

## Meeting Notes

Tuesday, May 16, 2017

4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

**Members Present:** Marjorie Ledell, Ali Caley, Marian Anderson, Pat Janik, Chuck Frayer, Donna Roberge, and Bill Ritchie

**Members Absent:** Herb Maxey and Linda O’Leary

### 1. Welcome and Call to Order:

Marjorie Ledell opened the meeting. The agenda was unanimously approved by the commission. The April 18th meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

**2. Public Health Advisory Committee Update:** The COA gave a housing presentation to the Advisory Committee, which is going to endorse the COA’s housing recommendations.

**3. Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities update:** The Meals on Wheels gave a presentation. They will be ceasing serving meals at the Firstenberg Center due to the small number of people who come to that location (only 14). They are researching a different option and location to serve this community. Those who came to the Firstenberg Center can come to the Leupke center for meals.

### 4. Presentation: Learn about Home Innovation and Safety

Dr. Sue Doyle, a practicing occupational therapist (OT) in Battle and certified aging in place specialist, described the unique perspectives that occupational therapists bring to productive aging and home safety and modifications that can be made to the home related to fall prevention, assistive technology, and older drivers. OTs look at:

- person-environment factors (physical abilities, cognition, vision, hearing, values and interests, safety judgement),
- environment factors (accessibility, tasks, safety concerns and demands, resources), and
- occupation (task) demands (attention, problem solving, physical demands, environmental interaction, safety concerns and demands)

#### ADA Environment for Home Safety

- When adaptations are made to the home environment, OTs look at the person’s ability to adapt to change, and analyze before and after modifications to maximize utilization. An adaptation may be suitable for the next six months, but needs to be reevaluated again if there are changes to the person in relation to their environment as they age.
- Persons with visual impairments/low vision:
  - Home safety evaluation for hazard removal
  - Adaptations to improve safety (automation of some lighting, knowing where color contrast helps or hinders). Most people don’t wear glasses in the shower and colors can help people differentiate the grab bar and water faucets.
  - Adaptations to improve task effectiveness: adapting closet cabinets to find items, setting routines and habits to support participation.

- Persons with Dementia
  - Environmental modifications for safety and increasing function
    - Decreasing distractions
    - Improving safety
    - Facilitating task/initiation completion
    - Electronic supports to facilitate participation and safety (alarms that trigger if the person leaves the safe area)
- Assistive Technology for Home Safety:
  - Redundant alerts for persons who are hard of hearing
  - Alarms to signal for help
  - Assistance for persons with physical and/or cognitive challenges. Examples:
    - Door alarms, wandering alerts
    - Locked medication dispensers with alarms
    - Voice and remote activation
    - Fall sensors and vitals monitoring
    - Stove motion sensors (cooking safety)
    - **Electronic/telehealth supported cottages (e.g., self-contained homes that can be placed in the back of a family member's home, that can monitor how many times someone has gone to the bathroom, taken their medicine, turn on lights and music, monitor blood pressure and urine analysis and send messages to nurses and caregivers). Recognizing the importance of someone being at home and being meaningfully occupied there is where the OT can be of help.**
- Remote Access and Home Safety
  - OTs not always available to provide on-site visits and support.
  - Having a trained caregiver do a systemic review on photography or video and interviews with client and then having an OT go over it.
  - **Telehealth not reimbursable from Medicare/Medicaid for OTs. The VA doesn't have this limitation.**
- Older Driver Safety and OT
  - Car Fit: fit the driver to the vehicle to maintain safety
  - Driving Skills: lost driver prevention for drivers with dementia, resuming driving after illness or injury
  - Alternatives to driving: evaluation of safe community mobility options, training and support to change habits and routines
- Funding sources for OTs
  - Medicare/Medicaid
  - Medicaid waivers potentially coming to WA Area Agency on Aging
  - Commercial Insurance
  - Private payment
  - **Lack of resources overall for the coverage for the amount of work involved.**
- Occupation therapy is a vital part of the team that allows a person to age successfully at home. Evidence shows that a Home Safety Evaluation by an OT can:
  - Decrease health decline
  - Reduce falls
  - Increase participation
  - Increase quality of life
  - Reduce hospital readmissions
  - Decrease costs

**Questions from the COA members with speaker's responses:**

**How to start the process of hiring an OT?** Contact your insurance provider to determine if it's covered and the amount of coverage in your policy.

**AARP has a guide for how to adapt your home. Technology can assist us to stay in our homes longer, but it is expensive. Medicaid/Medicare often does not pay for the cost of technology. How does that get covered?** There is a range of costs. The OT will work with the client to understand their budget and their condition and help identify funding resources. The OT will look at the simplest, most readily available, and lowest cost options first. There is potentially Medicaid and Medicare funding, waivers, and discounts available. **Lowe's and Home Depot offer mainstream technologies for which the cost is dropping. Doctor's prescriptions can call for the involvement of an OT. The use of the OT and adaptations can end up reducing cost over time.**

**What are the older driver resources available in Clark County?** There are several OTs in Clark County who are trained in Car Fit. Any OT can tell you whether the person is safe or unsafe driver. There are numerous people who fall in between safe and unsafe which is the greatest concern. **The county needs more certified driving specialists to screen and train the people who fall in between safe and unsafe.**

Do you recommend the use of therapy dogs? It depends on the client. Some clients have the cognitive and physical ability and some don't. The funding of a dog to help with self-care is difficult to obtain.

**Clark County COA might want to add to its visitability standards about lighting, lighting safety, and automated lighting.**

The speaker offered to send the COA more information on E-cottages.

#### **Questions from the audience with speaker's responses:**

**It seems like it could be difficult for the client to agree with the adaptations, especially if the client is fighting to stay at home. How to address this?** This is why it's important to involve the client in the decision making process, develop a relationship of trust, in order to identify alternatives that provide the best person-environment fit.

**Do OTs have the possibility of engaging people before they need the services of an OT?** Yes, we have demonstrated that the benefit of involving an OT is preemptive and reduces costs. OTs also do retirement planning, not from the financial perspective, but from the wellness and prevention aspect. People who retire and sit at home watching tv end up with crises. What does healthy retirement look like and how can we set up clients for it.

**I have physical limitations and I need help once or twice a week with lawn care for a large yard. When I look for help on a long-term basis, it always comes down to seeking volunteers. How do we go about getting help without relying on volunteers?** That is a good question for the community to look at and decide. The outside spaces around our home and the occupations we engage in around our home are just as important as the occupations we engage in inside our home. An audience member stated that Bank of America, Target, and Winco have groups of volunteers. The Human Services Council (Volunteer Connections) has lists of contacts if you need a volunteer.

#### **5. New Business:**

Member recognition - Bill Ritchie and Herb Maxey were given Certificates of Appreciation for their service to the COA.

Election of Officers – Motion to hear nominations. Ali Caley nominated Marjorie Ledell as Chair. The nomination was approved unanimously. Pat Janik nominated Marian Anderson as Vice-Chair. The nomination was approved unanimously.

**6. Announcements:**

June 20 – Presentation from Clara Chambers – Medication Management. A second speaker is still to be identified.

New COA members are Amy Gross and Temple Lentz who will be joining the COA in June.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm

***The Clark County Commission on Aging provides leadership and creates community engagement in addressing the needs and opportunities of aging.***