

Ageing Well Whatcom Steering Committee

Friday, November 4, 2022

By Zoom call

MINUTES

Attending:

Becky Kirkland, PeaceHealth Center for Senior Health
Chao-ying Wu, Chuckanut Health Foundation Board/Family Care Network
Chris Orr, Whatcom Council on Aging
Heather Flaherty, Chuckanut Health Foundation
Kristin Hill, Opportunity Council
Mary Anderson, Whatcom Transportation Authority
Melinda Herrera, Rosewood Villa
Tessa Whitlock, Chuckanut Health Foundation

Regrets:

Amy Hockenberry, Whatcom County Health Department
Barbara Juarez, NW Indian Health Board
Heidi Bugbee, Generations Early Learning & Family Center
Janet Malley, Whatcom Transportation Authority
Kenzie Nelson, VibrantUSA
Marie Eaton, Palliative Care Institute, WWU
Ryan Blackwell, Northwest Regional Council
Sarah Lane, Health Ministries Network
Tammy Bennett, YMCA
Tonja Myers, Christian Health Care Center

Welcome, Approve Minutes

Minutes from the 10/7/22 Steering Committee meeting were approved as written.

What's New

Members who weren't at the last Steering Committee meeting shared updates regarding their organizations and broader opportunities and/or challenges related to older adults.

Becky – PeaceHealth Center for Senior Health

- Staffing is a challenge, especially providers, medical assistants and other clinical staff. A new provider is starting next week, but there have been multiple departures.
- Given capacity challenges, the Center for Senior Health is currently closed to new patients.
- The walk-in clinic is seeing long wait times.
- Becky is hearing more from patients about the financial burden of medical care.
- PeaceHealth is increasing its behavioral health services, including at the CSH. They are using the [AIMS \(Advanced Integrated Mental Health Solutions\)](#) model out of the University of Washington.

Questions & Discussion: Is cost of housing as a barrier to recruiting healthcare personnel? What is being done to address the provider shortage?

- Becky stated that paperwork and other administrative aspects of healthcare providers' roles seem to be a deterrent.
- Ying commented that cost of housing is a barrier to relocating to or staying in Whatcom County, especially for primary care providers whose salaries are lower than specialty providers. At a recent

local medical society meeting, most of the new providers were in specialty care, with only a few in primary care. Unfortunately, providers sometimes accept positions here, then realize the cost of living and don't stay, which disrupts care.

- Lara noted that lack of primary care providers and other medical personnel is bigger than just CSH, and bigger than Whatcom County.
- Ying observed that a statewide approach is needed, though hyper-local solutions are also possible. Basically, it comes down to Whatcom County outcompeting other areas to draw providers.
- Since the issue of healthcare access and capacity is complex, Lara proposed flagging it for further discussion, including what role AWW might play in addressing it.

Chris – Whatcom Council on Aging

- WCOA recently released a strategic plan, looking ahead after being in “survival mode” the last few years. Key areas are:
 - Meeting growing demand for Meals on Wheels; looking at a central kitchen model in collaboration with Whatcom Community Foundation’s Millworks project.
 - New or renovated Bellingham Sr Activity Center (longer term project).
 - Fundraising and development.
 - Branding and communications to increase community awareness about WCOA.
 - Collaboration and partnerships, including increasing WCOAs presence throughout the county (to date, much has focused on Bellingham).
 - Expanding the WCOA board.

Discussion:

- Mary noted that WTA is re-envisioning its downtown station, including the possibility of co-locating with other organizations; she’ll connect with Chris to discuss potential partnerships.
- Chris said that WCOA is definitely interested in shared space and co-location options; the earlier discussion about older adults’ access to healthcare has him thinking about on-site health care services.
- Ying stated that Family Care Network is in the process of establishing a non-profit part of the organization; this is still in the early stages, but could potentially include collaboration with the senior centers.

AWW Priorities

The committee reviewed AWW’s 2022 priorities and status (attachment 2 in meeting packet).

1) Refresh AWW Blueprint – completed.

2) Expand partnerships – ongoing/in process.

- Just one AWW all-member meeting this year (goal was two).
- Numerous collaborations throughout the year. Lara described the session “Housing for People of All Ages” hosted by AWW/CHF as part of Whatcom Housing week; she’ll send the link to the recording once it’s posted on the WHA website.
- Ying added FCN’s new non-profit function as a potential partnership opportunity.

3) Hold a second AWW grant round.

- Tessa and Heather shared that proposals aligned with the Blueprint will be considered as part of the CHF’s regular fall grant cycle, since Aging Well is one of CHF strategic priorities. This approach is more streamlined than having a separate AWW grant round.

- The CHF grants committee will be reviewing proposals later this month; four proposals involve older adults or intergenerational activities. Heather stated that there is an open invitation for AWW steering committee members to participate, as long as it doesn't create additional meetings. She also asked for trust in the review process and decisions.
 - Ying mentioned funding something like the [Early Childhood Service Corps](#) (a model in Colorado that places older adults in early childhood settings to help address workforce shortages, as well as provide intergenerational interaction). Heather noted this would be a different funding strategy and would require a separate discussion.
- 4) **Elevate voices of older adults** – ongoing/in process. “Housing for People of All Ages” session intentionally included a panel of older adults talking about their own experiences and perspectives.
 - 5) **Implement "official" AWW Coalition membership** – this has not happened.
 - 6) **Address loneliness and isolation among older adults** – highlighted in updated Blueprint, but no specific projects.
 - 7) **NEW AREA (identified during the year): Data** – work with Health Dept to build out their Health Indicators Platform with older adult data (Health Dept has hired a person who is leading this), and define progress indicators for the Blueprint focus areas. Data subcommittee members have been identified; work has not started.
 - 8) **NEW SUGGESTION: Asset framing/reframing aging** – cultural shift work that could tap national resources, and/or be very local like a Steering Committee book group.

Priorities for 2023 (including 2022 priorities that were not completed) will be discussed and decided at the December meeting.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

Members in attendance said they are comfortable meeting in person for the December 2 meeting.

- ➔ **ACTION:** Lara will check with all Steering Committee members about their comfort with meeting in-person in December.

Next meeting: **Friday, Dec 2. Tentatively planned for in-person at CHF, 9:00-10:30 AM**, pending Lara checking in with all Steering Committee members.