

**Knoxville Mayor’s Council on Disability Issues
November 11, 2020 Zoom Meeting Minutes “Zoom Meeting”**

Agenda

- I. Meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m.
- II. **Roll call**
 - Present:** Byrne, Colebrook, Cook, Davidson, Foutch, Houston, Huang, Loebner, Mull, Neely, Orr, Parr, Rodgers, Shilling, Shipley, Simmons, Upton, VanDyke
 - Absent:** Spangler
 - Guests:** Aaron Bradley, Director AAAD & Amy Stiles, ARC Knox County
- III. **Approval of October Minutes** Mull made a motioned to accept Octobers’ meeting minutes and Parr seconded, motion passed.
- IV. **Speaker: Aaron Bradley – Needs & Services provided at the AAAD – Mr. Bradley provided the council with the following information:**

Understanding Medicare – Many older Tennesseans are on a fixed retirement income and could use help comparing Medicare plans to select the one best suited to their needs and budget. The Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability provides a free, non-biased service for Tennesseans through the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP).

YOU WOULD REFER INDIVIDUALS TO SHIP IF YOU RECOGNIZE:

- They need help understanding their Medicare benefits
- They are having difficulty accessing health care despite being eligible for Medicare
- They need assistance paying for prescription medication
- They may need to change drug plans or Advantage plans for more Medicare benefit coverage

In 2015 alone, SHIP helped more than 80,000 seniors with Medicare or a related health insurance. For counseling and assistance with Medicare, contact your local Area Agency on Aging and Disability SHIP counselor at **877-801-0044** (toll free).

Downsizing for safety and comfort – For many older Tennesseans, there comes a time when a smaller, more manageable place to live is important. Downsizing could also mean staying in place with less stuff. Either way, moving or consolidating can be an emotionally charged event since it requires some walks down memory lane and finding good homes for well-admired possessions. Sorting through generations of belongings is an opportunity to pass down a few family stories (or tall tales), and it helps the older person get ready for a new chapter with fewer material possessions to worry about.

Living Wills and Advanced Directives – A living will, originally designed to be completed when a person was diagnosed with a terminal illness, is an earlier version of an advance care directive document that tells a doctor how a patient wants to be treated. Advance directives or advance care plans for health care replaced living wills. They are written in greater detail than a living will and list a health care agent to make sure instructions are followed. This is important because the directive supports a person's right to make their own health care decisions. Advance directives help people state their treatment choices before they reach a condition when they cannot. Planning involves several steps to help people learn about options available for end-of-life care; determine which types of care best suit their wishes; and share their wishes with family, friends and physicians. Advance care plan forms can be found on the Tennessee Department of Health website.

Fall Prevention – Falls are the leading cause of injury in people aged 65 and older in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), about one out of ten of these falls result in a serious injury that requires hospitalization. Often the injured person spends time recovering in a long-term care facility.

FALL PREVENTION STRATEGIES

- Fall prevention programs consider *physical* risks (weak muscles or balance problems, vision changes and vision loss), *behavioral* risks (inactivity, medications side effects and alcohol) and *environmental* risks (clutter, poor lighting, throw rugs and poorly designed public spaces).
- The National Institute on Aging (NIA) recommends that people stay physically active to maintain strength and balance.
- People also need to undergo regular sight and hearing tests and check the side effects of any medicine they take, prescribed or otherwise.

- A check of the home should make sure carpets are fixed to the floor and pathways through the home and stairways are clear of papers and clutter. Small rugs (aptly named throw rugs) should be removed from hard surface floors. Grab bars should be installed in showers and tubs and slip proof decals placed in tubs and shower stalls.
- Information on evidence-based falls prevention (strength and balance) programs can be found at **866-836-6678**, the statewide number for the nine Area Agencies on Aging and Disability.

End of Life Care – AAAD has noticed families wait too long to understand what happens during this time. People think they are announcing to the world they are giving up. A lot of people recover in hospice. It's a wonderful support system to the family and person struggling. Don't consider it a service that makes you think you are giving up on your loved one.

Helping Family Caregivers – Provide some wraparound services for the caregiver, respite services, go to doctor appointments, whatever the caregiver needs for a four-hour period. Also, homemaker and personal care services. Simply not enough money to care for everyone's needs. There is a wait list for this service.

Help for caregivers includes the following:

- The **National Family Caregiving Support Program** (NFCSP) provides resources and assistance for unpaid caregivers providing care for someone who is 60 years of age or older or someone with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia. The program also assists caregivers 55 years or older caring for a minor child under the age of 18. Services include counseling and support groups, caregiver training, respite care, personal care, homemaker, and adult daycare. To learn more about the NFCSP in your area, contact the local Area Agency on Aging and Disability (AAAD) **866-836-6678** (toll-free).
- **Respite** is a temporary break from caregiving that allows the caregiver to take some personal time. Every caregiver needs a break now and then, and everybody benefits. Contact the Tennessee Respite Coalition (TRC) to find low- or no-cost respite services through a voucher system. TRC also oversees the Senior Companion program. To learn more about the program, call **888-579-3754**.

Reporting Elder Abuse and Neglect - Raises awareness of elder abuse in our state. On the Tennessee comptroller website for Elder Abuse Study, the study reports an estimated financial

exploitation for elders in Tennessee was over 200,000 million dollars. This money is taken from our elders inappropriately from Tennesseans each year based on a national report. You can report elder abuse online or call the hot line. If the abuse is happening now, call 911.

