

MINUTES

Senior & Disabled Services Advocacy Committee

May 9, 2008

Members Present: Mary Johnson, Chair; , Ed Necker, Megan O'Connor, Dianne Burch, Graham Bailey, Jim Patterson, Tim Baxter, Sharon Durham, Dan Arkin, Dennis Shine, Jessica Harris

Members Excused: Marion Esty, Trescott Ducker, Susan Busler

Staff Present: Kay Metzger

Guests: Merry Bayley, Linda Keen

1. **Call to Order / Introductions**

Mary Johnson, Advocacy Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:21 p.m. All present introduced themselves.

2. **Consideration of Meeting Agenda**

Agenda accepted by consensus

3. **Consideration of the minutes of the April meeting**

Motion: En Necker moved the minutes be approved. Dennis Shine seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

4. **Committee Business**

a. Legislative Priorities for 2009

Mary Johnson suggested we begin by reviewing the current year's priorities. There were four.

(1) Create a Consumer-Oriented Culture Within the Department of Human Services, Department of Medical Assistance Programs (DMAP). Tim Baxter reported that much has been accomplished, but we still have far to go. For example, the members of the Advocacy Committee have:

- Engaged high-level staff at the Dept. of Human Services in a discussion of the problem and have suggested ways to work towards a culture-shift within DMAP.

Consumer groups (including participation by DHS and elected officials) have been convened, examining the practices, communication, and culture of DMAP.

- Partnerships have been formed with advocates serving the developmentally disabled, mental health, homeless and under-insured, including a critical connection with the Oregon Health Action Campaign.
- Recommended to the Legislature that an “Ombudsman for Health Care” be created.

DHS is now working on a Policy Option Package (POP) that proposes six new positions within DHS (but outside of DMAP) for the purpose of ombudsman work.

Although there has been significant progress, it was recommended that the Advocacy Committee keep this issue as a priority, as work is not yet completed.

(2) Expand Funding for Services to Keep People Independent.

Dennis Shine reported that he felt the goals of this priority were not met. The funding for Oregon Project Independence was not increased during the past biennium, and State General Funds were not invested in the program as hoped. Ed Necker reported there is hope for additional money through the Emergency Board meeting in June 2008. Mary Johnson reported that our efforts to educate and communicate with Legislators has seemed to pay off, as some are articulating support and a better understanding of the issues. The group concurred that there is still work to be done on this Priority.

(3) Protect the Core Values of Oregon’s Model of Long Term Care.

Mary Johnson reported that passage of SB1061, calling for support of and planning towards improved services to seniors and people with disabilities, is a positive step in the right direction.

(4) Keep the Promise – Fund Equity for Area Agencies

This past biennium Transfer AAAs received 90% of what DHS would have funded itself to do the same work. This issue is still a problem and has impact on the level of service residents of Lane County receive.

Next, the Committee brainstormed ideas for 2009 Priorities. The list included the following ideas:

- More work on creating a consumer-oriented culture within DMAP. Meaningful consumer involvement vs tokenism

- Continued advocacy for a Health Care Ombudsman.
- Expanding/improving care provider supports, training, access to personal attendants, user-friendly tools
- Oregon Project Independence
- Services to non-English speaking individuals/families
- Study cost benefit of early intervention, i.e. programs such as OPI
- Quality of services/product; bulk purchasing of the “best”, currently spend a little now but a lot later.
- Quality of life
- Parity
- Creative use of State General Funds; not tied to always having to “match” Federal funds, with their excessive administrative requirements and eligibility
- Look for examples of effective cost-saving programs to adopt
- More awareness, enforcement of ADA, i.e. in medical offices
- Access to medical care for Medicare-only recipients.

Mary Johnson also distributed the “Oregon Department of Human Services 2009-11 Budget Themes”. The Committee agreed to review the list at the next meeting and come to consensus on next year’s priorities.

b. Working with DMAP / DHS

This item was covered under the previous topic.

A community forum will be held in Eugene on June 4th, sponsored by the Oregon Health Fund Board, at LCC. Committee members encouraged to attend if interested and available.

c. Working with Legislators

Ed Necker reminded the group that the committee plans to sponsor a Candidates forum after the primary elections. More discussion/planning will occur at a later meeting.

d. Working with Partners

No further report.

5. Announcements

Dennis Shine reported that he has continued to advocate with County Commissioners for restored County funding to LCOG's Senior Connections and Senior Meals programs.

Mary Johnson and Dan Arkin reported on their involvement with the LIPA Trillium Committee. They are uncertain about their effectiveness on the committee and feeling frustrated. Tim B, Kay, Mary J, and Dan A agreed to contact Rhonda Busek, LIPA, for further discussion.

- 6. Reminder of Next Meeting –
Friday, June 13th
Senior & Disabled Services
2nd Floor Large Conference Room
1015 Willamette Street
Eugene, OR 97401**