting.
- Disproportionate impacts associated with COVID in terms of age and race; COVID has exacerbated the acuity of needs across the board (i.e. care delivery, standards of care, public health concerns).
- Committee focused on four categories: public health systems; social isolation of seniors; health systems/ICU; impact and response of AAA and county government.

Long Term Care Recommendations: Sarah Elliot

- Future of care settings/future of LTC.
- Working on 4 recommendations; finalizing language and content including social-led model of care, ensure funding for AAAs, assessment and mitigation of disparities, behavioral health and intersection of older adults in congregate care settings. Looking at 8 domains of aging – focus on how we create sustainable communities that allow for aging in place.
- Concern raised around recent reporting on unnecessary drugging of seniors in LTC settings. Classifying them as schizophrenic and medicating to mask and control behavior – see [NYT article](#).

No objections to SAPGA recommendations or concerns raised.

**SAPGA Sunset Review:**

- 3 factors to be considered by DORA: What purpose was group created to address, did we do what we were created to do, is there anything left to do?
- All information requested has been submitted to Brian Tobias with DORA. Brian will make recommendation and send report to DOLA by October 15th.
- Member survey of current and past SAPGA members was conducted about our current work and future. 23 responses. ([Click here](#) for slides) Results appear to show that members feel SAPGA is still relevant and there is still a need for it – but it must evolve. Most obvious way recommended by respondents is the ability to advocate and implement our recommendations, including funding to support implementation.
- SAPGA will have to address a “younger old group” in future. Chronic health needs are appearing at a younger age in our population. Transportation in rural areas is critical. Housing/home-share is a pressing need.
- There should be lobbying arm to ensure implementation of SAPGA’s work.
- More diverse regional representation needed on SAPGA.
- COVID has shown that without execution on our recommendations, older adults will continue to suffer setbacks in many areas. Implementation is key. Now would be the worst time to discontinue this group because needs have increased during COVID and interagency cooperation is needed now more than ever.
- If SAPGA continues, group should continue virtual meetings so people from all parts of Colorado can participate.

- If SAPGA is discontinued, are there other groups that do similar work? This will be focus of the conversation with Jarett Hughes and possible reforms here. (CO Center for Aging, CCOA, CO-Care). SAPGA is unique in its breadth and depth of issues it covers and its broad stakeholder/community participation. Diversity has allowed SAPGA to have a de-siloed approach to aging work in Colorado.

### Discussion of Older Coloradans Act:

Jarett Hughes, Senior Advisor on Aging

(See slides [here](#).)

- Goal is to continue collecting feedback on OCA as we look to modernize, particularly in relation to revisions.
- Federal law specifies via the Older Americans Act that the state agency shall be the leader in relation aging issues on behalf of older people in the state.
- Older Coloradans Act – creates CCOA, State Office on Aging, lays out duties of AAAs. This should be our starting point. What is next for the OCA? (originally passed in 1964)
- Lifelong CO is our vehicle for promoting local, regional, and state strategies on aging.
- First draft of revisions to OCA will be made by Friday Sept. 17.

Discussion:

- Would want to see language and vision that SAPGA put forth in our goals, vision, and recommendations. First and foremost we want to see this put into law. Whether SAPGA continues depends on what the revisionary language is. If CCOA is autonomous (with external staffing) and can make/implement recommendations, perhaps SAPGA could sunset. Citizen oversight is critical – it must lead the process. State Office should be the convenor, not the only agency responsible for work. Must also include a public-private-nonprofit partnership. If all these pieces can come into the revised legislation, members could be supportive and may agree that SAPGA could sunset.
- There is a need for sustainable funding. We need to strategically build for levels of greater economic independence for older Coloradans. Needs to be a department who is held accountable. Responsibility for implementation should be centered on administration (executive branch).
- We are critically in need of innovation and new models for serving older Coloradans. Need a break with strategies from past. Funding to support is critical.
- Need to also focus on potential of older adults – not just problems.
- Need for supervision role outside of the government that is not dependent on the political apparatus to survive.
- Members would like to see broader cross-agency coordination, including outside groups; proactive identification and development of programs and services. Outreach must go beyond AAAs. Must retain flexibility to act locally and develop community-specific strategies – this is an existing benefit of AAAs.
- About ¼ of state is people over 50. Having 2 bodies is not an over-representation. CA has 3 paid staff and a focus on equity – this would be helpful in CO. Would also be helpful to have someone focused on diversity and equity within a broader aging focus.
- Must figure out how we bring private sector to table and figure out how to partner. This could be an exciting opportunity to modernize OCA.

