

**Commonwealth Council on Aging
FINAL MINUTES**

**Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services
8004 Franklin Farm Drive
Henrico, VA 23229**

**September 27, 2023
10:00 am – 2:00 pm**

Quarterly Meeting

Members Present: In-Person: David Broder, Harvey Chambers, Jo-Ann Chase, Amy Duncan, Carla Hesseltine, Tresserlyn Kelly, Dr. Cleopatra Kitt, Josh Myers, Ellen Nau, Diana Paguaga, Debbie Preston, Dr. Tina Savla, Beverley Soble, Michael Wampler, Paige Wilson, Roland Winston, Erica Wood, Kathryn Hayfield (Ex-Officio), Courtney Richter (Ex-Officio) and Ron Boyd (Ex-Officio)

Members Absent: Dr. Andrea Buck and Tara Ragland (Ex-Officio)

Guests & Presenters: In-Person: Sue Armstrong, Geraldine Bridgett, Clay Chase, Stephanie Cole, and Erika Payne; Via Zoom: Sol Baik and Steve Zollos

Staff Present: In-Person: Charlotte Arbogast, Frank DeGaetani, Marcia DuBois, Megan Grey, Catherine Harrison, Kathy Miller, Sara Link and Sara Stowe, Via Zoom: Erika Oronskey and George Worthington

Welcome and Member Introductions

Carla Hesseltine, Chair

Chair Carla Hesseltine called the meeting to order at 10:05 am and welcomed members, guests, staff, and presenters.

Chair Hesseltine reminded members that Council meetings are now being live streamed for the public. Members of the public can register to listen to the meeting. Council members participating electronically have joined the meeting as “Panelists” as have our presenters for the meeting. Several council members are joining the meeting via Zoom as permitted by the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

No members were identified as participating electronically due to a personal matter, disability/medical condition, 60+ miles distance, or caregiving obligations.

Charlotte Arbogast called for a Roll Call for attendance and for members to introduce themselves. Charlotte Arbogast confirmed that a quorum was present.

DARS staff, guests, and the presenters for the meeting also introduced themselves.

Review Proposed Agenda
Chair Carla Hesseltine

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Proposed Action: Approve Proposed Agenda

Chair Hesselte stated that the agenda needed to be approved. Jo-Ann Chase made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Roland Winston seconded the motion. Hearing no further discussion, the motion was approved unanimously.

Review of Previous Meeting Minutes

Harvey Chambers, Secretary

Proposed Action: Approve Meeting Minutes

Harvey Chambers presented the July 19, 2023 draft meeting minutes for approval. He stated that the draft minutes had been provided to members and for the public and are posted on the Council's webpage. There were no edits or changes so the minutes were approved by consensus as presented to the Council.

Public Comment Period

Charlotte Arbogast, Council Staff

Charlotte Arbogast asked the public if there were any public comments. She reported that she received two written public comments. The first written comment was provided by Herb De Groft and was included in the Council members' meeting packets. In his comments, Herb de Groft suggested the Council consider prioritizing its 11 Legislative Recommendations to ones that reflect the highest needs, specifically #5 and #6. He inquired about the process to receive input on the priorities from the Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs). Herb De Groft also suggested the Council work with the AAAs to identify key legislators and begin working with them now, in advance of the General Assembly Session, to identify sponsors and advocates for these legislative requests.

The second written comment was received earlier that morning from Steve Zollos, CEO of Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia (SSSEVA). Steve Zollos asked the Council specifically to consider the limited representation SSSEVA's Planning and Service Area (PSA) has on the Council with the forthcoming transition to the new membership structure. Chair Carla Hesselte and Vice Chair Tresserlyn Kelly indicated they would reach out to Steve Zollos for further discussion.

