

# Advisory Council on Aging and Disability Services

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

Mailing Address: PO Box 34215, Seattle, WA 98124-4215  
Office Address: Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 5<sup>th</sup> Ave, 51<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Tel: 206-684-0660 TTY: 206-684-0274 FAX: 206-684-0689  
www.adsadvisorycouncil.org

## MONTHLY MEETING APRIL 10, 2009

### MEMBERS PRESENT

City of Seattle	King County	United Way
<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant	<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant	<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Barbara Hurst,	<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant	<input type="checkbox"/> Lorna Stone
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diane Snell	<input type="checkbox"/> Julie Peterson	<input type="checkbox"/> Thelma Pegues
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Pierre Loebel	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Silversity Madrazo, Secretary	<input type="checkbox"/> Timmie Faghin
<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, Member at Large
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Robert Gross	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kate Slaminko	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Midge Levy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jacqueline Deerr-Lord	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cathy VonWald, AC Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amy Astle-Raaen

<b>Excused Absence</b>	Tim Burgess, Lorna Stone, Silversity Madrazo, Timmie Faghin, Julie Peterson
<b>Guests:</b>	Marcia Appleton, George Dicks (Chair, MCAAE), Marsha King, Katty Chow, Larry Low, Richard George, Zelalem Kassa
<b>ADS Staff</b>	Karen Winston, Doug Ricker, Gigi Meinig, Maria Langlais, Rosemary Cunningham
<b>United Way Staff</b>	Linda Woodall
<b>King County Staff</b>	
<b>City of Seattle</b>	Pamela Piering

### Welcome and introductions:

**Cathy VonWald, Chair**, welcomed Advisory Council members and ADS staff to the meeting. She asked those present to introduce themselves.

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

Co-sponsored by:



**PROGRAM: Vision - Losing Vision Doesn't Mean Losing Independence**  
Strategies and skills that promote safety and well being despite vision loss.

**Area Plan Objective:** *Increasing Independence for Frail Older Adults and People with Disabilities*

The presenter, Marcia Appleton is a licensed social worker and the vice president of Vision Rehabilitation Services at *Community Services for the Blind and Partially Sighted (CSBPS)* a community based non-profit. She graduated from the University of the Washington School of Social Work, gerontology track. She joined CSBPS at the time when the agency was developing its outreach and programs to meet the needs of people with vision loss. She has been with the agency 30 years and CSBPS is now the leading vision rehabilitation agency in the northwest that provides services to older persons with vision impairment.

According to Marcia, the main causes of vision loss in the elder population include cataracts, glaucoma, macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy. Society relies on sight to navigate through the world ninety percent of the time. In seniors 80 years of age and older one in 3 will have significant vision loss. Once they reach 90 years of age the majority of seniors will have vision loss.

Marcia works with a team that brings vision services to people in their own homes. The team consists of social workers, rehabilitation teachers, mobility instructors, and volunteers. The typical recipient of service is older, lives alone, and has macular degeneration or other retina related diseases. The team sees younger people with vision loss also. Many younger people have head trauma and sight loss from accidents or injuries from the Iraq war, while older people present with age related macular degeneration or complications from chronic illnesses such as diabetes, multiple sclerosis, or HIV.

The *Community Services for the Blind and Partially Sighted (CSBPS)* provides services in King, Snohomish, Skagit and Kitsap Counties. In-home services are provided free of charge. The low vision clinic charges a fee which may be covered by insurance. However, most services and devices are not covered by Medicare and Medicaid. No one is turned away due to an inability to pay for services. The team works with patients to determine the best steps to gain independence. The team provides education, simple and advanced training, which gives patients alternatives to function independently inside and outside of their home. Patients are taught how to use mobility devices such as how to use the white cane which identifies them as someone with a sight loss or new technologies that increase quality of life. Patients not familiar with basic resources are given information to help them in other aspects of their life.

**What are the risk factors for low vision?**

Research indicates that African Americans and Hispanics are at higher risk from glaucoma or diabetes related retinopathy. While Caucasians particularly those with light pigmented eyes (blue, green, hazel, and gray) are at higher risk from cataracts, or macular degeneration.

Recent studies conclude long term exposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun trigger many occurrences of macular degeneration or cataracts. Now more than ever the earth receives more

UV rays from the atmosphere than previous generations. People with light pigmented eyes are more susceptible to UV rays than people with dark colored eyes whose eyes act as a filter. Sunglasses treated with glare reduction, UV protection, top and side shields will reduce UV damage.

