

<b>MEETING MINUTES</b>	<b>COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING</b>		
<b>Date</b>	June 9, 2020	<b>Meeting Time</b>	10:00 AM- 11:45 AM
<b>Chairperson</b>	Barbara "Reba" Cornman	<b>Meeting Location</b>	Zoom meeting

Attendees:

<b>COMMISSIONERS</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>STAFF</b>	
Barbara 'Reba' Cornman, Acting Chair	√	Amanda Smith, Ph.D.	√
Allan Jensen, M.D.	√	D'Paul Nibbler	√
Barbara C. Brody		Jeff Amoros	√
Betsy Simon	√	Erika McClammy	√
David L. Roth, Ph.D.	√	Heang Tan	√
Elizabeth F. Johnson	√	James Macgill	√
Elizabeth Tanner, Ph.D.	√	Mary Anne Brennan	
Bishop Dr. J. L. Carter		Molly Martin	√
Rev. Lee Michaels		Raia Contractor	√
Lloyd H. Buckner		<b>EX-OFFICIOS</b>	
Sarah Matthews	√	Chris Ryer	
Hon Sharon Middleton, Councilwoman		Michael Braverman	
Stephanie Brooks-Wiggins		Michael S. Harrison	
Susan Francis, Esquire	√	Randi Walters, PhD	
Thomas Cudjoe, M.D.	√	Reginald Moore	
Tracey Murray, DNP	√	<b>REPRESENTATIVES</b>	
W. Daniel Hale, Ph.D.	√	Sean Bloodsworth, DSS	
<b>INVITED GUESTS</b>		Holly Freishtat, Planning	
Rona Martiyan, Dietitian Consultant	√	Alice Huang, Planning	
Elizabeth Briscoe, MD Philanthropy Network	√	Alice Kennedy, Housing	√
Lauren Averella, Civic Works	√	Leslie Yancey, Rec & Parks	√
Michael Friedman	√	Nicole Hart, Housing	√
Tasha Cornish, St. Mary's Outreach Center	√		
Aileen Tinney, Catholic Charities	√		
Marina Nellius, Medstar	√		
Margaret Pittman, Morgan State University	√		
Nichole Battle, GECO	√		
Tiffany Nicolette, CHAI	√		

## I. Welcome and Call to Order

Ms. Cornman welcomed the Commission and guests. She read an excerpt from Commissioner Dzirasa's email to all Health Department staff, regarding the events in Minneapolis and across the country, the persistence of racism in the United States, and the mission of the Baltimore City Health Department in promoting social justice and health equity.

## II. Review and Approval of Minutes Commission Members

Ms. Johnson moved that the minutes of the May 12 Commission meeting be approved; Ms. Francis seconded and the minutes were approved as presented.

## III. Agency Services Updates/ COVID-19 Response

Deputy Commissioner Tan provided an update on the Health Department's response to the COVID pandemic. She noted that the past few weeks had been very challenging, as the crisis presented by the pandemic has been compounded by the continued racial inequities in our society. She thanked Councilwoman Middleton for her advocacy for the Area Agency on Aging's programs during the City Council budget hearings.

Mr. Amoros presented information on the Mayor's three phases for re-opening Baltimore City. At the time of the Commission meeting, the city was entering Phase 1. Decisions about entering each phase will be made based on data, including the number of COVID-19 cases, mortality data, and hospital utilization. The Health Department monitors this data daily, and depending on trends, the Mayor can approval for the city to enter a new phase or may direct a return to a previous one. Mr. Amoros said that the data has indicated a drop in the three metrics, enabling the city to enter Phase 1.

Ms. Matthews asked if restrictions on senior buildings had been lifted. After some discussion, senior housing representatives and Ms. Tan clarified that there have not been restrictions on senior buildings, but the CDC and the City Health Department have issued guidelines that senior buildings should follow, including restricting visitors and practicing social distancing. It is up to the building managers/owners to develop their own policies in accordance with the guidelines.

Dr. Cudjoe asked about the prospects for re-opening senior centers. Ms. Tan said that this question has been raised at the State level, but no determination has been made. Due to the risks the pandemic poses to older adults, senior centers are not likely to open until we enter Phase 3, or possibly even later.

Dr. Smith presented the latest case data. Of note is that 29% of Baltimore City's COVID 19 cases are persons 60 and over, but 87% of the deaths from COVID 19 are people 60 and over, demonstrating the lethality of the virus for older adults.

