Huntingdon-Bedford-Fulton
AREA AGENCY ON AGING

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Citizens Advisory Council Meeting
Friday, September 24, 2021

The Citizens Advisory Council of the Huntingdon-Bedford-Fulton Area Agency on Aging met on Friday, September 24, 2021 at the Hopewell Senior Center. Council President Prudence Harclerode opened the meeting at 10:00 am.

MOTION: On a Gordon/Lohr motion - The minutes of the July 30, 2021 Advisory Council minutes are approved as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEM 1 - Financial summary. Connie Brode said the Agency ended FY20-21 in good financial shape, mostly due to the Cares and FFCRA funding during Covid. Expenses were also down based on in-home service providers not having sufficient staff to fill care plans and several Agency vacancies. She explained that each service area has a set amount of money and, in regard to the Caregiver Support Program, there are many restrictions which limit the use of funding and some of this is always returned to the Department of Aging. However, guidelines have been loosened which will allow for larger monthly reimbursements under the CSP. Apprise insurance counseling program has been renamed "PA Medi". The Assessment program, which is fee generated, brought in $118,888 in FY20-21.]

ITEM 2 - a) Enrollment update. As previously discussed, DHS went out for bid on Enrollment, which now includes Assessment, and PA Association of Area Agencies on Aging submitted a proposal. However, DHS is negotiating with the current provider, Maximus, which is a huge concern with AAAs and the State Legislature. Connie thanked the Council for the letters they submitted to elected officials and the state supporting AAAs. P4A has submitted numerous protests about Maximus possibly being awarded the contract.

b) Provider issues. With in-home service providers continuing to have staff shortages, no one has been taken off the waiting lists since May and Connie said this is a statewide problem. The Agency bid out personal care and home support for FY20-21 and awarded contracts at an increased rate of $21.00 per hour, but this hasn't seemed to help. Mrs. Harclerode noted the trouble getting workers and questioned if employee wages went up. A new provider took some consumers, but most are not even taking referrals. Connie said there are also problems placing persons who need nursing home care. Mary Gates asked about training aides and Connie said we can refer them to the current providers for possible employment.

During the recent Department of Aging/PA Council on Aging meetings, Connie said there were presentations on Social Security, protective services, the Aging Network and meeting

consumer needs. The state is also reviewing a cost of living increase for PACE/PACENet. Contracting with other AAAs to provide services and the new intrastate funding formula, required by the federal government, were also reviewed. The Agency's PA Council on Aging representative, Brenda Gordon, provided a handout on legislative updates.

ITEM 3 - Senior Centers. All centers, including satellites, are open with sites making adjustments due to Covid numbers, sanitizing centers, etc. Some are beginning activities. Congregate take-out meals are scheduled to end December 31, but Connie will check on this in light of Covid numbers. Bobbi Manges said PCN is having trouble getting food products and asked that participants be patient if menus are periodically changed. She said PCN has only 3 staff at the McConnellsburg kitchen putting out 1,300 meals a day. The Agency needs food service workers at Juniata Valley, Three Springs, Bricktown (Mt. Union) and Hustontown. Volunteers are helping at the centers and this is very much appreciated.

LaVonne Lohr asked about timeframes for picking up meals and Connie said the centers can be flexible and try to accommodate persons' schedules. Bobbi said most centers have set 10:30-11:30 for pick-ups and try to have them out prior to serving the congregate meal. Take out meals have attracted new people and it is hoped that they will come to the centers in the future. Mrs. Harclerode said some have questioned the lack of variety in recent meals and Connie said this goes back to having trouble getting products and increasing food prices.

Lester Richardson, a guest from Chaneysville, said there is a rumor that the Agency is closing the Chaneysville Center. Connie assured him that there has been no discussion on closing centers or satellites and that the Joint Board of Commissioners is very much in support of senior centers. Mr. Richardson and Jeannie Zimmerman asked about getting a paid employee and Connie said there is no paid staff at any of the satellites. We appreciate those who volunteer, but the Agency can't support paid staff at these facilities. She and Bobbi will set a meeting with the Chaneysville group to discuss operations.

ITEM 4 - PA-Medi Insurance. Open enrollment for persons to review and/or change their insurance begins October 15. Additional information can be found on the PDA website under Medicare counseling. The Agency has a worker in each county office who is trained to assist individuals. Persons should also check eligibility for PACE/PACENet.

ITEM 5 - Transportation. Connie said we are very short on drivers, as well. Persons can apply on Indeed.com or through Career Link's website or call the Bedford Office.

PennDOT is setting up a new website called Find My Ride (findmyridepa.org) for persons to schedule a ride with the appropriate agency. She reminded everyone that Cart is a public transit program and, if someone doesn't qualify for one of the reduced fares, they can still ride by paying the full fare. Reduced fares are $1.75 per stop in our 3-county area and $4.50 per stop in counties contiguous to ours, with the balance of the fares being paid through various funding resources including the Agency, PennDOT, Medical Assistance, etc. Mrs. Harclerode volunteers at the Bedford Office and said, in entering results of the recent transportation survey,

comments have been very optimistic and people are happy with the service. Mrs. Lohr praised the service and said drivers and dispatch staff are wonderful.

Tony Molinari said that the shortage of drivers is statewide and we are feeling the pinch. Persons confirm their interview, but do not show up. Cart has had to cancel some out of area trips, particularly in Bedford County. Connie apologized for any disruption of service and hopes that we can soon get back to normal.

In closing, Connie explained a new law that went into effect in Pennsylvania regarding advertising public meetings. The meeting notice along with the agenda and minutes must be posted on the Agency's website at least 24-hours in advance. The information will be posted only until the next meeting is scheduled and advertised.

The Agency's website is full of information and, throughout the meeting, Bobbi projected on the screen how to access various information. She also shared statistics about website usage for the past 30 days, with 762 users accessing the site and 540 Google searches.

Based on the Thanksgiving holidays, the next Advisory Council meeting will be Friday, November 19.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:05 am.

Those in attendance included:

Prudence Harclerode	Bedford County
Mary Gates	Huntingdon County
Brenda Gordon	Fulton County
Jeannie Zimmerman	Bedford County
Doris Imgrund	Bedford County
LaVonne Lohr	Fulton County
Lester Richardson	Guest
Ron Morgan	Daily News
Bobbi Manges	AAA Staff
Lori Heaton	AAA Staff
Tony Molinari	AAA Staff
Cindy Harbaugh	AAA Staff
Connie Brode	AAA Staff