

Whatcom Healthy Aging Initiative
Friday, March 2, 2018
At the Whatcom Center for Philanthropy

MINUTES

Attending:

Mary Carlson, Whatcom Council on Aging
Ryan Blackwell, Northwest Regional Council
Marie Eaton, Palliative Care Institute, WWU
Carol Nicolay, Health Ministries Network
Sue Sharpe, Chuckanut Health Foundation
Dr. Chao-ying Wu, Chuckanut Health Foundation Board/Family Care Network
Leslie Jackson, Bellingham at Home
Heidi Bugbee, Generations Early Learning & Family Center
Amy Hockenberry, Whatcom County Health Department
Kristin Granstrand, Mercy Housing Northwest

Regrets:

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)
April Claxton, Recreation Northwest
Tammy Bennett, Whatcom YMCA
Heather Flaherty, RiverStyx Foundation
Trisha Bannerman, PeaceHealth

Welcome and introductions

Lara welcomed the group, and members introduced themselves. New members described their roles and/or programs.

Amy Hockenberry is the Health Information & Assessment Supervisor at the [Whatcom County Health Department](#). She acknowledged that the Health Department has had limited focus on the aging population in recent years and is happy to be representing the Department for this initiative.

Heidi Bugbee is the Executive Director of [Generations Early Learning & Family Center](#). The Center is a division of the St. Francis Foundation, and was previously housed at St. Francis skilled nursing facility and known as “St. Francis Childcare.” The Center is now located at the Mt. Baker Care Center and Summit Place Assisted Living. The Center provides childcare and intergenerational programs, including planned activities and visits to residents, especially those who are more socially isolated. The Center also runs a small store for residents, “part convenience store, part gift shop.”

Kristin Granstrand is the Regional Manager for Resident Services at [Mercy Housing Northwest](#), an affordable housing organization. Mercy recently opened Eleanor Place on Forest St. in Bellingham, with 80 units for lower-income older adults (65+). Eleanor Place has an on-site Resident Services Manager and space for events, activities, and services. Other Mercy properties in Bellingham are Sterling Senior (older adults) and Sterling Meadows (agricultural worker family housing).

Review and approve minutes

Minutes from January 26, 2018 were approved as written.

Name, purpose, and guiding principles

Since the last meeting, Ying, Heather and Lara worked on further articulating the initiative's name, purpose and guiding principles. Ying asked the group to consider the proposal (*Attachment 2 in meeting packet*) from three perspectives: 1) someone who knows nothing at all about the initiative, 2) one of us who is explaining the initiative to someone who is unaware of it, and 3) one of us who is doing the work. Do the statements help explain or guide?

Discussion and comments:

Name:

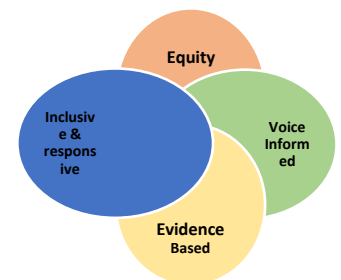
- The group agreed that "Aging Well" is preferable to "Healthy Aging."
- "Initiative" feels more active than "collaborative."
- Both could be used: *Initiative* to refer to the overall effort and *Collaborative* for the group leading the effort.
- Confusing to have multiple terms. Best to keep it simple!

Purpose Statement:

- Needs to be very short and concise – a sentence or even a phrase.
- The suggested purpose statement actually outlines guiding principles ("we do this by...")

Guiding Principles:

- There is support for the statement, "In all our work, we are guided by our commitment to equity, inclusivity, responsiveness, and to **taking actions** that are voice informed and evidence based."
- The graphic representing the commitments and their overlap at the center is helpful.
- Might be good to state somewhere who the "we" is – people may want to know what organizations are involved.



Comments and suggested changes in red:

Option 1: *Feels more "weighty." Rearranging some of the lines would improve the flow.*

With and for our Elders (*++ positive*)

We work to create a better way of living "*Better*" *feels a bit judgmental. Maybe "ways of living well?"*

Through all our years, and into the end of life

Here in Whatcom County.

Because we are, all of us, each of us, essential and integral.

