

COMMITTEE: GENERAL	DATE: APRIL 2, 2020	LOCATION: ZOOM TELECONFERENCE
<p>PRESENT: Asimos, Bortel, Boutilier, Bradley, Brilliant, Dowling, Etemovic, Gunn, Kwentus, Lamorte, Locks, López, Marchese, Nuessle, Silverman, Timms, Turner, Vreeland Long, Weingarten, Zeller</p> <p>EXCUSED: Barry, Saffran</p> <p>VACANT: CSL</p>		
<p>RECORDER: Mandy Reyes</p>		
<p>NEXT MEETING: Thurs., May 7, 2020, by Zoom teleconference</p>		
<p>MINUTE SUMMARY</p>	<p>ACTION TAKEN/RESPONSIBLE PARTY</p>	
<p>Call to Order Chair Marchese called the meeting to order at 11:31 a.m.</p> <p>Approval of Agenda The agenda of April 2, 2020 was approved as written.</p> <p>Approval of the Minutes The minutes of March 5, 2020 were approved as amended: On page 2, under Salamah Locks: Thanked those commissioners who responded re: health concerns with voting booths. Salamah, <i>Chloe Cook and Mark Solomon</i> were able to distribute Clorox wipes to 36 of 92 voting sites. On page 5, under Sybil Boutilier: They met with staff in <i>Assemblyman Levine's</i> office and with other representatives.</p> <p>Open Time for Public Expression: <i>Linda Jackson with Aging Action Initiative (AAI):</i> Congratulated the Commission on Aging (COA) for reaching this Area Plan milestone. AAI is looking at putting on some Inform & Connect mini academies for the network. Addressing key issues of the moment one of which is the moratorium on evictions for renters. They are also surveying local jurisdictions to see what they are doing to stay in touch and support their older residents.</p>		

Ellen Baxter, AAI, Community Outreach Coordinator, Detect & Connect: Detect & Connect is now able to go online through Zoom with live workshops. They can deliver important information and offer much needed socialization because the meetings are interactive.

Aging and Adult Services Report:

Lee Pullen, Director, Area Agency on Aging reported on the following:

Pullen provided a program by program report on where things stand and what some of the activities have been in the last month and gave an administrative update that ties into what Aging and Adult Services may be doing in the next few weeks.

- Adult Protective Services (APS) and In-Home Support Services (IHSS) are all working remotely however APS investigations are still being conducted in the field. There has not been an uptake in abuse reports, although domestic and family violence can increase when people are together and isolated. IHSS social workers have been checking in with older adults and adults with disabilities and reassessing over the telephone. For new intakes, the state still requires those to be done in person. Masks and hand sanitizer are being used. Care providers to date have been able to perform their work and continue to go into homes to provide support.
- In the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program, there has been lots of activity in partnership with our Public Health Department and our Emergency Operations Center around people who may become infected with COVID-19 in an assisted living or skilled nursing facility and the interrelation with hospitalization should someone be hospitalized. The California Department of Public Health ordered these facilities to take people back when they are released from the hospital if they were living there or allow for new admission of people who have COVID-19. There is a great deal of concern about this, but the practical side is to not overwhelm the hospitals.
- The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) has been getting the Area Plan together and ready to present and continue to operate the Information & Assistance office which has had a surge of calls. They are also working closely with the COVID-19 hotline which is at 415-473-7191.
- Jenay Cottrell, Program Manager, has spearheaded a partnership with Whistlestop, Marin Center for Independent Living, West Marin Senior Services, Jewish Family and Children's Services, and Good Earth to deliver groceries to individuals who are older or have underlying health conditions and are choosing not to go to the store.

- AAA is awaiting notification from the California Department of Aging (CDA) as to an estimate of what our federal funding will be out of the Cares Act. This is monies that were set aside for the AAAs for emergency services. This money will be able to be used in a more flexible way than we have been able to do in the past.

Chairman’s Report:

Chair Marchese reported on the following:

- The 4-year plan is the COA’s baseline for funding. It’s safe to say that disaster preparedness appears to be of highest priority.
- Filling out the census is important and learning how to do census reporting is important and he would like the commission to make this a priority.
- Marchese would like the COA to build relationships with the AAI organizations to increase the flow of information and education and so that the COA’s 3 charges, performing, educating and advocating can be more streamlined.
- Marchese would like to present the COA’s priorities to Director Pullen to confirm they align with the priorities of Aging and Adult Services.
- Marchese has requested from a team of lawyers that he has worked with over the years to see how the HIPAA law can be relaxed during this pandemic so that older adults in need can be identified.

