

GROWS Advocacy Committee report: 4/27/21

Topics:

1) The Advocacy Committee is drafting a letter that has the objective of spreading awareness of GROWS to organizations that intersect in the Older Adult Service Provider and Caregiver space. Suggestion that it should be a two page fact sheet with a member directory. David, Robin, and David met with Pazit Aviv from the Montgomery County Villages program to discuss collaboration efforts.

2) At the April 22nd CoA meeting, the speakers theme was Intergenerational Programming (Strategies) with Leah Bradley, Founder of Empowering The Ages <https://empoweringtheages.org/> & Aditi Merchant founder of www.bigandmini.org While technology is a powerful tool to connect older adults with 70% having access, there is also the concern about those with no connectivity or little savvy to be connected online.

The AAA Director noted the Senior Centers and Rec Centers are forming strategies to open in the next few months. The County stats on vaccination % was challenged. They say 85% of those over age 65 are vaccinated.

Commission members have been meeting with Council members in small groups to promote the Commission's budget priorities.

3) **The CoA Task Force** to counter social isolation and loneliness in Montgomery County (SILoS) has a date of May 18th from 10 to 11:30am. Speakers include Dr. Liz Necka from NIA, NIH, Lynda Flowers, AARP, and Scott Code from Leading Age. I think it will be a great program to promote to the GROWS membership. The event will be open to the public but the target audience will be those professionally invested in this topic not only for helping the community in general but for program planning, public policy planning, community outreach and education.

4) **CoA, Aging in Community:** GROWS liaison and Commissioner Mary Sweeney reported on the lack of knowledge in Senior Affordable housing when calling 311 and the 240-777-3000 help lines.

5) **CoA, Health & Wellness** heard from : Nina Chalkin and Hirsch Isen, IHAS: In-home Aide Service MoCo -- Complements other social services programs to reduce institutional placement, reduce hospital care, reduce abuse and neglect and promote self sufficiency. Marla Lahat, Home Care Partners, Home Based Chore Service and Personal Care.

6) **CoA, Public Policy Committee:** is extremely concerned with the reduction in County surveyors at nursing homes and the elimination of 10 positions in the County. The budget savings should be allocated to Senior Programs. There will be a letter to be sent to the State and to the County to find out how the County allowed this to happen without a study. Maryland Medicaid LTC Waiver program received 400 more slots from the money from Cares Act.

7) **CoA, Communications Committee:** is working on Seniors Today and has produced a press release and Senior Today advertisement for the Public Forum.

Please check and promote the GROWS calendar for great educational and networking events. Promote the GROWS directory and website in your regular emails and correspondence.

The next GROWS Advocacy committee meets monthly on Zoom the 4th Tuesday of the month at 1pm.