

Advisory Council on Aging and Disability Services

Creating choices for elders and adults with disabilities in Seattle-King County

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MONTHLY MEETING APRIL 11, 2008

MEMBERS PRESENT

| City of Seattle | King County | United Way |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Daphne Tomchak | <input type="checkbox"/> Vacant | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Midge Levy |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Barbara Hurst, Secretary | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Julie Peterson | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lorna Stone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diane Snell | <input type="checkbox"/> Elsie Erickson | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thelma Pegues |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Pierre Loebel | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Silversity Madrazo, Member-at-large | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Jonathan Wanagat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tim Burgess, elected official | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kaylene Moon | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Don Moreland |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marie Cook | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rose Finnegan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Phil Pitruzzello |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Houston Brown, | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art Mussman, V Chair | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michael Miller, AC Chair |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Robert Gross | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kate Slaminko | <input type="checkbox"/> Vacant |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jacqueline Deerr-Lord | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cathy VonWald | <input type="checkbox"/> Amy Astle-Raaen |

Excused Absence

Guests

Molly Hoffman, Duane French, Jim Street

ADS Staff

Pamela Piering, Rosemary Cunningham, Doug Ricker, Gigi Meinig

United Way Staff

Linda Woodall

King County Staff

Linda Wells

MINUTES

Michael Miller, Chair, welcomed Advisory Council members and ADS staff to the meeting. He asked those present to introduce themselves. He introduced Jim Street the Moderator of the debate.

In association with the Area Agency on Aging for Seattle-King County and sponsored by:



PROGRAM: DEATH WITH DIGNITY INITIATIVE I-1000

Speakers:

Midge Levy is an ADS Advisory Council member and is retired from the HIV/AIDS program at Group Health Cooperative in 2005. She has been a practicing social worker and administrator for over 45 years, mostly in medical settings with people with disabilities, geriatric and hospice patients. She is active in a number of organizations including the Legislative Action Committee of the Washington Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, also the Seattle/King County Chapter of the Older Women's League. She will give an overview of Initiative 1000.

Molly Hoffman was a member of the faculty and the social worker for Family Practice Residency Program of the UWMC. As a faculty member, she focused on issues of death and dying. In 2007, Molly was appointed to serve on the Governor's Family Practice Advisory Board, which advises the University Of Washington School Of Medicine on the implementation of educational programs in family medicine. She helped to present a paper about Advance Directives at a National Conference of Death and Dying Studies which was later published, and also helped to present an ethics case to both the University of Washington Medical Center (UWMC) and the Harborview Social Work Department. She will speak for Initiative 1000.

Duane French represents "Not Dead Yet" and lives with a spinal cord injury which left him a quadriplegic at a young age. Duane was the first person with a significant disability in Alaska history to be appointed as a division director for the state of AK. He served as the Director of the AK Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, became the Executive Director of Access Alaska, an Independent Living Center, and was appointed on two separate occasions to serve on the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education. Duane was also one of the first 10 National Spinal Cord Injury Association inductees in the Spinal Cord Injury Hall of Fame. He currently works for the State of Washington and will speak against Initiative 1000.

Jim Street will serve as the moderator for the three presentations and the question and answer period. Jim spent over 25 years in public service. He has had a distinguished career as an attorney, judge, Seattle City Councilman, and currently directs the regional juvenile justice reform partnership called Reinvesting in Youth to increase the quality of prevention services for juvenile justice. He served 12 years on the Seattle City Council and held numerous distinctions including serving as council president and spent more than a decade on the Metro's Transit Committee. As the first President of the Puget Sound Regional Council, he led the development of Vision 2020 which created a strategy for protecting our quality of life. Jim will serve as our moderator.

Midge Levy presentation

Midge began her presentation by reviewing a number of historical initiatives which failed. Then she gave an overview of Initiative 1000, the Death with Dignity Act, sponsored by Booth Gardner. Supporters are gathering signatures throughout the community. The initiative is based on an Oregon law permitting physicians to prescribe a lethal dose of medication self administered by the patient. The initiative includes a number of requirements listed below:

1. The patient must be competent and voluntarily express a wish to die.

2. The patient must be terminally ill with no more than 6 months to live as determined by 2 physicians
3. The physician must offer alternatives such as comfort care, hospice, pain control and refer the patient for counseling if the patient shows signs of depression, psychological disorders or impaired judgment.

According to Midge, this initiative brings out strong personal feelings in the community and in the health care industry. Many physicians and hospice staff have mixed feelings, yet, the initiative is meant to enable terminally ill patients the benefit of options, autonomy and control in deciding how and when they will die to avoid prolonged suffering.

Molly Hoffman Presentation

Molly acknowledged the Death with Dignity initiative is controversial and made more so with medical advances and interventions now available to prolong life beyond a person's natural life span. Her experience working in the ICU exposed her to patients with suffering, loss of dignity and choice.