DARS Agency Update

Marcia DuBois, Deputy Commissioner

Deputy Commissioner Marcia DuBois presented an update on DARS, which included:

- Introduced and welcomed Stephanie Cole to the meeting. Stephanie Cole is Virginia's new Administration for Community Living (ACL) Regional Administrator for Region III.
- Noted a recent national survey of older adults identified lack of support, transportation access, food insecurity and economic instability are the top social barriers to older adult health.
- Highlighted Malnutrition Awareness Week from September 18-22, 2023. A 2022 needs assessment survey found that:
 - In 2022, almost 1 in 5 (18%) of Virginians 60+ reported having trouble having enough food to eat.

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- In 2022, 45% of Virginians 60+ reported having trouble maintaining a healthy diet.
- In 2022, almost half (47%) of Virginians 60+ reported the availability of affordable quality food as fair or poor.
- Shared that Virginia's State Plan for Aging Services had been approved by ACL and takes effect on October 1.
- Noted that the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Commission is sifting through the public comments they received on their draft plan and will be putting out a new Dementia State Plan in the coming months.
- Provided an update on the Year 2 Budget, which was adopted earlier in the month and included \$700,000 for supplemental AAA funding, an increase in the Auxiliary Grant rate, and a 5% rate increase for Medicaid Personal Care and Respite Care rates.
- Noted that the next Biennial Budget planning is underway now.
- Highlighted proposed regulations at the federal for the Older Americans Act and Adult Protective Services.
- Shared that DARS had recently received new a new U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Older Adult Home Modification Program grant, a Lifespan Respite Grant Enhancement Supplement from ACL, and renewed grants for GrandDriver and Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA).
- Highlighted new staff at DARS: Laura Koch, Public Guardianship Coordinator; Frank DeGaetani, Legal Services Developer; Matthew Wasikiewicz, Farm Market Fresh Coordinator; and Cassidy Morton, Public Relations and Marketing Specialist.
- Noted that the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services, the state's Medicaid agency, issued a Request for Proposals for the new Cardinal Care Managed Care Program.
- Recognized two Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) for their receive of AARP Challenge Grants, Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens and Local Office on Aging.

Review and Approve Council Annual Report

Proposed Action: Approve 2023 Annual Report

Carla Hesseltine

Chair Carla Hesseltine presented the Council's draft 2023 Annual Report with the 2024 Legislative Recommendations. In 2022, the Council's enacting statute was amended with legislation from Senator Favola to require the Council to file an Annual Report each year by October 1 with the Division of Legislative Services to facilitate distribution to the Governor and General Assembly. The 2024 Legislative Recommendations were approved at the July meeting, and they have been added to the draft report. Also in the draft report is a letter from the Chair, report out on the 2023 Best Practices Awards, a summary of the Council's 2023 activities and initiatives, and a listing of the Council's membership. Following the adoption of the report, DARS staff will ensure it is delivered to the appropriate entities and you will be able to find it posted on the Division of Legislative Services website.

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After pausing to hear if there were any changes or corrections, hearing none, Bevereley Soble made a motion to approve the 2023 Annual Report. This was seconded by Dr. Cleo Kitt. Hearing no further discussion, the motion was approved unanimously.

Update on Council GTE Grant Proposal

Charlotte Arbogast, Council Staff

Chair Carla Hesseltine reminded members that the July meeting they approved the resubmission of the GTE proposal pending administration approval. She then reported that administration approval was received and the DARS staff submitted the GTE grant proposal on our behalf by the summer deadline. Lastly, she was pleased to share that the grant has been fully funded.

As a reminder, the project will develop training videos focused on awareness of older adult malnutrition and food insecurity, and information about the programs available to help address these issues. These training videos would be broadly disseminated across the Virginia geriatric and gerontological workforce, as well as to older adults and caregivers, to help educate professionals about malnutrition/food insecurity and existing resources. The ultimate goal is to reduce the number of older adults who are currently or at risk of being malnourished or food insecure in the Commonwealth.

