

**Health Planning Council Long Term Care Committee
 Long Term Care Council for NY Connects
 Friday, February 4, 2022 12:00 - 1:15 pm (Virtual)
 Minutes**

Attending: Sarah Askew (*Statewide Senior Action Council*), Corina Benites (*Law NY*), Carolyn Beyers (*COFA Advisory Board member, FLIC, and HSC alumni*), Diane Bradac (*Cornell Work Life*), Jan Bridgeford-Smith (*Women’s Opportunity Center*), Katie Chichester (*Ithaca Housing Authority: Titus Towers*), Edna Brown (*Hospice and Palliative Care*), Beverly Chin (*HSC*), Teresa Craugh (*Cayuga Health Partners*), Diane Dawson (community member), Erin Durkin (*Family & Children’s Service*), Ashley Earll (*Family & Children’s Service*), Casey Gallagher-Licitra (*Cayuga Health Partners*), Bill Gilligan (*HPC Board*), Beth Harrington (*Suicide Prevention & Crisis Service*), Susan Hatch (community member), Amy Jackson (*County Office for the Aging*), Jan Lynch (*FLIC*), Terry McCann (*County Office for the Aging: EISEP*), David McElraith (*Titus Tower resident*), Angela Mennitto (*On Dying Well*), Jerome Midgley (*Nascentia Health*), Tammy Moliviatis (*Cayuga Health Partners*), Lisa Monroe (*County Office for the Aging*), Steve Moolin (community member), Amy Morris (*Access to Independence in Cortland & NY Connects*), Anne Reilley (*PT*), Teri Reinemann (*Age Friendly Tompkins*), Lisa Richards (*Ithaca College, Gerontology Institute*), Anna Rosenblatt (*Cayuga Health Partners*), Lenore Schwager (community), Tessa Sivers (*Finger Lakes Independence Center*), Dawn Sprague (*County Office for the Aging*), Deb Trautstein (*Visiting Nurse Service Ithaca & Tompkins*), Samantha Weeks (*Alzheimer’s Association of CNY*), Kathy Yen (community member). NOTE: missing attendees

Topic/ Discussion	Follow Up/ Action
<p><u>Welcome, Introductions, and Announcements</u> Bev Chin greeted meeting participants and noted that the meeting is being recorded. She will be staffing and facilitating today’s meeting. Community announcements will be held following the presentation.</p>	
<p><u>Review of November 5, 2021 Minutes</u> Approved with typo noted. (Terry McCann/ Angela Mennitto)</p>	Post final version on website
<p><u>Presentation – “What’s Happening with Long Term Care and Aging Services in 2022?”</u></p> <p><i>Age Friendly Plan Draft</i>– Teri Reinemann reported that Tompkins County has been part of the Age Friendly network since 2015 when Tompkins’ first five-year plan was submitted. During 2020-2021, they received a grant to work under the Health Across Aging and All Policies initiative under Gov. Cuomo. Under the initiative, they were encouraged to work with the Health Department and the Department of Planning and Sustainability in preparing the second five-year plan. They also had the opportunity to work with researchers from Engaged Cornell for community assessments. The new draft plan which has been completed, considered input from subgroups of the Department of Planning (housing, transportation, etc.), current work of the County Office on Aging (COFA), Youth Services, Ithaca College of Gerontology and more. Organizations that subcontract with COFA are also written into the draft. The Plan will be sent to the Steering Committee for review by the end of the month. Some of the proposed work dovetails well with the Long-Term Care Committee’s interest in social isolation, possibly leading to the formation of new workgroups.</p> <p>Teri provided highlights of Governor Hochul’s State report which includes a commitment to establish a statewide Master Plan for Aging. The purpose of the Master Plan is to create a blueprint of strategies that ensure older adults can live fulfilling lives in good health, and with the freedom and independence to age in place for as long as possible. This may very well be in line with the Health Across Aging and All Policies focus of the previous administration. The</p>	

plan expands on other areas of importance to adults including social isolation, elder abuse, strengthening the ombudsman program, more funding for supportive housing and independent living, and the establishment of criteria for memory care so that facilities advertising these services must meet specific regulations. The report also calls for innovative models for nursing homes such as the Greenhouse project, and funding for the community based and home care workforce, although the latter may not include increased wages for the direct care workforce. What will be critical is how these objectives will be rolled out and what this may look like for smaller communities such as Tompkins County.

Bev added that she is aware that Cayuga Medical Center is participating in the Age Friendly Health Systems Action Community facilitated by HANYS to mentor healthcare provider organizations in applying a 4 M's framework when caring for older adults. (4 M's takes into account: what matters, medication, mentation, and mobility). Emily Mallar is representing the hospital in the learning collaborative. Teresa Craugh from Cayuga Health Partners will find out more about the project and share this information at the next meeting.

