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## Meeting Minutes

**Welcome and Introductions:** Bob Meyers, *Chair*

**In Attendance:**

- Bob Meyers
- Nancy Andersen
- Becky Bird
- Gayle Carlson
- Susan Lubke
- Brian LaMoure
- Audrey Finlayson
- Jerry Thex, Jr.
- Peggy Tombre
- Alex Ward
- Kerrie Reidelbach
- Lindsey Carter
- Kristin Page-Nei (Guest Speaker)

During the introductions Gayle mentioned the TFAP Commodities program took \$1 million in cuts.

**2025 Governor's Conference on Aging:** Kerrie Reidelbach, *DPHHS SLTCD Aging Services Bureau Chief*

- September 16 – 17 in Helena at the Great Northern Best Western Hotel.
- Draft agenda was shared with the group.
- Help is needed with gathering silent auction items, setting up the items at the hotel, and completion of the bid sheets to help support the mini-grants program.
  - Becky volunteered to lead.
  - Jerry volunteered to help welcome participants at the registration table.
  - Brian is working on contacting the Helena Indian Alliance about presentation of the Flags.
  - Nancy reported AARP is working on a keynote speaker, possibly Will Phillips, AARP Regional V.P.
  - Becky, Gayle, and Audrey volunteered to review the mini grant proposals.
- To date, six centenarians have registered with one interested in attending the luncheon.
  - Becky asked about writing a letter to the editor for her surrounding communities to promote the centenarian luncheon and the Governor's certificates recognizing their achievement. Others are open to that as well.
  - Becky agreed to draft the letter that others could use it if they want.

- Kerrie will review the letter and add additional information such as the website link for the application. Once finalized, this will be shared with the council.
- Tessa already has six sponsors for the conference: Discreet Solutions, Easterseals Goodwill, Consumer Direct, Association for the Blind, and the Commission on Securities and Insurance. Hoping for Caitlin with Wish of a Lifetime from AARP to sponsor, and she is waiting for her budget to be released sometime in May to confirm.
- After review of breakout sessions on the draft agenda, it was suggested to include a senior center from Indian Country as well as a mini-grant recipient from last year to talk about their work.
  - Nancy has a funeral home contact.
  - Gayle is going to check into end-of-life choir groups or musicians in the area.
  - Becky recommended everyone watch a Netflix episode titled: *You Can't Ask That* season 2, episode 9. The centenarians interviewed all answered each of the questions that were on cards they randomly drew. She stated it was very interesting hearing about their different perspectives. The thought was to possibly recreate this for a breakout session. Susan is willing to lead this effort if group decides to do this.
  - There was also a discussion about repeating breakout sessions so people could hear more of the topics offered. Doing so would limit the number of possible topics.

#### **69th Legislative Session: Kristin Page-Nei, AARP Lobbyist**

- Reported that the 2023 session had 4,643 bill drafts of which 1,698 were introduced and 885 of those became law. This year close to approximately 817.
- Looking at the Council's priorities, Kristin presented the bills that would fall into three categories.
  - *Social Determinants of health*
    - AAAs, \$4 million in the budget (\$2 mill/yr).
    - 3% provider rate increase.
    - \$500K for APS for three social service positions for guardianship services.
    - The Dept. requested up to 12 positions for Medicaid processing and ended up with five positions budgeted.
  - *Access to Care*
    - Medicaid Expansion renewal was passed and signed by the Governor. 18,500 people between the ages of 50 and 64 use this service. Coverage for hearing aids passed and requires health insurance companies to cover hearing aids for all persons, not just for children.
    - HB 231 revised property tax passed.
    - SB 542 to freeze property values for two years passed.
    - HB 831 to increase elderly homeowner and renter income tax credit passed.