Ms. Martin reported on the Health Department's work on outbreak prevention. She noted that outbreak prevention in nursing homes is handled by a separate unit in the Health

Department; the Area Agency on Aging is responsible for the work in assisted living facilities and senior housing. Staff are beginning to use a tracking tool that enables assisted living facilities and senior housing sites to notify the Health Department when they need assistance. Communication campaigns are planned focusing on safety. The Area Agency on Aging is also working on a long term framework for outbreak prevention with a focus on preparedness.

Dr. Jensen said that he is hearing that there is confusion about the status of senior housing and other facilities. He asked if it was possible to notify the public as to which facilities are safer than others, as measured by such data as the number of deaths occurring in a facility. Ms. Martin said that the State is making mortality information for nursing homes public, but that it is not available for other types of facilities. She said that her team is gathering more information about resources that could be helpful to the public.

Mr. Macgill provided an update on the Area Agency on Aging's food response and the status of Maryland Access Point (MAP). He noted that MAP is receiving a surge of calls requesting food boxes. He said that the City is implementing a new initiative called Baltimore Health Corps, with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation and other sources. The Health Corps will include hundreds of community health workers, consisting of contract tracers and service coordinators, hired on a temporary basis. MAP is slated to hire 15 of the service coordinators.

#### IV. Farmers Market Coupons

Rona Martiyan, the Area Agency on Aging's Nutrition Consultant, provided information on how the Senior Farmer's Market Coupon program will work this year. In the past, this program was run through the senior centers, but that is not possible this year because the centers are shut down. Instead, older adults will apply for the coupons through MAP in July. The coupons will be mailed out to recipients in August. Ms. Martiyan noted that this has been a successful program in Baltimore City, with our coupon redemption rate at a higher level than other jurisdictions. Certain areas of the City, however have had lower redemption rates than the City average: particularly the areas served by the Waxter, Oliver and Sandtown Centers. The lower rate can be attributed to lack of transportation to the farmers' markets, and fewer markets on the west side of the City.

#### V. Code Red

Ms. Martin presented information on the Health Department's plans for Code Red, potential heat waves this summer. Senior centers will be open as cooling sites, for people of all ages. The Department is also procuring 25,000 fans and 1200 air conditioning units, which will be available to persons 55 and over or persons with disabilities, who qualify under income guidelines. The City Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) will be managing the air conditioning part of the program.

Ms. Johnson asked what safeguards were in place to prevent fraud (e.g. people selling fans and air conditioners). Ms. Martin said that the Area Agency is trying to prevent this by working with

trusted partners such as Civic Works. Dr. Tanner asked if the program accepted donations. Ms. Kennedy said DHCD directs donors to partner organizations such as HUBS organizations, which can confirm whether the donated equipment can be safely installed.

Dr. Hale asked if churches could operate as cooling sites. Ms. Tan said that the Department is focusing on its own facilities, but that the Department welcomes participation by partners. Dr. Tanner asked if transportation would be available to cooling sites. Ms. Tan said that people needing transportation can call MAP and can also use their TaxiCard accounts to travel to cooling sites. Several Commission members expressed concern about the senior centers operating as cooling sites: whether social distancing would be practiced; would temperatures be taken; would the facilities be cleaned regularly. Ms. Martin said that all these issues have been taken into account in the planning.

#### VI. Other updates Ex-Officio, Agency Reps, Non-profits, Commission Members

Ms. Averella stated that Civic Works had provided home deliveries of food for 900 people in the previous week, including produce and prepared meals.

Ms. Nicolette said that CHAI had gotten a grant to purchase food boxes from Hungry Harvest, and had re-purposed CHAI's senior shuttle to deliver food baskets.

Ms. Hart said that DHCD's LIGHT program will be moving from 2700 N. Charles Street to 417 E. Fayette St., Suite 1125.

Ms. McClammy stated that the Health Department would begin distributing masks to senior housing sites in the next week. The Health Department has received a donation of 100,000 masks. The distribution will include information on how to use the masks. This project is a partnership with AIM and the Salvation Army.

Ms. Cornman noted that the Caregivers Conference has been cancelled but that the Caregivers Conference Planning Committee has organized a series of online programs that will begin at the end of June. She said that Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Services will receive the annual Maryland Gerontological Association organization award, and that Dr. Tanner is receiving a Lifetime Achievement award from the Maryland Hospital Association.

Ms. Cornman said that there would be Commission meetings in July and August.

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 AM.