County Office for the Aging – Lisa Monroe recapped the public hearing held virtually in October. Normally this is an annual in-person event required by NYS to inform the community of plans for the year and to solicit community feedback. Although it has not been required due to COVID, COFA felt it was important to connect with TC residents. They also distributed a short survey asking how current COFA services could be improved, what additional services are needed now; and what new services may be necessary in the future. Several recurring themes appeared; help with chores, more outreach, affordable housing, lack of home aides, and social isolation. With regard to current needs, navigating vaccination appointments and health insurance were mentioned. The need for technology support, companions who could provide support at medical appointments, and walkability were suggested as future needs.

Following discussion with staff and their advisory committee, COFA's 2022 priorities include: continuing with the age friendly initiative (convening the steering committee and implementing the next five-year plan cycle); focusing on social isolation (continue distribution of the robo- companion animals); continuing Senior Planet, a program that enables older adults to have their own tablets, wi-fi, with friendly visits from Ithaca College students to help with technology. Program participants, selected by Long Term Care Services, were able to use the tablets to communicate with each other, have telehealth visits, and generally mitigate feelings of isolation. The COFA office has been open to the public and will continue to serve people in person, by phone or virtually. They are increasing outreach with additional case managers and creating opportunities to connect with the public, a challenge since tabling events have been on hold since COVID. They have also created a position for a home aide to serve their case managed clients, in addition to their contracts with local agencies. This was a necessary move to address the lack in-home services for their clients. They will be executing a new mini grant, Pause for Parkinson's, to provide respite to caregivers of Parkinson patients. New volunteers for the Ombudsman program will create a greater presence in nursing home. The state association for all office for aging programs is also advocating for more money for meals, case managers, paying for volunteer ombudsman, and raising home care worker wages. Hopefully the Governor's plan for a statewide master plan for aging services will translate to improvements at the community level.

Amy Morris reminded everyone of the Good Neighbors Program, a Mother Cabrini grant funded initiative, to help people return to the community from nursing homes. ([link](#) provided by Sam Weeks) Many Tompkins residents were unaware of this program.

Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC) – Jan Lynch described FLIC as an organization that supports people with disabilities, including those with acquired disabilities which encompasses many older adults. FLIC operates several long term care programs. They are the fiscal intermediary for the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program, a program for people with Medicaid, but which offers flexibility in choosing who serves as a personal assistant. The client may train an assistant to perform certain services traditionally provided under a license. As the fiscal intermediary, they onboard people to serve as personal assistants, track their hours, and manage the payroll. Currently have about 148 consumers receiving services from personal assistants under the Medicaid based program and an additional 20 receiving services under a program (EISEP) targeting people at income levels higher than the Medicaid threshold who cannot afford to pay aides out of pocket. Among their clients, there are several who are not getting all of the services they need because there aren't enough aides who can fill the hours that have been approved for reimbursement. The EISEP program is funded through COFA as well another program that provides respite care for caregivers of Alzheimer's patients. FLIC also operates the registry, a program that links clients with individuals who can provide in home personal care, companion services, and more. One of their 2022 priorities is to keep the registry aides engaged. They provided gift baskets to them during home care week, and issue and distribute a newsletter to keep them connected.

Jan noted that the Gov. Hochul included a provision in the State Plan to give home care staff bonuses. In general, the Fair Pay for Home Care advocates are very disappointed with her plan because it does not address the true problem of low wages and will not address retention. FLIC has an ARPA grant through the ST Library Association to make libraries more accessible to people with disabilities. She asked if meeting participants know of people who have had problems with getting information or using the library as a resource to contact her (jan@fliconline.org)

Edna Brown used the chat to remind everyone that Tompkins County Public Libraries had implemented a books by mail program. ([link](#) provided by Angela Mennito)

They are monitoring the status of the NYS RFP which sought to consolidate the number of Fiscal Intermediaries for CDPAP. Approximately 60 plus organizations were awarded with the designation. FLIC did not apply for the designation since they are a small organization, however they will likely partner with an organization in Western NY. The change to their status as an FI will have an impact on how they administer CDPAP in Tompkins.

Long Term Care Committee and Subcommittees/ workgroups – Bev reported that the Long Term Care Committee meets quarterly on the second month of the quarter. The next meeting in May will include a presentation by Mike Stitley, the Director of Emergency Operations for Tompkins County. He will be sharing his past experience with emergency situations at long term care facilities.

