

Governor's Council to Address Aging in Massachusetts

Thursday, April 26th, 2018

1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

McCormack Building

One Ashburton Place - 21st Floor Conference Rooms 1 & 2

Boston, MA 02108

In attendance: Co-Chairs Secretary Marylou Sudders and Eileen Connors, Secretary Alice Bonner, Ger Brophy, Rosanne DiStefano, Beth Dugan, Kevin J. Dumas, Tom Grape, Chrystal Kornegay, Nora Moreno Cargie, Ruth Moy, Alicia Munnell, Brian O'Grady, and Amy Schectman

On the phone: Bill Caplin, Laura Iglesias Lino, and Janina Sadlowski

Not present: Secretary Rosalin Acosta, Assistant Secretary Kate Fichter, Joe Coughlin, Betsy Hampton, Steven Kaufman, and Tom Riley

Council Staff: Amanda Bernardo, Emily Cooper, Kathryn Downes, Robin Lipson, Thomas Lyons, and William Travascio

The meeting was called to order at 1:08 pm by Co-Chair Secretary Sudders, who welcomed all Council members and visitors. A motion was made by Nora Moreno Cargie to approve the minutes from the December 4th, 2017 meeting. The motion was seconded by Brian O'Grady and the minutes were approved by all members present.

After the minutes were approved, Co-Chair Secretary Sudders thanked everyone who came to the Age-Friendly Massachusetts Designation Event with Governor Baker on April 11th in Framingham. At this meeting AARP designated Massachusetts as an Age-Friendly State. Governor Baker accepted a certificate proclaiming this special designation from AARP National Board of Directors President Eric Schneidewind.

Nora Moreno Cargie said that the Age-Friendly movement began in Massachusetts in 2014, in a hand full of communities. Since then, hundreds of communities across the Commonwealth have begun working to implement Age-Friendly policies. Nora mentioned that the Tufts Health Plan Foundation is inspired by the work that is going on throughout the State. At the April 11th event, she announced that the Board of Directors for the foundation had committed \$250,000 over five years to help continue the work that is underway.

Secretary Bonner said that since the Council's last meeting on December 4th, 2017, five workgroups were formed to focus on more specific policies and programs to recommend to the Governor. The workgroups formed are: Caregiving, Employment, Housing, and Transportation. The 5th workgroup will focus on Innovation & Technology, and will work across each of the workgroups to help them develop their recommendations. In addition, prior to this meeting, each of the workgroups held a series of meetings to develop identify

priorities. The goal is that each workgroup will present an actionable plan at the October 23rd full Council meeting.

Housing Workgroup: Amy Schectman, Housing Workgroup Co-Chair, began by mentioning that the four topics for this workgroup are:

- Services in public housing
- Design standards in new public housing;
- Property tax deferral programs in municipalities
- Housing production

The Housing workgroup developed goals for each of these four areas, including:

- Every older adults in public housing will have access to a qualified Service Coordinator a minimum of once per week.
- The workgroup will develop and the Commonwealth will adopt design standards for state-funded affordable public housing.
- The workgroup will create a housing production strategy for older adults with incomes at 80%-120% of the area median income that will enable older adults to live in the community and have their needs met.
- The number of older adults who take advantage of property tax deferral programs in municipalities across the Commonwealth will increase.

Co-Chair Secretary Sudders asked what the Housing workgroup sees as its greatest challenge to their work. Chrystal Kornegay, Housing Workgroup Co-Chair, said that the biggest challenge is getting services to be place-based, meaning that services would be available right in the building in which the older adult resides. Another challenge is that newer apartment buildings are not always designed with aging and accessibility in mind, such as the placement of light switches, lighting, and doorknobs. Another challenge, which presents opportunity, is to how best serve moderate income older adults. Another challenge is how to engage municipalities so that their residents can age better in their homes.

Nora Moreno Cargie inquired if it would be helpful to convene a focus group of municipalities.

