



Assistance. Advocacy. Answers on Aging.



AAC members = 21
Quorum = 11

To deliver, fund, and advocate for services that promote well-being, independence, and dignity for older adults, people living with disabilities, family and informal caregivers, and veterans in Boulder County.

BOULDER COUNTY AREA AGENCY ON AGING ADVISORY COUNCIL (AAC)

MINUTES: Sept. 2, 2022

Hybrid Meeting (Zoom and St. Vrain Community Hub)

AAC Members Present: Arlene Zortman (Co-Chair), Dena Boutwell (Co-Chair), Sara Beery, Lisa Bondi, Cindy Brekke, Pamela Christensen, Reed Cobb, Harriet Edelstein, Charles Erdrich, Jeff Foster, Amelia Groves, Emelita Gagne, Jeanine Tarrant, Ellen Taxman, Carren Williams, Hope Yasbin Engel

Excused: Rose Marie Miller, Diana Mapes, Christine O’Toole, Dave Pinkow, Erin Watson, Hope Yasbin Engel

Staff: Carol Cross, Lindsay Neville, Kate LeMere, Christine Vogel

Guests: Michael Wu (Boulder County Public Health Epidemiologist), Jeanine Hall (BC Co-Responder Team) and Richard Williams (Mental Health Partners)

1. Welcome and Comments from the Co-Chair – Arlene Zortman:

Arlene welcomed everyone to the meeting, referred to the recent appointment of a Racial Equality/Diversity Officer, and highlighted the difference between public and affordable housing to help frame future discussions; issues relating to housing and homelessness would be considered at the next meeting.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting in Aug. 2022 had not been circulated with the agenda papers and will be formally considered for approval at the Oct. meeting.

3. Public Comments and Correspondence

No public comments or issues of correspondence were raised.

4. Additions to the Agenda

No additions were proposed to the agenda.

5. Boulder County Public Health (BCPH) Surveillance Data – Suicide and Substance Use

Michael Wu gave a presentation and outlined recent data, trends and challenges relating to mental behavioral health (MBH), suicide, and substance use. Arising from his presentation and a general discussion, the following key points were noted:

- The surveillance data was collected nationally. The results presented was data gathered from BC Emergency Department (ED) visits and helped to provide a real-time picture of local events and trends.
- The latest BC cumulative data for 2022 (compared to the previous year) confirmed that: more visits to ED were taking place; there had been a 38% annual increase in suicide attempts and ‘suicide ideation’ (particularly amongst the younger population, although there was a large percentage increase in the 70+

population); and opioid overdoses had increased by over 17% with males more likely to overdose.

- It was suggested that relevant authorities should adopt different approaches towards people who overdose for recreation or medical prescription reasons. It was also suggested that the availability of fentanyl had significantly contributed to problems.
- The surveillance data was used by EDs nationally to identify trends and inform future operational plans, but the data was not particularly helpful to compare with other districts.

Michael was thanked for his presentation.

6. Boulder County Co-Responder Team Overview

Jeanine Hall introduced the BC's Co-Responder team, and members held a general discussion and noted the following key points:

- The Co-Responder team currently comprised seven paid women to cover City of Lafayette, the Town of Erie, and unincorporated Boulder County, and would be expanded shortly to include another three team members.
- The team partnered with law enforcement officers to respond to 911 situations (including shootings and fires) to assess risk/safety aspects (controlling the scene if required) and stay involved with affected people to ensure they received the support they needed (such as accessing aging services, responding to long-term care needs, mental health case management, and crisis negotiations).
- The Co-Responder team relied heavily on AAA and worked with senior centers to understand community needs to provide the right service at the right time and engage with advocacy and education programs.
- There were different types of Co-Responder responses, such as riding with law officers, being called to the scene, and no law enforcement officers being present at the scene.
- Boulder was currently considering whether an independent Co-Responder team should be established.
- The latest data concerning call outs in the local area would be forwarded to the AAC, and, currently, 50 contacts in BC involved 'aging in place' issues.

Jeanine was thanked for her presentation, and a ten-minute refreshment break was taken at this point.

7. SB21-290 Act Update

The meeting received an update on SB21-290 from Carol Cross and considered the following key aspects:

- The Act had established a new source of funds, specifically a grant program (in the Department of Human Service's State Office on Aging) to support health, well-being and security of older Coloradans.
- The recent submission of two BCAA proposals had been successful in round one to support a state-wide Community Assessment Survey of Older Adults (CASOA), and local projects to purchase a passenger van (for Erie) and upgrade equipment in Louisville and Longmont.
- A second round of funding was taking place and two project proposals had been submitted concerning (an updated proposal for) the Erie van and Lafayette Senior Center renovation. Further rounds of funding should evolve on an annual basis.

At the end of the meeting, members were also informed of the latest strategic planning developments involving CASOA and associated Community Conversations taking place throughout Boulder County.

8. Mental Health Partners (MHP) Overview and Updates

Richard Williams provided an overview of the operation of Mental Health Partners which offered a range of services and projects for older adults. Arising from Richard's introduction to MHP, members asked a number of questions and the following key points were noted:

- The four person MHP team included two Senior Reach Therapists and an internship consultant.
- MHP services for older adults included both regular services (from outpatient therapy to depression/anxiety support) and specialized services (such as home therapy, senior reach home visits, and geriatric trained therapy). Medicare and Medicaid consultations and financial management sessions were also available, alongside a free Senior Peer counseling service. MHP had continued its 'safety net' policy for clients with resources or private insurance (including those with Medicare and/or Medicaid), and clients with no money or insurance were funded via a grant scheme.
- The Clubhouse program catering for people with different needs (including the homeless) was currently on hold due to pandemic restrictions.
- The demographics and diagnoses of older adult MHP clients were outlined. Clients were predominantly white and the issues initially raised related to anxiety, trauma, depression and bipolar. Services were predominantly located around Boulder.
- MHP operated an Older Adult Internship Program, and was also recruiting new Peer Volunteers (to help people who were struggling with their lives) and seeking referrals for counseling and senior peer counseling.
- Future MHP projects included: a full team providing services onsite at Broomfield and Boulder SNFs; staff training in Older Adult Skills with a specialist at each MHP office; caregiver support groups at each MHP region; drop-in counseling center at Senior Centers; serving Bachelors in Social Work (BSW) in the internship program; and connecting older adult trained clinicians with community organizations.

Richard was thanked for his presentation.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Friday, Oct. 7, 2022, at 9 a.m. at Lafayette Senior Center

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.