She noted that the initial next steps are to develop and execute a contract between DARS and BES Studios to create the videos, and begin drafting the video content, including script and general video storyboard. DARS staff have reached out to the grant partners and supporters, the Virginia Association of Area Agencies on Aging and Virginia Association for Home Care and Hospice to let them know about the funding and forthcoming information.

Lastly, staff asked that if any members have a particular interest in contributing to the implementation of this grant project, please reach out. The Council will hear an update on the implementation progress at the January meeting. Staff also thanked Devin Bowers, DARS Grants Specialist, for all her work on this project.

Presentation: DARS Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

Megan Grey, *DARS Older Worker Programs Director*

Chair Carla Hesseltine shared the timeliness of a presentation on the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) as the Council's 2024 Legislative Recommendations include a component related to SCSEP as suggested by Council member Dr. Andrea Buck. She further noted that it is National Employ Older Workers Week, which runs from September 24th to September 30th.

She then introduced Megan Grey, DARS Title V Project Director. "Title V" refers to Title V of the Older Americans Act, which establishes SCSEP. In this role, Megan Grey partners with local, state, and federal agencies that serve older adults, as well as agencies that provide workforce training. Carla Hesseltine further noted that Megan Grey was joined by Erika Payne, SCSEP Manager from Senior Connections, the Capital Area Agency on Aging and a former SCSEP participant, Geraldine Bridgett.

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Megan provided an overview of the labor force as it relates to older workers followed by a summary of SCSEP. Erika Payne and Geraldine Bridgett shared their experiences working with the program, including lessons learned and best practices.

Members had an opportunity to ask questions of the three presenters. Members expressed interest in this program and applauded all the presenters for their work and commitment to older adult employment.

Presentation:

**UVA Weldon Cooper Demographics Research Group: Aging Data Dashboard Demo
Sol Baik, Ph.D., Senior Researcher and Project Lead on Aging and Rehabilitative Services Research**

Chair Carla Hesseltine introduced the next presenter, Dr. Sol Baik, a Senior Researcher and Project Lead on Aging and Rehabilitative Services Research for the Demographics Research Group at the University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service. She is currently responsible for building demographic data delivery for the DARS and AAAs and providing consultation services to clients with aging-related data needs. She received her Ph.D. in Social Work from the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

Dr. Baik presented on and provided a demo of the Weldon Cooper Center's new Aging Demographic Data Dashboard. This new data dashboard is a great resource for AAAs and the public to better understand the demographics of Virginia's older adults. Combined with the data collected during the statewide needs assessment last year, Virginia has a wealth of data at its fingertips to better understand the needs of Virginia's older adults and respond at local, regional, and statewide levels.

Members had an opportunity to ask questions. Members indicated they were grateful to know about this new data resource.

Presentation: No Wrong Door (NWD) Social Health Connector Tool

Sara Link, NWD Director

Erika Oronsky, NWD Expansion Specialist

Chair Carla Hesseltine introduced presenters Sara Link, No Wrong Door Director and Erika Oronsky, No Wrong Door Expansion Specialist.

Sara Link directs No Wrong Door Virginia, a statewide initiative streamlining access to long term service and supports through person-centered planning and a technology system. Sara Link formerly directed a partnership between Senior Connections, The Capital Area Agency on Aging and Virginia Commonwealth University Department of Gerontology for livable communities.

Erika Oronsky is the No Wrong Door Expansion Specialist. In her current role as NWD Expansion Specialist, Erika works across the Commonwealth to help inform providers and communities about this statewide network of shared resources designed to support them and the individuals they support, as well as driving technology enhancements to better serve Virginians seeking services. Prior to joining DARS team, Erika worked at VirginiaNavigator as an IT

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professional, providing technical and program support for the information resource database and technology that supports No Wrong Door Virginia.

Sara Link and Erika Oronsky then provided a summary of NWD followed by an update on the recently launched Social Health Connector Tool. They walked the Council through the NWD philosophy and system. They also shared the recently launched Social Health Connector Tool, which helps older adults and individuals with disability use a reflect, person-centered virtual conversation about social connections and opportunities or resources for enhancing social engagement. DARS was a winner of ACL's Mental Health Challenge, which provided funding to help create the tool.