Smoking or second hand smoke is a risk factor that increases the incidence of cataracts and macular degeneration. Smoking destroys the tiny, delicate blood vessels feeding the eyes.

Good nutrition plays a role in protecting the eyes while highly processed foods such as crackers, cookies, or other food high in trans-fats used to extend the lives of food affect the circulatory system and the small blood vessels in the eyes.

According to Marcia, while much has changed over the years, what remains constant is the need for independent living skills, training and ongoing adjustments to the supports people with vision loss need to remain independent. Patients tell her they miss the freedom and independence of driving the most. Looking to the future, the Baby Boom generation will eventually be a third of the older population as a result of the increase in older people the number of vision problems the health care system handles will increase and the health care system will need additional funding sources to provide the services which will be needed.

### **Questions:**

*Question:* I am surprised at the lack of funding from government sources for vision rehab. Can you give us examples of funding sources besides private pay and private insurance?

*Answer:* Marcia agreed, Medicare and Medicaid do not pay for vision services or technology. There are a few exceptions to government funding:

1. The Federal government pays for some vocational rehabilitation and adaptive technology to navigate the education system or retrain for work.
2. A small program government program dedicated to independent living for people 55 years of age and older with vision loss is available.
3. Since WWI when vets were blinded by mustard gas, the Veterans Administration has played a critical role in vision rehabilitation. Locally they have an intensive rehabilitation program at American Lake for Veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with head and vision injuries.

*Question:* Are there low vision support groups?

*Answer:* Yes, There are a number of them. They meet in schools, churches, retirement communities', private homes etc. The groups help people stay engaged with their peers. For more information about groups or other information about vision resources contact CSBPS.

E-mail [csbps@csbps.com](mailto:csbps@csbps.com)

Phone (206) 525-5556 or (800) 458-4888

fax (206) 525-0422

9709 Third Avenue NE, #100

Seattle, WA 98115-2027

*Question:* Is there a vitamin therapy regime used for prevention?

*Answer:* Yes, one in particular is approved by the FDA. However, Marcia cautioned there are many “treatments” advertised that can be considered scams and may actually be harmful. Call or visit the CSBPS web site for information and up to date research on therapies.

**Respondent: Dr. Robert Gross**

Dr. Robert Gross acted as a respondent. Dr. Gross has lived with vision loss a number of years due to a hemorrhage in his eye. He will receive additional surgery in the near future to help increase his sight. He gave the Advisory Council some valuable insight into what he felt was remarkable about successful outcomes from the VA American Lake program. He also gave us information on helpful technologies such as a voice activated computer called “JAWS” which he uses frequently. Finally, He expressed his concern over the lack of funding for vision services as well as other necessary services such as dentistry.

**Business Meeting**

**Minutes**

It was moved, seconded to approve the minutes as amended to “delete the third paragraph under universal design relating to a conference held previously”.

**Sponsors Meeting**

Cathy VonWald reported the sponsors meeting focused on State, City and County budgets and the expected shortfalls. United Way described their program to meet basic needs.

**Planning and Allocations Committee**

Rose Finnegan reported on the previous P&A committee:

*Budget Update* – P&A Committee members discussed potential State budget reductions in the areas of adult day health, Medicaid home and community-based long term care, and the Senior Citizens Services Act. When the State budget is finalized, the P&A Committee may need to meet twice a month to consider potential scenarios for reducing funding.

*Draft Area Plan Report Card* – The P&A Committee reviewed half of the objectives on the DRAFT Area Plan Report Card. The second half will be reviewed at the next meeting.

*Nutrition Service Area* – Terry Light, ADS Program Specialist for the nutrition service area gave the P&A committee an update on the 2009 changes to the congregate and home-delivered meal programs that resulted from the Request for Investment process in 2008. She also reviewed the program enhancements that could be funded with nutrition stimulus funding that ADS will receive in the next few months.

**Outreach and Advocacy Committee**

Don Moreland thanked Pam Piering for letting Margaret Casey work on behalf of people who are aging and disabled during this legislative session in Olympia. As a result it appears funding for services did better in the budget process.

The committee reviewed and discussed the updates to the house and senate budgets. The House cuts were more severe than the senate, however this week the house budget came closer to the senate budget. SCSA, day health and LTC client hours all will receive a reduction in funds. The Washington Association of Area Agencies on Aging still has concerns about the lower Adult

Day Health funding level, Medicare D co pays affecting the poorest residents of Washington State, the lower GAU funded medical benefits, and the reduction in the number of people eligible for the Basic Health Plan.