- HB 827 to revise Social Security income tax by raising the income levels that may be taxed did not pass. This is one that AARP plans to continue working on for the next session.
- HB 398 revises insurance laws related to “prior authorization” of chronic conditions and sets guardrails around adverse decision reviewers to protect consumers.
- Elder Justice
  - HB 532 revises laws related to abuse, neglect, or exploitation of incapacitated persons and vulnerable adults, providing for a crime of abuse, sexual abuse or neglect, or exploitation, failure to report or false reporting, and revising crimes related to theft of identity passed.
  - SB 296 regarding crime against vulnerable people passed with an amendment.
  - HB 743 creates reporting requirements for elder exploitation passed and requires DPHHS to report the elder financial exploitation cases they are investigating to county prosecutors and the AG to file an annual report of the cases.
  - HJ 26 study of guardianships and conservatorships passed. Age-friendly health systems, health provides practicing in the state.
  - HJ 19 passed a joint resolution of the state Senate and to declare the last full week in September as frontotemporal degeneration awareness week.
  - HB 687 revised the age of expanded Medicaid participants who are required to participate in community engagement activities from age 55 to 62.
  - HB 341 revises laws relating to the special revenue account related to brain injuries and the work of the brain injury council. There will be an opt-out fee on the motor vehicle registration opposed to the current opt-in donation. Funds will be used to educate and support individuals and families living with traumatic brain injuries, and it may also support the traumatic brain injury advisory council.
  - SB 524 revises laws relating to assisted living facilities category D option. This category D has been in place since 2017 but has not been used. This bill requires the department to develop a reimbursement model to include enhanced payments for higher acuity needs and higher rates for facilities that provide more individualized or intensive services to fewer than 15 residents.
  - HB 72, presumptive eligibility for HCBS Medicaid, passed. The Dept. will train folks to determine pre-eligibility, so those needing Medicaid can get timely services in their homes.
  - It was also noted that HB 182 passed and provides grant funding for senior citizen centers.
- Kristin has enjoyed working with all the departments throughout the session. She noted momentum for getting more people involved, which should be built on.

- **Questions:**
  - Brian asked about last-minute bills sneaking through at the end. Kristin didn't think so, though possibly in the topic of property tax.
  - Bob asked about the future and until the concrete plans are at the federal level, we cannot change state policy. May have a special session to tackle the effects of the federal changes.
  - Kristin suggested inviting delegates to visit congregate meal sites and learn about SHIP work being done. Storytelling is so important. Lindsey brought up minimal funding for OAA programs, which in this case is good if the state needs to step in and fill in the gaps of funding that may be lost.
  - Gayle noted another part of access is Seniors having access to healthy food, including emergency food supply. The Montana Foodbank Network will begin working on the farm bill starting next week. Kristin will meet with Gayle to discuss how AARP can support this.

**SLTC Division Administrator Update:** Lindsey Carter, *DPHHS SLTCD Administrator*

- A Steering Committee has been established to help with the planning of the upcoming four LTSS summits. This group will ensure success by helping with good representation at the table for each of the locations (Billings, Kalispell, Great Falls and Helena), and providing input into the format or structure of the summits. Brian will be participating and representing the council. The hope is to take all the stakeholder input to use for the next legislative session. There were some bumps in the road during the roundtables, so working to better prepare for these summits and get out what's needed to help meet the future needs of long-term care for Montanans.
- Becky asked about potential priorities for the next session, and Lindsey responded none were set yet. However, focusing on community-based, least-restrictive services continues to be a priority for the Department.

**Other Information on Federal proposed changes:**

- All Older Americans Act (OAA) programs excluding the nutrition program are moving to Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS). Nutrition is moving to Child and Family Services.
- Programs at level funding:
  - Title IIIB Supportive Services
  - Title IIIE Caregiver Supports.
- Programs on the elimination list:
  - Title IIID
  - SHIP
  - Ombudsman
- Programs good for another year:
  - MIPPA
  - SMP

- AAAs met to discuss a grassroots effort for the OAA programs. USAging and ADvancing States are advocating to not separate but keep the OAA programs together under the same administration.

**Council Priorities:**

- **Social Determinants of Health:** Special emphasis on access to nutritious food choices, transportation, housing, and social support/community inclusion.
- **Elder Justice and Fraud Prevention:** Special emphasis on crime/fraud/scam prevention
- **Age-Friendly Health Systems:** Special emphasis on dementia care and caregiver workforce/family caregiver