Members had an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback to DARS as it continues to update and polish the new tool and accompanying resources. Members thanked the presenters for sharing this information and tackling such an important topic.

Legislative Committee: Update on Final Budget & 2024 Legislative Recommendations

Proposed Action: Adopt 2024 Recommendations

Erica Wood, Legislative Committee Chair

Erica Wood reiterated the information provided by DARS about the recent budget and then reminded members about the recommendations that the Council adopted in July and that were included in the Council's Annual Report, which included:

1. Establish a Prescription Drug Affordability Review Board
2. Require Guardian Training and Development of Training
3. Enhance Assisted Living Affordability
4. Incentivize State Contractors to Employ Older Virginians
5. Increase Funding for Home and Community-Based Services Through Area Agencies on Aging
6. Increase the Medicaid Home and Community-Based Waiver Personal Maintenance Allowance
7. Expand Virtual Access to Public Meetings; Allow All-Virtual Public Meetings for Advisory Boards and Commissions
8. Mandate Sick Leave for Direct Care Workers in Nursing Homes, Assisted Living, and Home and Community-Based Services
9. Develop and Promote Financial and Regulatory Incentives for Nursing Home Redevelopment into Small Household Model
10. Support Dementia Capable Training for First Responders
11. Enhance Outreach and Supplement Benefits for SNAP Enrollment

Erica Wood further reminded members about the guidance provided for how to talk to legislators and encouraged members to reach out if they had information or knowledge about advocacy on these topics.

Presentation: Virginia Housing Accessibility Programs & Housing Resources

Sue Armstrong, Strategic Housing Officer with Virginia Housing

Carla Hesseltine introduced Sue Armstrong with Virginia Housing for her presentation. She noted that Virginia Housing used to be the Virginia Housing Development Authority, and about

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1-2 years ago they changed their name to Virginia Housing. Carla Hesseltine noted that Sue Armstrong has been committed to housing work for many years and she joins the Council today to share some information about the resources and programs that are available through Virginia Housing to help older adults and people with disabilities.

Sue Armstrong provided an overview of Virginia Housing as well as the programs and services available through Virginia Housing for current or potential renters and current or potential homeowners. As the state's housing financing agency, Virginia Housing makes substantial investments in Virginia towards their goal of helping Virginians attain quality, affordable housing. Among the programs she mentioned were:

- Virginia Housing Search
- Rental Unit Accessibility Modification Grant
- Granting Freedom
- Owner Occupied Modification Grant - NEW
- Housing Choice Vouchers
- Housing Counseling, Educational Tools, and Homeownership Resources
- Rental Housing Development Programs
- AmeriCorps Vista Project

Members had an opportunity to ask questions about these programs. Members expressed gratitude to Sue Armstrong for coming and sharing information about these programs. Many indicated they planned to share this with their networks.

State Plan for Aging Services: Update

Charlotte Arbogast, Council Staff

Charlotte Arbogast shared that Virginia's State Plan for Aging Service has received ACL approval. DARS received approval notice on September 19. In ACL's approval letter, they noted that:

"The State Plan outlines significant activities that will serve as a guide for the Virginia aging service network during the next 4 years. Of particular note is the multi-method approach employed for the State Plan on Aging needs assessment."

With the approval in hand, the agency is working diligently to:

- Finalize and issue a press release.
- Getting the state plan materials added to the DARS website.
- Getting the state plan filed as a report to the General Assembly as required by state law.
- Getting the revised state plan filed on the Virginia Town Hall website.

Next week, DARS staff will reach out to the Council members with the press release and website link. She asked members to help get the word out about the new plan.

