

Maryland Commission on Aging
North Laurel Community Center, Laurel, Maryland
November 9, 2016
10:00 AM—12:30 PM
Minutes

Members Present: Rose Maria Li, Chair; Sharonlee Vogel, Vice-Chair; Joy Hatchette; Helen Kimble; Dot Principe; George Rebok; Carmel Roques; Mary Ellen Thomsen

Members Absent: Hon. Barbara Frush, Hon. Jordan L. Harding

Staff Present: Rona E. Kramer, Secretary of Aging; Jeffrey Myers, Principal Counsel, Maryland Department of Aging (MDoA); Rosanne B. Hanratty, MDoA, Staff to the Commission

Greetings and Introductions—Rose Maria Li, Chair:

Dr. Li extended greetings to Ms. Roques and Ms. Hatchette who were appointed to the Commission by Governor Larry Hogan in July 2016. Ms. Roques is the CEO of Keswick and sits on the board of LifeSpan and Ms. Hatchette is Associate Commissioner for Consumer Education and Advocacy of the Maryland Insurance Administration.

Secretary’s Remarks—Rona E. Kramer, Secretary of Aging:

Secretary Kramer welcomed the new commissioners and congratulated Dr. Li on her appointment to the Maryland State Board of Education. She noted that she recognizes the vital importance of the Commission’s work and plans to attend its meetings but that there may be exigencies that necessitate a change in her schedule, in which case Deputy Secretary of Aging, Dina Gordon, will attend in her stead.

Secretary Kramer updated Commissioners on the Governor’s trip to Israel, in which she participated. She said that she had a daylong meeting with officials of the Ministry of Health and her counterparts in the field of aging services. As a country, Israel is similar in size and population to the state of Maryland, but its age distribution reflects a larger proportion of younger residents and a smaller proportion of older adults. She noted that Israeli health programs provide incentives for health promotion and aging in a community setting—goals which she shares.

She said that the triennial legislative audit of the Department of Aging was in progress, that the Department’s proposed FY 2018 had been submitted to the Governor while the FY 2016 budget was being closed out. She explained that the Department reverted \$1.5 million to the state at the end of FY 2016 by implementing efficiencies in operations. She also said that the increase in absolute numbers of older adults as well as changes in age distribution such that older adults are becoming a larger proportion of the total Maryland and US population present challenges to public sector agencies and providers of services to older adults. Among such challenges is the lack of growth in per capita public sector spending.

Secretary Kramer emphasized the importance of evaluating programs for effectiveness and efficiency as well as implementing efforts to enhance and encourage healthful aging and community living for older adults.

Approval of June 8, 2016 Minutes:

The June 8, 2016 minutes were approved without changes.

Statutory Charge and Ethics Guidelines for Maryland Commission on Aging—Jeffrey Myers, Principal Counsel, MDoA:

Mr. Myers stated that as members of the Commission on Aging, Commissioners are subject to the Maryland Public Ethics Law and the Commission is subject to the Maryland Open Meetings Act. Commissioners are precluded from soliciting gifts on behalf of the Department of in their roles as Commissioners. He also cautioned that meetings of the Commission may not occur in facilities regulated by the Department, including for example, continuing care retirement communities. Ms. Hanratty noted that Commissioners may complete online training on state ethics requirements. (<https://efds.ethics.state.md.us>.)

He also stated that at least one member of the Commission must have completed training on the Open Meetings Act. Ms. Vogel stated that she had completed the training. (Information on the Open Meetings Act and training may be found at <http://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Pages/OpenGov/Openmeetings/default.aspx>.) He indicated that effective October 1, 2016 additional requirements on meeting notice, availability of agendas and posting of minutes had taken effect. Ms. Hanratty affirmed that these requirements are being implemented for the Commission.

Mr. Myers stated that he is available for consultation on provisions of the ethics and open meetings laws.

Mr. Myers reviewed the Commission's statutory authority at Maryland Human Services §10–208 (appended), with its charge found at Human Services §10–208 (f) (2) and (3). He also informed Commissioners that the Commission Chair is an automatic member of the Interagency Committee on Aging Services.