Don proposed two motions both to write letters signed by the AC chair to the following people:

1. A letter to congratulate Ron Sims on his appointment as assistant secretary to HUD.
2. A letter thanking Jerry Riley for effectively promoting programs which serve aging and disabled clients.

Both motions were seconded and passed.

Finally, Don announced Jerry Riley will be seen on King Five “Upfront” the weekend of April 11<sup>th</sup>. Check your local listings.

### **Universal Design**

The next meeting is the following Thursday. Art reminded the Advisory Council about the May 28<sup>th</sup>, Double Tree SeaTac conference on *Technology and Design for Healthy Aging: What You Can Do NOW*. The conference will focus on the practical and ethical implementation of technology in long term care. The primary goal of this forum is to introduce professionals in the fields of gerontology, long-term care, architecture, and computer science to advances in technology and design that can be applied to the residential settings targeted to older adults. Topics include: Age-Friendly Communities, Lifelong Design, Flex Homes and much more. The cost is \$109. For more information follow the link:

<http://depts.washington.edu/geron/conference2009.php>

### **State Council on Aging**

Cathy Von Wald and Don Moreland reported on the recent State Council on Aging meeting. The SCOA will focus on a communication strategy to bring about awareness of their mission and vision. Plus they want to increase their role as the voice of older adults. The SCOA will invite the governor and several legislators to a future meeting to discuss legislative priorities as part of their priority to influence policy level decisions.

### **Communication Committee**

The committee will meet in May. They reported 13,000 hits to Senior’s Digest.

### **Director’s Report**

1. Pamela Piering praised the Senior’s Digest <http://www.poststat.net/pwp008/pub.49/> and the work done by many people. She appreciated the good information brought to readers through the online magazine.
2. Title IIIB received a slight increase of 3-4%. IIIB funds nutrition, and the Older American’s Act. People have begun to advocate for an increase of 12% to the Older Americans Act during the 2010 funding cycle.
3. The Title V Senior Community Service Employment Program received 8 slots for King County.

4. The Federal Economic Stimulus package will bring one-time funding for Medicaid match, as well as one-time funding for additional congregate and home delivered meals. This increase could help fund additional days at congregate meal programs or additional home delivered meals.
5. ADS continues to make inroads into the business community ADS and W4A joined the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce and recently began to make connections with the Rotary Club and the Downtown Seattle Association. There are a number of Rotaries in the Puget Sound area that fund special service projects and are interested in short 20 minute programs during their lunch meetings.
6. Project 2020, supported by Maria Cantwell is gaining strength. The bill would expand a pilot project called Aging and Disability Resource Centers available in 43 states, including Washington's Pierce County. Project 2020 would make counseling on long-term care options, disease prevention and alternatives to nursing homes widely available to seniors and others before they spend their resources and become poor enough to qualify for Medicaid, which it is often too late to provide cost-effective home care. As a result, people often end up in nursing homes, where they remain for the rest of their lives. Maria Cantwell estimates that the measure would reduce federal Medicare and Medicaid costs by \$2.8 billion over five years and make it possible to serve an additional 280,000 people in Washington over that same five-year period.

**Announcements:**

1. The Snohomish and King Co Advisory Council Executive committees are planning a joint meeting for the fall. A committee was formed to plan a program. The meeting will be held in a central location.
2. Michael Miller updated the AC on pressing transportation issues related to
  - a. Medicaid transportation
  - b. The new Smart Card
  - c. The disabled pass
  - d. Light rail

He asked for a block of time to give the Council more information next month. He encouraged the council to contact their legislators about the changes.

3. Don Moreland reminded everyone to call the Olympia hotline regarding the dual eligibles and the Medicare D co-pay the poorest must pay. George Dicks asked the Advisory Council to mention the DDD and mentally ill in their phone calls, since the same issues.
4. Marsha King suggested someone may want to consider calling the Seattle Times editorial Board with an update on budget issues of most concern.

**NEXT REGULAR MEETING**

**Pedestrian Master Plan**

**Friday, May 8, 2009**

**Noon – 2:00 PM**

**4060 Conference Room, Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 Fifth Ave**

**Seattle, WA 98124**

[www.adsadvisorycouncil.org](http://www.adsadvisorycouncil.org)