Vice-Chairman’s Report:

Vice-chair López reported on the following:

MEDICARE AND COVID-19 COVERAGE UPDATES

Testing:

- Physician ordered COVID-19 test is covered with no cost sharing in either traditional Medicare or a Medicare Advantage Plan.

Hospitalizations:

- All medically necessary hospitalizations are covered.

- Include extra days in the hospital for inpatients who would have been discharged but were diagnosed with COVID-19 and had to stay longer under quarantine.
- No differential charge for private room if room medically necessary.

Vaccine:

- None yet. Under current law, when vaccine available all Part D plans (and MAPD) required to cover

Telehealth:

- Medicare beneficiaries allowed to receive a wider range of healthcare services without having to travel to a facility.
- Covers doctors, nurse practitioners, clinical psychologists, and licensed clinical social workers.
- Deliver telehealth via phone and video chat at home or any health care facility (office, hospital, nursing home, clinic).
- Includes routine visits, mental health counseling, preventive health screenings for cancer and other illnesses.
- During emergency, paid at same rate as in-person services.
- Waive requirement that patient had to see doctor within past 3 years.

MEDICARE AND COVID-19 INITIAL ENROLLMENT

Medicare Enrollment through Social Security (SSA)

- Local Social Security offices are closed to the public, although some continue to provide services over the phone
- SSA extending deadlines for filing “whenever possible”
- Beneficiaries who need to apply for Medicare Parts A & B
- Suggest creating an account on www.ssa.gov to allow those in Medicare’s initial enrollment period to apply for both A & B
- To locate telephone number to local SS office: <https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>

MEDICARE AND COVID-19 SPECIAL ENROLLMENT

Medicare Part B and Special Enrollment through SSA

Scenario – Individual wishes to enroll immediately because:

- Job is unavailable at the current time
- Not going to work due to fear of contracting virus
- Lost job and employer sponsored health insurance
 - Must file 2 Forms to enroll in Part B •
 - CMS 40B Application for Enrollment in Medicare Part B, **AND**
 - CMS L564 Request for Employment Information
- Open questions (no guidance yet)
 - What if workplace has closed or no access to records?
 - What to do if Social Security offices aren't open?

MEDICARE AND COVID-19 MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLANS

“We must remove barriers that could prevent or delay beneficiaries from receiving care.” CMS on 3-10-2020

- 42 C.F.R. 422.100(m) authorizes special requirements during a disaster or emergency related to Medicare.
- MA plans must:
 - Cover benefits at non-contracted facilities if those facilities have participation agreements with Medicare.
 - Waive, in full, gate-keeper referral requirements.
 - Provide same cost-sharing for in and out-of-network.
 - Make changes immediately without 30-day notification, e.g. reductions in cost sharing, waiver of prior-authorization.

MEDICARE AND COVID-19 MEDICARE ADVANTAGE

Examples of possible MA Plan waivers:

- Remove prior-authorization requirements
- Waive cost-sharing for COVID-19 treatments in Dr. office or emergency room
- Waive prescription refill limits; relax restrictions on home delivery
- Expand access to telehealth
- Loosen provider-enrollment requirements
- Suspension of nursing home pre-admission reviews
- Reimbursement to providers for care delivered in alternate settings

Telephone Confirmation: Beneficiaries should contact their Medicare Advantage plan to confirm specific waivers – recommend getting full name of customer service individual and note date/time of the call.

On-line Confirmation: Beneficiaries should copy or electronically save waiver information on-line that they rely on, in case it should change.

MEDICARE AND COVID-19 PRESCRIPTION REFILLS

Medicare Contractor consideration criteria to pay for a greater than 30-day supply of drugs:

- Nature of the drug (including Part B immunosuppressive drugs)
- Patient's diagnosis
- Extent and likely duration of disruptions to the drug supply chain during an emergency
- Other relevant factors to determine if extended supply is reasonable and necessary
- Up to a 3- month supply CMS permits plans to relax restrictions on use of preferred retail or mail-order pharmacy but does not require it.