Co-Chair Secretary Sudders offered that representatives from municipalities of varying sizes and geographic locations could be invited to the Council's June 19th meeting.

Chrystal suggested that each municipality could discuss housing, transportation, tax deferral, and other policies that assist residents as they age in their respective communities.

Ger Brophy asked the Housing workgroup what they saw as the top three services that should be offered in public affordable housing for older adults.

Chrystal said a good starting point would be to offer services that are paid for through insurance. Some examples could be adult day health services or home care. Chrystal also discussed the Governor's Housing Choice bill which would help fill service gaps for older adults. Secretary Bonner said that this bill would create opportunities for additional funding for rural areas.

Transportation Workgroup: Roseanne DiStefano, Transportation Workgroup Co-Chair, spoke about communities the Transportation Workgroup looked at that are transportation "rich." These communities have a high number of older adults that are 85 years of age or older, and have a high concentration of people who cannot drive. In contrast, the workgroup also identified communities with high concentrations of fully mobile residents. The workgroup decided it would concentrate on populations/communities that fall in between these two extremes. This middle ground includes individuals who may begin to have issues with vision, they may not drive certain times of the day (such as dusk or dawn), and they may not drive in certain conditions (such as rain or snow). Another population of people that the workgroup is looking to assist includes people who need accessible vehicles for wheelchairs. Rosanne said that sometimes companies will decline a ride if it requires that there be two aides to give assistance. Roseanne suggested that companies be restricted from turning away consumers who need a two person assist.

Roseanne added that one challenge the group faces is to partner with ridesharing services like Uber and Lyft to develop older adult friendly drivers. This could entail training drivers to be aware that when accepting a request for a ride from an older adult that they may have to get out of the car to help the person in getting to or from their house, or carrying groceries for them.

Nora Moreno Cargie, Transportation Workgroup Co-Chair, noted that one of the reasons why transportation is so important is that it is a large industry that can jump across all of the work that the workgroups are doing. Nora mentioned that she and Beth Dugan were recently on a conference call with staff from the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) during which NORC staff mentioned that they would be performing a nationwide scan on transportation for older adults. She added that at the workgroup's last meeting, representatives from the Barr Foundation mentioned that one of their pilot programs is to purchase ramps so older adults with limited mobility can more easily get onto buses. Nora said that their biggest challenge is that there is a lack of resources. Therefore, the workgroup's goal is to partner with other programs in place.

Beth Dugan said that while the transportation industry is vast, as Nora noted, it also means that there is an opportunity to partner with many organizations and businesses.

Roseanne mentioned that there is incentive to develop solutions in the older adult transportation market. The healthcare industry can save money by getting older adults to appointments on time. Likewise, the retail industry can make money if older people are able

to go out and about. Roseanne also noted that the cost of transportation to and from a medical appointment should be included in the cost of a medical bill.

Co-Chair Secretary Sudders noted that the cost of transportation to and from medical appointments is covered for those on MassHealth. She went on to say that there is a successful program that was developed by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health & Human Services and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation that provides rides for individuals to and from the Perkins School.

Employment Workgroup: Alicia Munnell, Employment Workgroup Co-Chair, said that their biggest challenge is that people do not have enough money when they retire. One aspect of retirement that they can control is how much their social security monthly payment is. If someone keeps working and retires at age 70, then their social security benefit will be 76% higher. One goal is to help both employers and employees. One way to help employers is to develop an awareness campaign to educate employers that older adults provide a tremendous value for their businesses. On the employee side, the workgroup seeks to establish an awareness campaign to educate workers about the benefits of working longer and share opportunities for older adults.

Alicia proposed rolling out the awareness campaigns by October. She said that she would hope a meeting could be organized with the Governor and business leaders to share information about the value of older adult workers. These business leaders would be urged to share the information that they learned with their peers. In the employee awareness campaign, they would be informed as to why they should work longer.

