

Mayor's Council on African American Elders

c/o Aging and Disability Services, Seattle-King County
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MCAAE Meeting Summary REVISED

August 18, 2023

Members Present:

Benjamin (Omara) Abe, M.D.; Charlotte Antoine; Claudette Thomas; Pamela Williams; Paul Mitchell; Paula Williams; Sheila Mary

Staff Present:

Karen Winston; Lena Tebeau; Mary Mitchell

Welcome and Introductions (Paula Williams)

- Introductions were made by each participant present in the meeting at 2:06pm, with each sharing the reasons they came to, or participate in the commission.

Medicare Fraud and Medicare Privatization: Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action (PSARA) Overview (Ronnie Shure and Steve Buck)

- A few things have gotten worse with Medicare over the years and more threatening. The work being done is not limited to retirees, because if we can save Medicare, we will have that available for the next generation.
- PSARA represents older people in the Puget Sound and in Seattle. We work with many advocacy groups and have taken the lead in Washington State and across the county to identify issues with Medicare fraud and misuse.
- Medicare is now 58 years old, and the Medicare for All Act was introduced this year. Protect Medicare by limiting Medicare Advantage.
- Medicare Advantage is a private business. There is fraud, cherry-picking participants based on health, dropping participants with expensive illnesses, and they are not transparent. There is upcoding to get paid for more diagnoses that don't need treatments. There are lots of advertisements, less providers, more hidden problems, and coverage is not available for every service.
- Medicare Advantage uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) to automatically deny claims and patients pay without question with only 3% of denials being appealed. There's a push in congress to say that any denial should have a legitimate review by doctors. PSARA has no capacity to assist with denials and appeals directly.

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- Joining is an easy way to be aware of issues impacting you; it provides a vehicle for advocating elders' positions in the community, and it doesn't cost much to belong.
- Visit www.PSARA.org and read our Monthly Newsletter and watch our webinars. Register for the upcoming 09/13/23 webinar "*We Can Reclaim Medicare*" with Dr. Ed Weisbart. Visit www.Protectmedicare.net for more information and action steps.

MCAAE Committee Updates

Social Isolation (Charlotte Antoinette)

- Attended a workshop in March 2023 and went through training. Findings: Isolation is real. We must pay attention. Positive strategies include talking to family, friends, and coworkers about positive aspects of ageing.
- Older adults want to enjoy life and do things, not be shut down because they're older. Older adults are seen as forgetful or sick in children's stories or media with images and messages informing belief and judgments leading to ageism which has harmful effects on us, and others.
- If there are older adults on your block, speak to them, have a conversation with them, recognize they are here, and get to know your neighbors. Reach out to younger people and communicate with one another. Share your history, your stories. Be good to the seniors.
- Computers help elder people keep connected. Laptops are to be given out to seniors only. Charlotte Antoine will check on if there are classes on computer use and share the information with Karen Winston to share with the group.
- The Black Community Intergenerational Symposium was held yesterday, and many things were discussed that addressed the social isolation question. There is a Foster Grandparents program to connect seniors with young people (ages 0-22) and a stipend is connected to the program which doesn't count as income; therefore, it doesn't affect people's benefits.

Financial Literacy & Fraud Prevention (Paula Williams)

- Presentation given to the council last month and an article was written for Age Wise on Financial Fraud. Will investigate doing class on Financial Fraud through Zoom.

Health Disparities Committee (Madinah Slaise not in attendance)

- No updates were provided.

Affordable Housing/Rent control (Claudette Thomas and Dr. Omara Abe)

- Had meeting with the mayor in May regarding Drug activity and crime happening in the Central Area Senior Center. The mayor sent someone out and they now have two security guards at the building.
- New legislation: Rent increases now requires a 6-month notification from landlords.

Age Friendly Updates (Paula Williams for Dinah Stephens)

- Planning Candidate Forums for people running for City Council.
- They’re planning one Candidate Forum in each district for people running for City Council. They’re looking for people to participate who live in those districts. The ask is to bring forth a story, issue or problem seen or experienced in community impacting older adults. They’re looking for people to share a story and follow-up with questions (“what can I do”, “what can be done”).
- Event details may be available in September/October.

Aging and Disability Services Updates (Mary Mitchell)

- New staff on the ADS Leadership Team: Naisha Williams, Dr. Tiffany Johnson, and Jessica Gardner. Michael Adusa joins the team, replacing Sariga Santhosh.
- Attended US Aging conference in Salt Lake City, Utah and talked about how technology can help with social isolation. Elli-Q Proactive Care Companion Technology <https://elliq.com/> (and other predictive companion-like devices) were shown as options to help address social isolation and fill caregiver shortages. May try to set up a demonstration from the company.
- A workshop was hosted titled “Race, Let’s talk about it”, with data driven presentation focused on why we need to center race. Black women die at a higher rate in childbirth than all other women. It was standing room only and received well. Follow-up sessions will be conducted. We walked through the Race and Power of Illusion Toolkit as an example of tools to borrow language from.
- There’s a national caregiver shortage causing a backup of clients at the state level. We are working with the state to determine how to see clients and working on procedures for accountability.
- Attended the Intergenerational Black Symposium yesterday and highlighted the work being done by ADS.
- Doing a deep dive with the Contract Team to discuss where to improve and how to make things work better.

Roundtable

Paul Mitchell: The ROOTS (Relatives of Oldtimers from Seattle) Celebration is coming up and we have a table there to talk to people about what we are doing. Held at the museum at Jimmy Hendrix Park on 09/03/23 from 10:00am-6:00pm. This is the 51st year. There will be music and entertainment all day long and food will be available for older adults. Come and enjoy time with your older friends. Paul has mailed out fliers and can provide posters.

Motion to Adjourn: Paula Williams **Second:** Claudette Thomas
Meeting Adjourned: 3:28 p.m.