MEDICARE AND COVID-19 GENERAL RESOURCES

- CMA Website: <https://www.medicareadvocacy.org/from-the-centerfor-medicare-advocacy/https://www.medicareadvocacy.org/covid-19- may-impact-medicare-coverage/>
- CMS Fact Sheet on Coverage and Payment Related to COVID-19 for Medicare: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/03052020-medicare-covid-19-fact-sheet.pdf>
- CMS Telemedicine Fact Sheet: <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/factsheets/medicare-telemedicine-health-care-provider-fact-sheet> ♣ CMS Memorandum for MA and Part D Plans: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/hpms-memo-covid-informationplans.pdf>
- 1135 Waivers and Therapists: <https://skillednursingnews.com/2020/03/cmscracks-window-for-virtual-therapy-visits-in-nursing-homes-amid-covid-19- but-barriers-remain/>
- Testing is Covered: <https://www.medicare.gov/coverage/coronavirustest?emci=b1f91b3e-8168-ea11-a94c-00155d03b5dd&emdi=bc9b7933-9768- ea11-a94c-00155d03b5dd&ceid=4142489>

- Kaiser Family Foundation on COVID-19 Coverage and Costs:
<https://www.kff.org/medicare/issue-brief/faqs-on-medicare-coverage-andcosts-related-to-covid-19-testing-and-treatment/> ♣
- CMS Provider Fact Sheet (waives 3-day prior hospital stay):
<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/covid19-emergency-declaration-healthcare-providers-fact-sheet.pdf>

Proposed Slate of Officers from the Nominating Committee for FY 20-21:

Chair Marchese nominated Jean Gunn, Woody Weingarten and Chris Asimos as members of the Nominating committee and the full commission needs to vote on them. Their charge is to solicit candidates for officers' positions for the upcoming June election. There was a motion by Commissioner Locks to vote and there was a second. The Commission on Aging voted and approved the 3 nominees.

California Senior Legislature Senior Assembly Position Vote:

- Lisa Brinkmann has applied as a candidate
- Application period closed March 27
- Move to approve the application of Lisa Brinkmann was approved

Committee Reports:

- Planning (Brilliant).
 - The Planning Committee met on March 18 and finalized the Area Plan presentation you saw today.
 - Next meeting is TBD.
- Health and Nutrition (Asimos):
 - Next Health and Nutrition meeting is next week on Friday, April 10 from 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
 - Lorraine Wilson will be talking about the digital and health connection divide and program.
 - They plan to brainstorm about the current situation at hand and what support this group can give to older adults during this pandemic.

- Housing and Transportation (Bortel):
 - The 67 senior units that Whistlestop is building along with Eden Housing has been approved for once construction is allowed again.
 - The Care Act will impact the Bay Area and the Marin Transportation Coordinator (MTC) will be getting a portion of 1.3 billion for public transportation.
 - Emergency housing, the bay area will get 13.9 billion.
 - Next meeting is May 20.

- Legislative (Boutilier)
 - The committee met last week. Assemblyman Mark Levine asked to join the meeting. It was very informative. He talked about how the state will be going forward.
 - A recording of the hour with Levine could be made available to all.
 - Peter Mendoza of Marin Center for Independent Living (MCIL) reported that the Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) sub-committee has decided to suspend their Master Plan for Aging work so that they could focus on people and older adults with disabilities because of the COVID-19 situation. They did to commit to several draft recommendations which are on the website. Peter will send a copy of these recommendations to Sybil.
 - Peter also reported the Disability Rally Day is going to be a virtual event on June 3rd. It's the 30th anniversary of the American's with Disability Act and this is the theme.
 - Carole Mills (District Representative, CA Senator Mike McGuire) reported that they have been inundated with letters, phone calls and email questions around the pandemic. Some are health related particularly from health care providers that do not have the equipment they need to keep themselves safe. Most have to do with financial concerns such as taxes, income and property taxes, drivers licenses, and from small business and independent contractors who are getting killed in this crisis.
 - The Health Equity Workgroup is having their first meeting this coming Friday.
 - Next meeting is Friday, April 17.

- Ad hoc (Silverman/Timms)
 - The committee met on March 12.

- In order to make this committee a permanent committee they must go through some steps.
- They spent some time coming up with a title for this committee. For now, Outreach, Equity and Advocacy Committee is the working title.
- They discussed empowering commissioners to begin advocating more.
- Next meeting is scheduled for April 16 at 10:30 a.m. They will need some help from staff to set up a Zoom meeting.

Age-Friendly Update:

Jody Timms reported on the following:

- They had a check-in meeting and a Zoom meeting, and they are connecting and sharing what they are doing in different cities to support their older adults.
- Marin Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) is having a meeting on Monday to share the neighbor to neighbor programs.

Aging Action Initiative Update:

Teri Dowling reported on the following:

- The Steering Committee is meeting regularly to check-in with each other.
- The convening has been rescheduled for Sept. 16.

Commission Updates and Announcements (*public comment*):

A lot of towns are doing doorhangers to reach out to people that cannot use smartphone and computers. The doorhangers list the volunteer match program, gives links and phone numbers.

New Business (*public comment*):

Chair Marchese made a motion to table remaining items until next meeting. Motion was approved.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 12:49 p.m.

The next meeting will be on May 7, 2020 by teleconference.