Alicia said some of the challenges are: outreach to employees and employers, convincing people to work longer, and finding studies or conducting studies that show the value of older workers. Alicia went on to say that in Massachusetts half of the private sector employees have no retirement plan. One possible solution to this is that if a company does not offer a retirement plan than they can enroll all of their employees into an IRA and the employee can opt out if they so choose to.

Robin Lipson, EOE, noted that half of the workforce in Massachusetts is employed by big companies and the other half are employed by small businesses. Therefore there could also be organizational challenges in connecting to smaller businesses.

Alicia added that she saw an Age-Friendly business model as: first, property tax relief; second, working longer; and third, retirement plan assistance for those who do not have one.

Tim Driver, Employment Workgroup Co-Chair, mentioned that he has been trying to work with larger businesses to make available data to the public about longevity of older adults in the workforce. He said that he has seen data that ties older adults to customer satisfaction. He added that it would be helpful to access data about small businesses.

Co-Chair Secretary Sudders said that she would be willing to work with the Employment Workgroup to help organize a meeting with the Governor and business leaders for some time over the next few months. Secretary Sudders also mentioned that she speaks monthly with Secretary Rosalin Acosta (Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development) and the leaders of some of the business trade groups. The Secretary offered to connect them with members of the Employment Workgroup.

Co-Chair Eileen Connors asked, “How does the Employment Workgroup define ‘small business?’”

Tim Driver offered that in his experience it is typically companies with 500 employees or fewer, while Amy Schectman suggested that it could be 50 employees or fewer. Co-Chair Secretary Sudders said that the Small Business Administration (SBA) defines a small business as having 50 employees or fewer.

Caregiving Workgroup: Secretary Bonner spoke on behalf of workgroup Co-Chairs, Tom Riley and Liz Whitla, who could not be in attendance. The workgroup believes that it would be important for employers to recognize the work of employees who are caregivers. Many older adults are caregivers, but caregiving is not just limited to older adults; there are also many younger people who are caregivers. The Caregiver Workgroup is focused on caregivers in the workforce, the challenges they face, and the potential opportunities that exist to raise awareness. Recently the Executive Office of Health & Human Services hosted the first employee Caregiver Lunch and Learn. At the first meeting, 30 people of different ages attended. Amanda Bernardo from EOEI will be organizing these monthly sessions. Also recently, Fallon Community Health Plan conducted a survey to find out about caregivers in the workforce; we will reach out to them after they conclude their work. Gathering data about caregivers in the workforce will help promote the workgroup’s efforts.

Co-Chair Eileen Connors offered that these support groups would not only be helpful for caregivers to help access information, but could also provide support to the caregivers themselves.

Secretary Bonner added that it is important to leverage legislation, like the CARE Act that was recently passed, to help caregivers as well.

Ruth Moy said that one challenge might be individuals who do not think of themselves or self-identify as a caregiver.

Innovation & Technology Workgroup: Tom Grape began by stating that the goal of the workgroup would be to recommend 2 – 3 initiatives and an implementation plan that leverages technology, innovation, and/or new partnerships to improve transportation, support caregivers, increase engagement, and reduce isolation.

Ger Brophy, Innovation & Technology Workgroup Co-Chair, said that in envisioning the potential to become *the global longevity economy hub*, there are four pillars that the workgroup would use to formulate their ideas. One of these four is called the Grand Challenge which is a technique used at General Electric (GE). The purpose of the Grand Challenge is to develop new ideas on a specific topic by challenging stakeholders to compete for the best idea. Ger added that GE has the infrastructure in place and thought that an event announcing the Challenge could be hosted within a few months, and believed that the Grand Challenge could be conducted early in the fall.

Nora Moreno Cargie said that she would like to see various communities across the state engaged. She offered that this could be an opportunity engage incubators and diverse communities.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.

Brief Summary of Topics Discussed by Council Members:

- Technology
- Financial Planning
- Innovation
- Pilot programs
- Grand Challenge
- Support groups
- Caregiving
- Employment
- Workforce
- Transportation
- Housing
- Age-Friendly