Molly explained, the Death with Dignity Initiative 1000 is sponsored by Booth Garner, Washington State's former Governor now living with Parkinson's disease. The initiative is a narrowly defined and targeted to terminally ill patients with 6 months or less to live confirmed by the attending physician *and* a consulting physician. Patients must be 18 years of age and older, competent and understand the consequences of self administering a death hastening prescription medication. A number of safeguards are imbedded in the initiative.

Research shows the Oregon law facilitated conversation between the patient, family and physician. Patients better utilized other services and options dealing with their disease. In fact 95% of patients using the Oregon law maintained a conversation with their family and physician.

The initiative will give people peace of mind and choice in determining the time and circumstances of their death, so they do not endure the devastating affects of a difficult disease process once they loose their ability to be productive and have meaningful lives.

Duane French Presentation

Duane French a founding member of *Not Dead Yet* which represents a volunteer coalition against assisted suicide. A few years ago he was undecided in forming an opinion on the assisted suicide issue until he attended a conference where the Oregon initiative was discussed.

As a quadriplegic he feels he has led a full productive life with wonderful opportunities as an advocate and policy maker. He gave an example of four quadriplegic men like himself, whose lives were taken by Dr. Kevorkian during assisted suicide. Three were in their twenties and one 47. They never had the opportunity to explore life and be productive.

Duane went on to explain several reasons he opposes I-1000:

1. Twenty-five states decided assisted suicide is not a good idea.
2. The Oregon law and the Washington initiative have differences that involve tort laws. Oregon does not have tort law while Washington does which could be an increase in lawsuits.
3. Although it is illegal for a physician to falsify medical records, Section 4 of the initiative states I ask that you give ECN an opportunity to serve your mother, “The attending physician may sign the patient’s death certificate which shall list the underlying terminal disease as the cause of death.” According to Duane, this section misrepresents the actual cause of death which was from the prescription to hasten death.
4. The Washington State American Medical Association opposes the initiative. With rising medical costs, managed care and insurance companies delaying or denying treatment, a \$100 prescription indirectly may coerce a patient into assisted suicide.
5. Others opposing the initiative include Ralph Nader and the Clintons who view it a dangerous public policy.
6. The initiative does include a safeguard of a two physician review. However, patients may shop for a physician until they find someone to prescribe the drugs.

Although the Oregon law is portrayed as an excellent policy, abuses in every state exist, many under the “radar”. Duane understands Oregon has not invested in resources or given the health department legal authority to review and investigate abuse. In Oregon few participants were re-evaluated for depression. We know once seniors lose mobility and are isolated they suffer from depression.

Question and Answer

Question:

A three part question: 1) How is depression evaluated? 2) What about the needs of the adult children? 3) How does the high cost of medical care fit into the equation?

Answer:

Molly: DSMIV provides a description of depression and requires ongoing evaluation. Research by Kuebler Ross found depression in dying patients does not interfere with their decision making. Responding to the high cost of care, Molly said she has personal experience with the high cost of the ICU.

Duane: The DMSIV test is a rigorous standard. Focus should be on the competence of the patient.

Question:

Is the definition of competent and the patient’s ability to understand the consequences in the initial language?

Answer:

Molly: Yes, it is defined as the ability of the patient to understand the consequences of using the initiative, the patient's ability to communicate, and the opinion of the physician, psychiatrist or psychologist.

Question

Terminally ill is defined by 6 months to live as determined by 2 physicians, what if a person could actually live longer, say up to a year or 18 months?

Answer:

Molly: Medicine is more an art than science. Patients must have no chance of recovery to use the law.

Duane: Medicine is more science than art. He explained his father diagnosed with cancer had 6 weeks to live with no surgery. After surgery he was given 7 additional years.

Question:

What governing body will be responsible for regulating?

Answer:

Duane: Public health

Question

I have seen a lot of death by suicide using guns, can you respond?

Answer:

Duane: Oregon is number 5 in the nation for veteran suicide.

Molly: In Oregon people no longer need to use a gun to take their life if they suffer from a debilitating terminal illness.

Question

Can you speak to the moral, ethical and faith-based considerations?

Answer:

Duane: There are a number of people who oppose the initiative based on religious beliefs and civil rights.

Molly: I believe in autonomy, self determination and the moral ethical right of the patient to choose. The law protects the patient who chooses this option to relieve suffering. It is not about the number of days a person breathes, instead it is about relationships, contribution to society and family. Once people are educated, they are thoughtful about the choice.

BUSINESS MEETING

Minutes

Action Taken: It was moved/seconded and passed that the March 14, 2008 minutes be approved as written.

COMMITTEE AND TASK FORCE REPORTS

Seattle City Council

Pam received word from Council Member Tim Burgess, that he will be unable to make it to this meeting, however, his legislative aide, Barb Graef attended the meeting.

Sponsors Meeting

No meeting to report.

