

## Long Term Care Planning Committee

June 14, 2022

### Meeting Minutes

LTC Planning Committee Members in Attendance: Melissa Morton, Chair, Office of Policy & Management (OPM); Jennifer Cavallaro, Department of Social Services; Stephanie Bozak, Department of Children and Families; Margaret Gerundo-Murkette, Department of Aging and Disability Services; Kim Hriceniak, Department of Public Health; Amy Porter, Department of Aging and Disability Services; Michael Santoro, Department of Housing; Laura Watson, Department of Housing; Representative Jonathan Steinberg

Others Present: Heather Ferguson-Hull, OPM

Called to order by Melissa Morton at 10:04 AM

#### Welcome and Introductions

Melissa Morton offered words of welcome, and introduced Heather Ferguson-Hull, who recently joined OPM and will be providing staff support to the committee

#### Updates and Announcements- Legislative Updates

Ms. Morton shared that although it was a short session, quite a bit of legislation was passed related to the Long-Term Services and Supports system. The written legislative summary was sent to the committee and is available [here](#). Ms. Ferguson-Hull highlighted 12 items from that summary, and there were no follow up questions from the committee.

#### Member Updates and Announcements

**Margaret Gerundo-Murkette** noted that the Department of Aging and Disability Services' State Unit on Aging (ADS/SUA) is losing approximately 40 percent of its staff members due to retirements. She expressed appreciation for the patience shown during this time of transition and she added that the work of the department continues. Ms. Gerundo-Murkette shared that the budget included \$18.5 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding for the department, of which \$10 million is for senior centers, \$3 million is for Meals on Wheels, \$1 million is for Alzheimer's respite care, \$4 million is for Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), and there were some funds that were allocated to a couple of individual senior centers. These funds are significant, and they are in addition to other ARPA funding the department is receiving. ADS/SUA is working with their partners, including the AAAs, elderly nutrition providers, senior centers and other groups to determine the best use of the funds to meet the needs of these groups. She added that the budget included a full-time dedicated position to support senior centers. Ms. Gerundo-Murkette also noted that the department received approximately \$826,000 in public health workforce federal funds. The focus of these funds is for staffing to help address social isolation in a variety of ways, including increasing access to technology.

Ms. Morton also noted PA 22-32, regarding data collection to prevent senior malnutrition, and Ms. Gerundo-Murkette shared that this work is already underway.

## Long-Term Care Advisory Council Comments

**Michael Werner** stated that the Council will be meeting this summer. He echoed Ms. Gerundo-Murkette's comments about the significance of the \$10 million in funding for senior centers. He added that the new dedicated staff position of senior center coordinator at ADS/SUA will be extremely helpful, and he expressed gratitude to the chairs of the Aging and Appropriations Committees for making this position possible. Mr. Werner added that coordinating communications and opportunities and tracking different senior centers' operations on the state level should be extremely beneficial to Connecticut's aging population. He shared his excitement about the new Community Ombudsman program. Ms. Morton clarified that the funding for this program is currently for one position. Commissioner Porter confirmed that is the case, and she added that it will help lay the groundwork for the program, especially as there is hope there will eventually be federal funding to expand it.

**Andrei Brel**, representing the Connecticut Association of Adult Day Services shared his excitement about what was achieved during the legislative session and expressed his appreciation for the support the association receives. He noted that there have been efforts to include Adult Day Services under the Medicaid State Plan, and that there will be a working group to study the issue. He added that New York, Massachusetts, and Vermont currently realize savings through providing these services as part of their state plans, as they are cost-effective. Mr. Brel said that the additional state funding that is in the process of being allocated is very much appreciated.

## Other Business

No new topics were raised.

## 2022 Meetings

Ms. Morton confirmed that the committee would continue to meet virtually for the remainder of the calendar year. The possibility of meeting in person next year will be revisited at the December meeting. The future meeting dates are:

Tues., September 13th – 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM – Microsoft Teams

Tues., December 13th -- 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM – Microsoft Teams

Full meeting recording can be accessed here:

[https://youtu.be/D10\\_pFyM2sA](https://youtu.be/D10_pFyM2sA)

Meeting adjourned at 10:33 AM