Announcements & Regulatory Update

Carla Hesseltine, Chair

Chair Carla Hesseltine noted several specific items in the Council's printed and/or virtual meeting materials, including:

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- V4A Update Materials provided by Ron Boyd.
- 2023 Age-Friendly Ecosystem Webinar Series.
- Press Release from the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services on the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Medicaid Managed Care, called Cardinal Care
- A DARS flyer for the Virginia Lifespan Respite Care Voucher Program.
- A press release from the County of Henrico on their recently launched Real Estate Tax Program for older adults and individuals with disabilities. Henrico indicates that this is the first program of its kind in Virginia.

Council Staff highlighted the following federal regulatory actions:

- ACL Proposed Regulations for the Older Americans Act
- ACL Proposed Regulations for Adult Protective Services
- CMS Proposed Regulations for Staffing Standards for Nursing Facilities
- HHS Proposed Regulations for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Council staff can provide members with more information about these as they move to the final stages of publication and into the implementation phase.

In addition, she noted the following actions underway at the state level:

- Board of Nursing regulations governing Certified Nurse Aides and Nursing Education Programs.
- Board of Long-Term Care Administrators Notice of Intended Regulatory Action governing the practice of nursing home administrators.
- A Department of Social Services (DSS) action to issue regulations for the Assisted Living Facility (ALF) Appeals Process for Discharges.
- A DSS action to update the regulations for SNAP benefits took effect on August 17.

Carla Hesseltine asked members to help finalize the 2024 Council meeting dates. The proposed dates were January 17, April 17, July 17, and September 18, 2024. Paige Wilson made a motion to adopt the 2024 meeting dates. This was seconded by Diana Paguaga. Hearing no further discussion, the motion was approved unanimously.

Other Council members made the following announcements:

1. Tresselyn Kelly noted that the Peninsula Task Force on Aging was having a Legislative Forum on September 28, 2023.
2. Debbie Preston shared that she participated in roundtable with Virginia Attorney General Jason Miyares. The roundtable discussed elder abuse, and there was specific attention paid to financial institutions as voluntary, but not mandatory, reporters of suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation, as well as the need for more training for workers, such as grocery store workers. She also noted that Senior Connections would be celebrating its 50th Anniversary of the Empty Plate Luncheon in October, and Hanover County was hosting a Caregiver Expo on November 15.
3. Paige Wilson reminded members that October 7, 2023 is Ageism Awareness Day and the Americans Society of Aging has a Toolkit to help with promoting it.
4. Jo-Ann Chase noted that she serves on the Latino Advisory Board and has been serving on that Board's subcommittee on health, where she has also raised the need for early diagnosis and detection and better treatment for Alzheimer's and Parkinson's Disease.

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Public Comment Period

Carla Hesseltine, Chair

Charlotte Arbogast reported that there were no additional public comments received.

Meeting Adjournment

Carla Hesseltine, Chair

Having completed the agenda, Chair Hesseltine adjourned the meeting at 1:50 p.m.

CCOA Member Electronic Participation (NONE)

CCOA Meeting Handouts:

1. Proposed Meeting Agenda
2. Draft Meeting Minutes July 19, 2023
3. DRAFT CCOA Annual Report
4. GTE Grant Proposal Summary
5. SCSEP Presentation Slides & SCSEP Programs Listing
6. Weldon Cooper Data Presentation Slides
7. Virginia Housing Presentation Slides
8. No Wrong Door Presentation Slides and Virginia Easy Access Relaunch Flyer
9. How to Talk to Legislators Guide
10. CCOA Regulation Update
11. Meeting Announcements
12. Flyers on:
 - a. 2023 Age-Friendly Ecosystem Summit
 - b. Virginia Medicaid RFP Press Release
 - c. Virginia Lifespan Respite Voucher Program
13. Henrico Real Estate Tax Program Press Release
14. NVAN Priorities Background and NVAN Grip Card
15. V4A Handouts
16. 2024 Meeting Dates
17. Last Minute: 2 Written Public Comments from Herb De Groft and Steve Zollos