

Aging Well Whatcom Initiative

Friday, May 3, 2019

9:00-11:00 AM

At the Northwest Regional Council

MINUTES

Attending:

Becky Kirkland, PeaceHealth Center for Senior Health
Carol Nicolay, Health Ministries Network
Chris Orr, Whatcom Council on Aging
Dr. Chao-ying Wu, Chuckanut Health Foundation Board/Family Care Network
Dr. Dave Lynch, Chuckanut Health Foundation Board/Family Care Network (retired)
Elaine Cress, Whatcom Council on Aging
Heather Flaherty, Chuckanut Health Foundation
Heidi Bugbee, Generations Early Learning & Family Center
Janet Malley, Whatcom Transportation Authority
Jenny Weinstein, Opportunity Council
Marie Eaton, Palliative Care Institute, WWU
Mary Anderson, Whatcom Transportation Authority
Mary Carlson, community member
Ryan Blackwell, Northwest Regional Council
Tonja Myers, Christian Health Care Center

Regrets:

Amy Hockenberry, Whatcom County Health Department
Colleen Harper, Bellingham At Home
Kristin Granstrand, Mercy Housing Northwest
Melinda Herrera, Rosewood Villa
Pauline Smith, Skagit Adult Day Program
Sarah Lane, YMCA
Wendy Lawrence, Opportunity Council

Welcome and Introductions

Lara welcomed the group and members introduced themselves. In the spirit of National Healthcare Decisions Day and “Before I Die Walls” everyone shared how they’d complete the sentence, “Before I die....”

Review and Approve Minutes

Minutes from March 1, 2019 were approved with a correction to the fourth paragraph on page 2 (page 3 of meeting packet). This sentence was corrected to read: “Mary C. said that from a non-profit perspective, it’s helpful to have one set of ~~priorities~~ *measurement criteria and data requirements*, rather than several different sets that don’t necessarily connect to each other.”

Aging Well Blueprint: Where are we?

Lara gave a brief overview of the Blueprint development process:

- December 2018 – the full group determined priority areas.
- January 2019 – the Blueprint Subgroup (Colleen, Mary A., Ying, Marie and Heather) developed the process, tasks, and template for the Blueprint committees to use.

- February-April – Blueprint committees met, bringing in additional members with expertise specific to each focus area. Draft templates were submitted and compiled.
- April – the Blueprint Subgroup (now including Ryan) reviewed the compiled draft and identified questions or points needing clarification, key strategies (those they saw as especially important or effective), and what they felt was missing.

The first drafts were edited with a focus on “tightening,” but not making substantive changes, and the Subgroup’s comments were embedded into the edited drafts as comments and suggestions. These drafts were sent to Committee leads and are what the group is reviewing today.

Blueprint Timeline

Ryan reported that the Blueprint Subgroup discussed timing for the Blueprint “launch” and feels that it should be held in September rather than this summer. This will allow more time to thoughtfully complete the Blueprint, share it with others for their feedback, and reach out to elected officials and other stakeholders.

A concern about the September timeline is that elected officials may be focused on their campaigns and less likely to participate in the launch (on the other hand, they may be **more likely to** participate because of their campaigns).

Marie described how members of the NW Life Passages Coalition committed to briefing key people within their organizations about the *Blueprint for Creating a Community of Care and Support for People with Serious Illness* and suggested a similar approach could be used for Aging Well outreach.

Ying observed that it may be less comfortable to talk with people who aren’t familiar with the Aging Well work, or who may see the issues differently – and suggested that such conversations are especially important. Tonja requested to have talking points to assist with this, and Mary A. noted it would be helpful to be “assigned” to reach out to specific people.

Heather stated planning is underway for one-on-one meetings with key elected officials to inform them of Aging Well and the emerging Blueprint. There was discussion about asking elected officials to endorse the Blueprint, and the importance of defining the **purpose** of endorsement and/or the launch – to what end?

Dave raised the question of how the Aging Well work will be carried forward. This was discussed at the March Aging Well meeting, where it was agreed that it would be valuable to continuing working as a Coalition and the importance of the Chuckanut Health Foundation’s continued financial support. Heather stated this will be on the agenda for the Chuckanut Health Foundation’s Board meeting in May. Lara proposed continuing the discussion about ongoing Aging Well efforts at the June Aging Well meeting.

ACTION → Lara will outline a plan for outreach to lay the groundwork for the launch in September. Many of the people we need to talk with have been identified as resources and partners in the draft Blueprint.

The current Blueprint Subgroup will start planning the launch and pre-launch outreach. Others are welcome to join!

Draft Blueprint Review and Discussion

General discussion and comments:

- Using the same structure throughout the Blueprint makes it easier to read and absorb.

- It's important to remember that among older adults, the fastest growing group is of people age 85 and older. We need to be thinking more long-range and about some of the challenges of this segment of the older adult population.
- The Housing committee included a short paragraph regarding the current situation that gave context to the rest of their section. The Blueprint Subgroup found this so helpful that it's asking all committees to create something similar in a "framing statement."
- The Blueprint Subgroup is also asking all committees to add a short vision statement, as some of the outcomes were big-picture and felt more like vision statements.
- There was discussion about if this could truly be called a "community vision," given the limited number of people working on the Blueprint. Overall, there was the sense that the input has broad-based enough to merit using "community vision."
- There should be an overarching vision for the entire Blueprint.
- There are many points of overlap or synergy among focus areas. Some items can be moved from one focus area to another to reduce duplication, and/or these intersections could be called out. This could be an opportunity to de-silo and consider pooling resources in new ways.
- Housing and childcare (as a component of economic opportunity) were the top two community health priorities identified at the Data Carousel recently hosted by Healthy Whatcom/Whatcom County Health Department. The Aging Well Blueprint can contribute to addressing both these issues.
- Attention should be paid to timing and priorities, teasing out what are long-term strategies vs. more near-term strategies and "early wins".

Numerous comments and suggestions were also made regarding individual focus areas.

ACTION ITEM → Lara will add group members' comments to the drafts and send to committee leads for further discussion and consideration. The goal will be to have the next draft ready for the June 8 Aging Well meeting.

Health and Wellness Focus Area

- The Health and Wellness focus area was not ready to be included in this draft.
- Pauline, who has been the lead for that Committee, is no longer in her position with the Skagit Adult Day Program.
- From the beginning, the Health and Wellness area included a wide range of issues which has been challenging for the committee.
- It seems that "wellness" is more upstream and long-range, while "health" could focus on health care and supportive services.
- This Committee is scheduled to meet next week to re-group, and Lara will be joining them.

Communication Plan Updates

This agenda item was not discussed due to lack of time. However, Lara noted that the pre-launch work is essentially a strategy within a broader communication plan. The Blueprint, launch event, and communication plan are developing parallel to each other.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

- Next meeting: Friday, June 7, 2019 – location TBA.
- The group decided that members of all the Blueprint Committees will be invited to this meeting.