Planning & Allocations Committee

Rose Finnegan reported

1. Several Advisory Council Members attended the Mt. Si Senior Center meal program on March 26th.
2. ADS Program Specialist Terry Light gave an update on the nutrition service area. She reported student interns will complete their research and analysis of the ADS nutrition service area in time for the RFI (bid process) to be released during June 2008.
3. The Association of Senior Centers annual conference will be held on May 20-21, 2008.

Outreach and Advocacy/Health Care Task Force

Don Moreland.

1. The Mental Health Transformation draft document includes good suggestions from a number of committee members including Lorna Stone and Dr. Jonathan Wanagat. A motion was made and seconded in which Michael Miller will sign and send the document today.
2. Don reported that Peter Greenfield from Columbia Legal was a guest at today's Outreach and Advocacy / Health Care Task Force Committee meeting. The advocacy effort to raise the Medicaid income eligibility level from \$637 (75% of federal poverty) to \$867 (100% federal poverty) was met with some success in Olympia. The legislature voted to raise the categorically needy eligibility level to 80% of federal poverty or \$693. The medically needy eligibility still remains at 75% of federal poverty. Peter will send out some written materials on Medicaid income eligibility. Don stressed it is important to lobby for parity between the medically needy and categorically needy. The Advisory Council is the voice for the poorest seniors and people with disabilities.

Universal Design

Art Mussman

1. Art reported the NW Universal Design Council is beginning to apply universal design principles to street-scapes, sidewalks, transit and walking trails.

2. A universal design conference will be held in Skamania Washington this summer. The focus will be on design which supports aging.
3. The 2008 Housing Conference will be held in the Tacoma during September.

Communications Committee

Kate Slaminko - no report

Legislative Forum

Don Moreland

Don updated us on the progress of the Legislative Forum to be held in September. This year the committee plans a joint forum with Pierce and King County. Representatives from both counties will meet at the Pierce County AAA on April 17 to coordinate and gather ideas about topics and keynote speakers. Anyone may join the planning meeting. Please contact Doug Ricker if you are interested.

State Council on Aging

Cathy Von Wald

Cathy reported the committee discussed Caregiver Program legislative issues and 2008 priorities. May is their annual retreat. She will try to send out the State Council on Aging Minutes to the Advisory Council so everyone will know what is going on.

Announcements

1. April 16 is the National Healthcare Decision Day. For more information the web site is nationalhealthcaredecisionsday.org
2. Michael thanked Midge for her work on today's program. Pam suggested we place a link on the Advisory Council web to the Advance Directives and other information which is timely and interesting.
3. Welcome to Julie Peterson our newest Advisory Council Member. Julie works for the Washington Association of Housing Services for Aging WAHSA a non profit that supports long term care providers. Julie reported WAHSD is the co-sponsor for the Skamania conference mentioned by Art earlier. Julie works with regulatory policy, and previously was a Kent City Council member and City Council President.
4. Jacqueline Deerr-Lord became a new council member last month. She was previously a public utility engineer. Her interest in aging and disability is a result of her experience as a caregiver for her quadriplegic husband. She hopes to learn a lot and contribute.
5. Don expressed interest in continuing to support an end to medical disparities for people of different races, ethnicities and other protected groups such as the LBGT. He has found resistance from DSHS who regularly leaves out the LBGT group.
6. Michael mentioned two new Metro KC programs - If you would like to participate, please email Michael
 - Bus Buddies – Volunteers are trained to teach people one-on-one on how to ride the bus and encourage rider-ship.

- Travel ambassador – Volunteers are trained to present information to groups about how to ride public transportation and encourage rider-ship.
7. Update: Accessible services will not raise the fair for 3 more years. Even though the regular bus fair will be raised 50 cents.
 8. Art said he notices many in Kirkland bus stops don't have shelters. He found Metro lists bus stops with shelters online.
 9. Pam asked how many have attended a nutrition meal site and have done their "restaurant review" More than half of the AC members raised their hands. Rosemary will email a copy of the review form.

ADS Directors Report

1. According to Pam the chronic care management is now a hot issue nationally with policymakers in Washington DC interested in moving resources to the chronic care model. Decision makers now expect AAAs to partner with health care organizations to address health issues related to lifestyle with an emphasis on positive health care outcomes, not just the ability to deliver services. Pam was told at the National ASA conference that Aging and Disability Services is writing the book on chronic care management.
2. Resource projections appear smaller due to a sluggish economy. The state funding wins look small and the revenue forecast will be smaller during the next biennium (2 year budget). Locally King County is already seeing shortfalls in revenue.
3. The PEARLS bid process is still on track. The Advisory Council has one member on the review committee. The funding is from King County and we expect it to continue for 6 years.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 pm.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING

Friday, May 9, 2008

Noon – 2:00 PM

6070 Conference Room

Seattle Municipal Tower

700 5th Avenue

Seattle, WA 98104

(206) 684-0660

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