If you suspect elder or adult abuse, call Adult Protective Services at **888-277-8366**.

If the abuse is physical, call Tennessee Domestic Violence Hotline at **800-356-6767**.

Information and Assistance Program (I&A) - I&A Specialists at the community level help a caller determine what they need, then find the best way to get help. Specialists are trained in screening callers to determine eligibility for various programs, help in a crisis, and provide additional help when needed. For I&A assistance, dial **866-836-6678**.

Tennessee In-Home Care Programs – People needing assistance with activities of daily living (such as bathing, walking, eating, dressing, toileting, transferring, continence) or instrumental activities of daily living (using the phone, shopping, food preparation, housekeeping, laundry, transportation, or finances) may need in-home services. Helping people find those resources will allow them to stay in their homes if they wish. TennCare CHOICES is a program for adults (21 and older) with a physical disability and older Tennesseans (65 and older) who need help with everyday activities. CHOICES services include care in a nursing home, as well as services in the home. You must be Medicaid eligible.

Questions or Concerns About Nursing Homes and Assisted Care Living Facilities – Located in nine areas throughout the state, Tennessee Long-Term Care Ombudsmen are trained to listen, investigate, and then resolve complaints through mediation about nursing homes and other care facilities. Issues can include violations of resident rights, refusal of services, inadequate care, or overall concerns about quality. **State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Toll-free: 877-236-0013**

Keeping Records – Make sure your family knows where your records are kept. Always inform them of important changes. All your work to prepare for an emergency will be wasted if no one knows where to find the information you have collected for them.

Assisted Living or Nursing Home – Making the decision to move an older person from their home to a place where they can live safely is a tough choice for all involved. The Tennessee Health Care Association (THCA) offers a Facility Visits Checklist to use when evaluating a facility. THCA also

offers a “Guide to Long-term Care in Tennessee.” Visit www.thca.org or contact THCA at **615-834-6520**.

- For additional information on nursing facilities, contact the Tennessee Long-Term Care Ombudsman at **877-236-0013**.

Warning Signs of Dementia – Memory loss that disrupts daily life may be a symptom of Alzheimer’s or another dementia. Alzheimer’s is a brain disease that causes a slow decline in memory, thinking and reasoning skills. The earlier the diagnosis, the better when it comes to dementia. It gives people time to learn, think and plan.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Memory loss that disrupts daily life
- Challenges in planning or problem solving
- Difficulties in completing familiar tasks at home, at work or at leisure
- Confusion with time or place
- Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
- New problems with words
- Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps
- Decreased or poor judgment (giving large amounts of money to questionable organizations)
- Changes in mood and personality

Driving and Aging – Most people would like to keep driving for as long as they safely can. For many people, a time may come when they must limit or stop driving either temporarily or permanently. But driving is more than getting from one place to another; it represents freedom and independence

TEN SIGNS THAT IT’S TIME TO LIMIT OR STOP DRIVING

There are often clear signs that it is no longer safe for a person to continue driving. You should look for:

- An increase in near misses or accidents
- Trouble judging distance
- Trouble looking back or turning around
- Slower response time, especially to surprises
- Confusion between different pedals
- Trouble concentrating
- Trouble seeing signs or traffic lights

- A new tendency to become lost
- New minor damage to the driver's car or home
- Frequent stops by the police, even if no ticket is issued

Any one of these indicators is something to watch and consider. More than one is a signal that a conversation is needed.

Nutritious meals across the region – delivering over 50,000 meals a month and 700,000 meals are provided per year. Grocery shopping and grocery delivery service, for those that must stay home through senior citizens home assistance services. We also provide legal services through contracts with legal aid with ETHRA. We also provide guardian services ordered by the court.

CREEVA - Assist victims of elder abuse and people with disabilities. Working on prosecution efforts with local DA. Call your legislator and let them know elder abuse must be addressed. That's the best idea we have. Call our legislators? How about we (as a committee) invite a couple of our legislators to join a meeting. Between now and then organize our thoughts around what action we would like to see them take around this issue.

V. Committee Reports

Transportation: The committee reported they met with Nancy Welch and learned about the role VAT serves and the volunteers they need. Started on short term and long-term goals. Working on measurable goals for next year.

By-laws Committee: Did not meet.

Membership Committee: Did not meet.

VI. Strategic Plan Reports

Disability Friendly City Survey – Did not meet.

Community Engagement – Did not meet.

Livability Committee – Working on standard verbiage for introducing disability survey to area businesses and employers. It was mentioned that the disability checklist will need to be completed by CODI volunteers, and any surveys conducted at businesses should be strictly volunteer.

VII. New Business

DRC – Disability Resource Center is working on information as it pertains to accessible parking spots that have the stripes.

VIII. Announcements and Public Forum

Misha – waiting on people to send them five things about the guessing game. Send to Misha this week.

Monica – Her deaf blind client's dog accidentally bit her neighbor, animal control was called, because client was deaf blind, they failed to communicate with her. Wanting ideas for how to help train people like animal control.

IX. Adjourned at 5:17 p.m.**Upcoming Meetings/Reminders:**

CODI Retreat: December 2, 2020, 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

This meeting and all communications between members is subject to the provisions of the Tennessee Open Meetings Act, TENN. CODE ANN. § 8-44-101, *et seq.*

Submitted by Conya Mull, CODI Secretary