Breakout Group 1 – Ed Leary, moderator

Participants: Ed Leary, Karin Stewart, Hayley Gleason, Dave Norman, Steve Child, Gail Meehan, Kara Harvey, Phil Cernanec, Ronica Rooks, Kathleen Drullinger-Haerr, Aisha Young, John Emerson, Carol Cross, Ed Leary, Andrea Wilkins

- Ability to implement, structure our recommendations into legislation is what is missing from SAPGA. CO Center for Aging has been trying to focus efforts here but it is hard to round up sponsors. State body needs to be able to do this without trying to persuade legislators to care.
- How do we get more legislators to pay attention to aging issues? SAPGA needs power to lobby.
- Need a matrix organization – so many silos. There are always barriers and competing interests among organizations, including competition over funding. We need representation across state, need to break down barriers. More community input is needed.
- Three key components critical to new structure: Policy, strategy and lobbying; oversight, quality and measurement of actions; implementation.
- Innovation is key. We need new ideas.
- Looking at other states – what models are successful?
- Development of state plan on aging referenced in OCA is what SAPGA has been doing. Revisions need to take this into consideration. SAPGA should be incorporated into OCA.
- Need coordination with private sector and nonprofit groups.
- Lifelong CO creates framework. Really focuses on local level implementation and innovation. It has a lot of things we want and we need to think about how we leverage it.
- OCA needs to ensure that data collected is sufficient to support this work.
- Funding for middle market – how do we support those that are not in poverty but not wealthy either?
- Dedicated funding to support innovation in aging should be considered in OCA revisions.
- OCA needs to ensure that have data that we need to do this work.

Jarett notes that this is the first of many conversations on this topic. First revisions expected Friday. Goal is to provide starting point for members to comments on tangible document, instead of talking about this in theory.

Breakout Group 2 – Christian Itin, moderator

Participants: Christian Itin, Kelly Osthoff, Bob Epstein, Coral Cosway, Amber Minogue, Sue Ronnenkamp, Andrea Suhaka, Jarett Hughes, Andrea Kuwik, Tony Tapia, Tara Trujillo, John Emerson, Karen Brown, Amber Minogue, and Briony Catlow

What would we like to see in a revised state structure in Colorado? What needs to be in the rewrite of the Older Coloradans Act (OCA) to make Colorado the best place to age in the US?

- The question was asked about the relationship between SAPGA and the Area Agencies on Aging. SAPGA has a statutory requirement to have a representative from an Area Agency on Aging on the working group. Additionally, SAPGA has had the director of the State Unit on Aging as a member.
- Legislation should include designated liaisons with every state department potentially as an ad hoc group or part of a Technical Advisory Committee to the State Unit on Aging (or Lifelong Colorado). The Technical

Advisory Committee concept is building on language that exists in SAPGA's legislation (HB15-1033). The goal is to formalize the department liaisons.

- For the CCOA or any body that derives out of the modernization of the OCA, the body would be independently staffed, autonomous, and able to implement recommendations and move work forward. They would be fully empowered to advocate, propose legislation, and support legislation and programs that benefit older adults. (California has such a commission and is staffed by three people independent of the Department of Aging. One of their staff positions is a policy person).
- Recommendations were made that more seniors need to be involved in any new body or bodies. A citizen advisory committee or sub-committees were mentioned as options. SAPGA legislation includes three consumer representatives (older adults or family who support older adults). There was concern about creating a commission with 50+ members; mention was made of expanding engagement with all groups including older adults via sub-committees and work groups.
- Expand the focus beyond the most frail and vulnerable population. Many of the poorest of the poor have a place to go for help – this might be about 15% of the population. The middle segment of the older population may need some resources, but few resources exist to help that audience. Additionally, focusing on the other 85% of the population to help them avoid becoming the poorest of the poor or the frailest is also a critical item to include as a part of the modernization of the OCA.
- The OCA rewrite should look more closely at prevention and maintenance of health. Reference was made to the SAPGA recommendation that supported the adoption of the Age Friendly Public Health Initiative – where the public sector takes an active role in helping move the needle on prevention and maintenance of health for the aging adult. Also, adding language about how the state can play a role in empowering aging adults to plan for their later years and be proactive is an important element. Lifelong learning around aging and helping aging adults better prepare for their last chapters of life should be included.
- The rewrite of the OCA should add an element about who will identify and act on the needs of the communities across the state? Who will assess and document the shortages and promote and fund the development of solutions (e.g., shortages of adult day in rural Colorado or shortages of respite care in Colorado)?
- Craft into legislation mandates about data collection in all facets of aging and in every department.