We do this through collective action

guided by

radical listening (*++ positive*) and

validated evidence

welcoming all and

moving toward justice. *This word may be too extreme; we know what we mean by it, but it could be alienating to some people.*

Option 2: *Format is easier to read. Sentence is too long.*

We work to create a better way of living through all our years and into the end of life, honoring the essential and integral nature of all of us, with and for our Elders in Whatcom County.

We do this through collective action, guided by radical listening and validated evidence, while welcoming all and moving toward justice.

➔ **ACTION ITEM:** Ying will rework the statements based on this discussion.

1) Demographics

Ryan reported on the work of the demographics subgroup and reviewed the chart of proposed demographic data (Attachment 3 in meeting packet).

Discussion and comments:

- Agreement on data elements of age categories, geographic and social variable, financial status and health insurance coverage.
 - Amy stated that data on serious chronic illness and quality of life are also be available through BRFSS (Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention survey conducted by state health departments).
- ➔ **ACTION ITEM:** Amy will look into BRFSS quality of life indicators.
- For living arrangements,
 - It would be beneficial to understand the overall “landscape” of housing, not just the number of units.
 - Goal should be to describe and differentiate the various kinds of living arrangements, including living at home, long term care, adult family homes, retirement, and assisted living.
 - Look at housing situations in more detail, for example, for those living at home, is it with or without assistance? Is the housing subsidized/eligibility based or not?
 - The Opportunity Council has the most comprehensive view of housing capacity and needs in Whatcom County, and would be an excellent resource for better understanding these issues. They recently hired a person for their housing initiatives, which include some senior housing.
 - The group agreed that an OppCo housing person would be a valuable addition to the Aging Well collaborative.
- ➔ **ACTION ITEM:** Demographics group will continue to work on compiling information based on this this discussion.
- ➔ **ACTION ITEM:** Lara will contact Greg Winter at OppCo regarding someone from their housing programs to participate in the initiative.

2) Other “Intersecting initiatives”

Group members identified the following: Elder Service Providers, PeaceHealth Center for Senior Health, NW Regional Council Strategic Plan, NW Life Passages Coalition and Blueprint, and Recreation NW’s Parkscriptions program.

Members of this group are involved with each of these other initiatives, which will help ensure that information is shared and opportunities for combining or coordinating efforts are identified.

Lara stated she also reviewed strategic plans of numerous agencies (e.g., Housing Authority, Whatcom Transportation Authority, Whatcom County Parks and Recreation, and others) looking for goals around older adults. She found virtually nothing, reinforcing the need for the Aging Well Initiative.

3) Priorities, desires, needs, wishes and concerns of older adults and their families.

Discussion and Comments:

- ***WE ARE “older adults and their families.” This work is not about “them.”***
- Marie obtained electronic versions of some maps from the Health Neighborhood Mapping project and invited others to join in reviewing them.

- ➔ **ACTION ITEM:** Lara will schedule time, book the Center for Philanthropy meeting room, and send out invitation to all.
- Completing the health mapping exercise ourselves would both give insight into this method of learning from people, as well as generate some “data” that could help inform how to approach the community voice aspect of the assessment.

Atul Gawande webinar and other opportunities for learning and reflection

- Group members who saw the webinar with Atul Gawande on February 16 shared some of the salient take-ways.
 - Those who watched it as a group at the Center for Philanthropy noted that discussing the information and ideas together afterwards added to the value.
 - Holding optional monthly “learning sessions” was proposed. They could be around articles, TED Talks or anything else that would inform or inspire Aging Well efforts.
 - Some group members expressed interest in this opportunity.
- ➔ **ACTION ITEM:** Lara will send out a Doodle poll to identify a time that works for the most people.
- ➔ **ACTION ITEM:** Members will send recommendations for relevant books, articles, TED Talks, interviews, etc. to Lara.

Wrap up and next steps

Lara proposed holding Aging Well meetings at various members’ locations as a way to get to know each other’s organizations and work better.

- ➔ **ACTION ITEM:** Members will email Lara if they are interested in hosting the group in the coming months.

The next Aging Well Initiative meeting will be Friday, April 6, 9-11AM. Stay tuned for the location!