

Whatcom Healthy Aging Initiative
Friday, April 6, 2018
At the Whatcom Center for Philanthropy

MINUTES

Attending:

Mary Carlson, Whatcom Council on Aging
Marie Eaton, Palliative Care Institute, WWU
Sue Sharpe, Chuckanut Health Foundation
Heidi Bugbee, Generations Early Learning & Family Center
Tammy Bennett, Whatcom YMCA
Heather Flaherty, RiverStyx Foundation
Tonja Myers, Christian Health Care Center
Dr. Dave Lynch, Chuckanut Health Foundation Board President/Family Care Network (retired)
Jeanne Brotherton, Chuckanut Health Foundation Board/Health Ministries Network (retired)
Trisha Bannerman, PeaceHealth
Jenny Weinstein, Opportunity Council
Mary Anderson

Regrets:

Dr. Chao-ying Wu, Chuckanut Health Foundation Board/Family Care Network
Kristin Granstrand, Mercy Housing Northwest
Ryan Blackwell, Northwest Regional Council
Amy Hockenberry, Whatcom County Health Department
Leslie Jackson, Bellingham at Home
Carol Nicolay, Health Ministries Network
April Claxton, Recreation Northwest

Welcome and introductions

Sue welcomed the group, and the meeting started with a round of introductions.

New members:

Trisha Bannerman is Director of Primary Care Operations at PeaceHealth. This includes oversight for the Center for Senior Health. Trisha has worked at PeaceHealth for eighteen years, in a variety of roles.

Jenny Weinstein started as the Opportunity Council's Director of Housing Development in October 2017. This position heads a new OppCo department focused on housing development, which will encompass some of OppCo's existing housing programs, as well as expand efforts in both developing and managing affordable housing.

Review and approve minutes

Minutes from March 2, 2018 were approved as written.

Name, purpose, and guiding principles

The group reviewed the newest iteration of the title, mission statement, and guiding principles for its work.

AGING WELL WHATCOM

Mission Statement: *We promote living well, through all our years and into the end of life.*

Guiding Principles:

- 1) *We work through collective action with and for our Elders.*
- 2) *We are guided by radical listening to individual and community voices.*
- 3) *We take evidence-based action.*
- 4) *We are committed to equity and inclusion, welcoming all.*

Discussion and comments:

- “Radical listening” and “elders” were discussed as potentially problematic phrases.
- Changes were suggested to emphasize the initiative’s focus on the community rather than (or in addition to) individuals.

➔ **ACTION ITEM:** Heather will make additional revisions based on this discussion.

The group discussed a list of “internal phrases” that could be reviewed to ensure accountability or as a touchstone as we reflect on the Aging Well work. These are elements of previous drafts of the mission and guiding principles, but it was felt they would be confusing for the general public.

- Radical listening (means: ability to have our mind changed along the way; open mind and heart; focus on what really matters)
- Moving toward justice
- Essential and integral (means: whole person/whole health; everyone has a part to play; focus on the “intersection space” in the guiding principles graphic; could also be called “Working at the center.”)
- Interdependent
- Organic and messy

It was suggested that these phrases be reviewed periodically, and/or be included in the agenda for every meeting.

Community Assessment

Demographics – the subgroup is still working on compiling these data.

Quality of Life Indicators – this was raised as another assessment area to consider. Amy Hockenberry provided from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS); Lara has also identified several reports that focus on older adults’ quality of life, which have some interesting indicators. The [Best Cities for Successful Aging](#) report (Milken Institute, 2017) is very comprehensive with indicators across many domains.

Housing Assessment – Lara proposed that a subgroup make a first pass at this and has already asked Jenny for her help. Mary C. also volunteered. It was suggested that someone from the Elder Service Providers would be an asset to completing the housing assessment, and that Melinda Herrera would be a good addition to the group (or could recommend someone else if she prefers).

➔ **ACTION ITEM:** Lara will contact Melinda Herrera about participating in Aging Well.

Programs and Services Inventory – Lara reviewed the directories and listings of services for older adults she was able to locate on-line: NW Seniors (also hardcopy version); WhatcomCares, NWRC; Whatcom Council on Aging; and a listing from the Bellingham Herald (July 2017 issue and on-line).

Discussion and comments:

- How easy or hard is it to navigate the listings? Or actually get the service or other resource that's listed?
- How well do the lists actually communicate what is available?
- Suggestion to add contacts for local government.
- There is some overlap and redundancy across the sites. Would a single resource website be possible? The challenge is maintaining it and keeping it updated.
- A "coordinated entry" approach could be used to streamline the process (similar to what's been implemented for children with special health care needs).
- We will learn more about these questions by listening to older adults and their families and get a better sense of what's working well and where the gaps/needs are.

The group agreed to take no immediate action at this time regarding inventorying programs and services.

Health Neighborhood Mapping

Marie led group members through an exercise to create personal "maps" of our health neighborhoods, guided by the prompts:

- Draw a map.
- Start with yourself.
- Add people, services, institutions, information sources or anything else that is important to you and your health.
- Use both drawings and words. As simple or complex as you wish.

Members shared their maps and discussed the possibility of using this exercise as an opening activity for community conversations or listening sessions.

Wrap up and next steps

- There is interest in setting up a Drop Box for Aging Well, which would help reduce the number of emails going out to share information.
- Lara announced that the National Council on Aging has Aging Mastery Program kits for which they're seeking review and feedback (kits available at the meeting for those who wished to take them).
- The group agreed to set aside 10-15 minutes at each meeting for members to share something interesting, inspiring, or motivating related to Aging Well. This will work better than holding separate learning sessions as was previously discussed.
- **The next Aging Well Initiative meeting is Friday, May 4, 9-11AM at the Northwest Regional Council, 600 Lakeway Dr.**

➔ **ACTION ITEM:** Lara will send out revised Outlook invitations for May and June meetings with the new locations.