Evaluation Results and Follow-up Discussion on September 22nd Symposium for State and Local Commissions on Aging—Rosanne B. Hanratty, Staff to the Commission:

Ms. Hanratty distributed a summary of the results of the Symposium participant evaluations. She noted that the evaluations were overwhelmingly positive and that several attendees had indicated that the presentations would be useful in their work locally.

Discussion of Future Goals, Objectives and Activities of the Commission:

Dr. Li distributed a list questions (appended) for discussion of the Commission's work. She asked for input to set priorities and select those efforts that will be of most assistance to MDoA in light of the Commission's statutory authority and Commissioners' expertise. In light of the Commission's charge to "review: (i) ongoing statewide programs and activities for seniors...," Dr.

Li described a process the National Institute on Aging (NIA) utilizes to conduct regular programmatic reviews. The work of each of NIA's four divisions is evaluated on a rotating basis, with each division evaluated approximately once every 4 years. Dr. Li said that another review method is one in which an agency head prioritizes programs for review. She noted that formal evaluations vary in complexity and cost but that the Commission, and other resource persons that it might call upon, could conduct less formal, but systematic, program reviews.

Secretary Kramer said that the Department is seeking to increase its evaluation capacity and recognizes that evaluation is very valuable but may be very complex because of statewide variations in demographics, local governance, and administrative structure. For example, she said that the 19 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) through which the Department's programs are implemented vary dramatically as do local commissions on aging.

Secretary Kramer identified some broad questions program reviews might address, including: Is the program worthwhile? Is it serving the purpose for which it was established? Is there a more effective way to achieve the program goal? She said that she has invited staff to reflect on such questions.

Dr. Rebok said that distinguishing between the intent of a program and the fidelity with which the program is implemented is important. Ms. Hatchette stated that obtaining input from various parts of the state is important. Secretary Kramer noted that she and the Department interact regularly with AAA directors and staff to obtain input on the issues facing locales. For example, she noted that the Eastern Shore lacks caregivers since many young adults leave the Eastern Shore at the conclusion of their education. She also noted that the degree to which local jurisdictions augment federal and state funding for senior programs varies. Such variations across jurisdictions may make program evaluation difficult.

Notwithstanding local variations, Secretary Kramer said that there are common challenges to be addressed that include enhancing health throughout the lifespan including into older adulthood while funding and providing services for those who require them, including the most frail. Several commissioners noted that health promotion and interventions were critical in childhood and the teen years and inquired about partnerships with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Department of Education in such efforts.

Dr. Rebok described the positive impact for participants in the *Experience Corps* in Baltimore City Schools. *Experience Corps* places trained volunteers, who receive a small stipend, in selected Baltimore City schools to tutor students and assist teachers in classroom activities. NIA funded an evaluation of Baltimore's *Experience Corps* program. The evaluation showed positive impacts of the program on both students and volunteers. He said that the Corps was an example of robust intergenerational interaction and that effective Corps volunteers may include not only the "well elderly" but also what he termed the "mildly frail."

Ms. Vogel said that including health promotion instruction and activities in K-12 curricula was important and inquired whether there were any curricular changes to accompany the

Experience Corps program. Dr. Rebok said that the program was designed to support the current curriculum.

Ms. Roques noted that it was important to encourage use of evidence-based programs that have already been evaluated and been shown to have proven outcomes. Dr. Li suggested that a subgroup be formed to discuss whether *Experience Corps*-type programs might be replicable elsewhere. Dr. Rebok, Ms. Roques, Ms. Principe and Dr. Li will serve on the subgroup. Secretary Kramer noted that the Department is interested in promoting volunteerism and that the recently concluded Boomer Council had addressed the issue. She said that it is important that volunteer opportunities match and utilize the varying skill sets of volunteers.

Other:

Dr. Li suggested that, in light of the Commission's statutory charge and goals, it may be appropriate to utilize its resources to develop program reviews and recommendations rather than hosting a symposium in 2017. Ms. Vogel said that such symposia need not be annual but that the networking component of the symposia are key and should continue in some form.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 PM.