- **Falls Prevention** – last met in 2020 and focused on one project to promote physical activity among older adults through the distribution of posters to senior residences. This subcommittee does not have plans to meet in 2022.
- **Home Care Workgroup** – has been meeting to discuss social supports and potential career ladder initiatives for home care workers. Social supports may be helpful for home care workers who experience low wages and other challenges.
- **Advance Care Planning** – Anna Rosenblatt reported on the status of the Advance Care Planning Group which has been meeting virtually throughout COVID. Discussion has centered around serious illness, advance care planning documentation, end of life, aging, emergency procedures and more. The meeting format usually includes a presenter or

discussion around a specific article that is distributed beforehand. For 2022 and beyond, the group is interested in expanding their membership and scope to ensure they serve and include more members of the community. Among the changes under consideration are: a new name for the committee that will reflect the range of topics covered; meeting less frequently – from every other month to quarterly; and changing the meeting format so that it is easier to publicize and attract more members of the community. In response to a question in the chat, Anna responded that there are 70 people on the distribution, but an average of 12 people who regularly attend. She is interested in knowing why people have not attended. She asked people to contact her directly at arosenblatt@cayugamed.org if they want to be on the listserv, have suggestion for a name, or have other ideas. She is open to brainstorming via a meeting or email.

NY Statewide Senior Action Council – Sarah Askew introduced the organization as a nonprofit, nonpartisan, grassroots organization which has existed since 1972. They advocate at the community and statewide level, provide Medicare counseling for people needing help navigating coverage, help with patient rights, and serve as the Senior Medicare Patrol for NYS covering Medicare fraud and abuse. Services are free.

Like others, they have been focused on safely conducting outreach during COVID and held a drive-through Senior Fair in Oswego. They have also partnered with several libraries to serve as access points for telehealth appointments if a person cannot do this in their home (for example, due to unreliable internet, no equipment, lack of privacy, etc.). Interested people can contact 2-1-1 to find out which libraries are participating. Statewide also provides free presentations for organizations and groups on a number of Medicare related topics and offer a monthly “Prevent Fraud” toolkit with articles and media messages to share. They have several legislative initiatives in 2022: 1) S4603/A5422 to expand EPIC, a statewide pharmaceutical assistance program for people 65 and over, to include people with disabilities who are younger than 65; improve the transparency and accountability of EPIC by reinstating the consumer advocacy panel, restore the requirement for an annual report to the Legislature, and reverse the administrative changes that resulted in a new and onerous EPIC application; 2) Medicare Savings Program – Raising the FPL from 135% to include persons with income of 200% FPL; 3) Medicaid - There is an executive proposal to eliminate the Medicaid resources test and raise the eligibility level of persons who are aged and blind from 87% to 138% FPL, and to protect people currently enrolled in Medicaid from losing coverage (i.e., Persons enrolled in Medicaid during COVID could not lose their coverage). Sarah encouraged people to sign on to support these legislative initiatives.

Sarah stated that they are looking for partners in the community, and would be interested in setting up a community day or some type of event for organizations people to share information on resources. Her contact information is as follows:

Sarah Askew, Outreach Counselor, NY Statewide Senior Action Council
275 State Street, 3rd floor, Albany, NY 12210
Phone: 607.319.4888 800.333.4374, ext. 300 Fax: 607.225.6200
P.O. Box 125, Brooktondale, NY 14817
Email: sarah@nysenior.org <https://www.nysenior.org>

Alzheimer’s Association for Central New York – Samantha (Sam) Weeks, formerly with Seven Valleys Health in Cortland, just started on December 6. The Alzheimer’s Association has expanded its staff to enhance its coverage in nonurban communities in their 14 counties. She is one of several new program managers and will be responsible for outreach and support in

<p>Broome, Cortland, Chenango, Tioga and Tompkins. She reviewed the vision of the Alzheimer’s Association – a world without Alzheimer’s and dementia – and delivered an update of their services. These include an array of information sources which one can find by calling their toll-free number (800-272-3900) 24/7. Callers may also talk to a licensed professional for a care consultation. They provide monthly support groups for peers and professional, caregivers, patients, as well as specialty groups such as for spouses and people in the LGBTQ community. Support groups are available in all of their counties and presently available virtually.</p> <p>Sam’s focus will be education and training programs. They can teach individuals for free and have a number of modules available (understanding Alzheimer’s and dementia, warning signs, difficult conversations, etc.) for targeted populations. They can also provide their programs at the organization level and will customize a training as needed. Alzheimer’s Association offers safety services, such as a free medic alert program where a loved one and their caregiver each get a medic alert bracelet and are connected to the medic alert system. This enables notification if something happens to either party. They host Alz Together, a social engagement activity for the caregiver and their loved ones to have fun together and connect with others. One of their recent activities took place virtually as a visit to a zoo; other events are in person. These activities are free. In addition, they partner with COFA for respite services for caregivers of people with Alzheimer’s. Finally, they offer a community resource finder (www.communityresourcefinder.org) and retain a list of at-home and other services targeted at memory care. She invited everyone to contact her with questions or if there is an interest in volunteering.</p> <p>Her contact information is, Sam Weeks, Alzheimer’s Association, Central NY Chapter, email- saweeks@alz.org.</p>	
<p>Community Announcements – Bev asked for open announcements: Beth Harrington, President of the Suicide Prevention and Crisis Center Board, shared that crisis line data indicates the largest percentage of calls from adults 65 and older. She is hoping to brainstorm ideas with COFA and other groups to determine if there is a need for further education.</p>	
<p>What Needs Are Not Being Addressed? –</p> <p>David, from Titus Tower shared his concern about the lack of unscheduled fire drills at Titus Tower. He has only seen notification of a scheduled fire drill which he feels is inadequate preparation for true emergency situations. Jan Lynch reported that FLIC has presented on individual emergency preparedness, distributing knapsacks with an emergency starter kit to individuals. Although their intent was to offer their presentation to congregate living situations, COVID disrupted their plans so they have posted a video for viewing on their website. While in-person presentations offer more opportunities for interaction, the video may offer individuals a place to start with their own planning. They also operate a core advisory group (CAG) for Tompkins County which meets quarterly to talk about many aspects of emergency planning. The group’s members include the Director of Emergency Response for Tompkins County and many community partner organizations. She informed Dave that he or any community member is welcome to attend or receive notice of meetings. Jan’s email is jan@fliconline.org.</p> <p>Sam Weeks reported on a program that is addressing the shortage of home health aides and health advocacy. A partnership between Guthrie Medical and OCM BOCES is offering flexible training with free transportation for students, including those who are outside of Cortland County. She had worked with the program in her former position. She recommended</p>	

<p>reaching out to Carly at Guthrie and provided a link with information and a contact. She encouraged people to share this with individuals interested in getting into the medical field.</p> <p>Deb Traunstein, with the Visiting Nurse Service, commented on a growing issue they are seeing with patients of the Visiting Nurse Service. She prefaced her remark that this problem may be greater than the group can address, but possibly Sarah at Statewide Senior Action Council has ideas. They are seeing more patients at home who cannot get into a nursing home, but who, in reality, need less intense services, such as what is offered in assisted living. This type of service has been out of reach financially for these individuals who cannot use Medicaid to pay for assisted living or who cannot pay out of pocket. For these patients, the only choices appear to be a skilled nursing facility or their home with services. She inquired whether the Governor’s plan or possibly other groups are addressing the lack of an appropriate level of care like assisted living, for individuals with low to moderate income.</p> <p>Lisa Monroe mentioned that this has been a longstanding problem in Tompkins existing well before her time at COFA, and had been a priority for her predecessor, Lisa Homes. COFA and many community partners have been advocating for the establishment of an assisted living program (ALP) in Tompkins that would accept people covered by Medicaid. Many attempts in the past have fallen through the cracks. Most recently, however, a local skilled nursing facility submitted an application to New York State to establish an ALP, but unfortunately the review process has been held up since the application was submitted at the beginning of 2020. She has attempted several times to determine the status of the application at the State level. The NYS approval process is lengthy, complicated and involves many different regulatory departments. As far as advocacy, she is under the impression that the State is aware but this hasn’t resulted in moving the application along.</p> <p>Deb has noticed that patients are being discharged to the home with services because they cannot get into a nursing home when they are COVID positive, or else they are discharged to the home and waiting for their assessment. It almost appears that home care services have become the new safety net. Lisa added that nursing homes are supposed to take patients, even if they are COVID positive, so she recommended contacting their ombudsman staff if they run into this problem. Deb suggested that the staffing issues at the facilities may complicate accepting patients with COVID.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that the health care delivery system is generally not well coordinated for people with long term care needs. Continuing to monitor the types of services gaps, such as the one Deb raised, remains beneficial for our community.</p>	
<p><u>Next Meeting and Adjournment</u></p> <p>The next meeting is scheduled for May 6, 2022. The Director of Emergency Operations for the County will be presenting.</p> <p>The meeting concluded at 1:18 pm</p>	<p>Post February 2022 Minutes</p>

Submitted by Beverly Chin