

**Contra Costa County Advisory Council on Aging
Health Work Group Minutes
Thursday, April 8, 2021**

Call to Order Susan Frederick, Health WG Chair called the meeting to order at 9:30 am.

Present: Fred Adams, Deborah Card, Jim Donnelly, Jennifer Doran, Susan Frederick, Nancy Leasure, Nuru Neemuchwalla, Brian O'Toole, Terri Tobey, Caitlyn Sly, Dennis Yee.

Guest: Michelle Berman, Gail Garrett@510-282-4429, Nhang Luong, Presenter.

Absent: Marty Aufhauser, Mary Bruns, Lisa Hammon, Joanna Kim-Selby, Jill Kleiner, Lenore MacDonald, Glenda Pacha, Penny Reed, Sara Shafiabady, Frances Smith, Kathie Thompson, Greg Wanket.

Staff: Anthony Macias, Melanie Smith.

Approval of Agenda/Minutes

April 8, 2021 Agenda – Susan added Chair's Report after Presentation.

Motion by Nancy, Second by Dennis to adopt the agenda with the addition of a Chair's report; Vote was unanimous.

March 11, 2021 Minutes –

Motion by Fred, Second by Nuru to approve the minutes as written; Vote was unanimous.

Announcements and Correspondence

Interim Staff Support for the Health Work Group (WG)

Melanie Smith, Aging & Adult Services Senior Staff Assistant (SSA)
Msmith1@ehsd.cccounty.us 925-471-2899

Presentation

Nhang Luong, Program/Projects Coordinator for Information & Assistance
nluong@ehsd.cccounty.us 925-655-1385

Information and Assistance is a helpline for seniors, their caregivers, an integrated call center, and a one stop for Aging & Adult Services. They provide intake for both Adult Protective Services (APS) and In Home Supportive Services (IHSS.) I&A is staffed with six Social Workers, two part-time retirees, and one part-time retiree that helps with IHSS calls. Callers may leave a voice mail for a return call. Translation services are available. They refer callers to the Health Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (HICAP) for questions about Medicare

and prescription drugs. For additional information on I&A – <https://ehsd.org/elderly-disabled/information-assistance>.

To contact I&A: 1-800-510-2020 or when dialing locally 925-229-8434.

Health WG Chair's Report

Susan would like suggestions for future presentations. Suggestions included:

1. Brian suggested a representative from MediCal to discuss response time which should be 5 days but has been approximately 45 days.
2. Dennis asked if Social Security might be in our purview.
3. Nuru noted the CCC Fire Chief mentioned his insurance has double because of risk factors depending on fire zones, and would like to hear about general fire issues in CCC.

4/8/21 ACTION ITEM – Susan will follow up on the three suggestions for presentations.

Members Reports (time permitting)

AARP Updates – Nuru Neemuchwalla

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) is pushing the prescription act as authored by six assembly members. AB458 directs Health And Human Services to implement a whole drug program to allow importing from Canada.

Legislative Report - Nancy Leasure

Nancy reviewed the status of pending assembly and senate bills. Susan suggest the Health WG focus on the top two AB323 and AB383. Nancy volunteered to draft a letter of support for AB323.

Brown Act discussion – per Anthony all WGs fall under the Brown Act but a member may draft a letter and send it to the Executive Committee as long as only Nancy and Susan are involved.

Motion by Fred, Second by Nuru to have Nancy draft the letter and send it to the ACOA Executive Committee for approval; Vote was unanimous.

AB383 Mental Health Older Adults. Susan asked Nancy to write a letter of support to present to the Executive Committee in May.

Motion by Jennifer, Second by Dennis to have Nancy write a letter of support to present to the Executive Committee in May; Vote was unanimous.

4/8/21 ACTION ITEM – Nancy will draft two legislative letters of support for the Executive Committee’s approval.

Dementia/Alzheimer’s - Jennifer Doran

Please see Attachment A for Jennifer’s complete written report. Thank you Jennifer for providing your notes.

Nursing Homes - Fred Adams

Fred shared an article from the East Bay times “How Nursing Homes Mask Neglect to Increase Ratings” from the East Bay Times. To summarize they developed a five star system to help you choose the best quality in nursing homes but instead only help you choose the highest cost one. Jim commented he “enjoys listening to Fred’s reports but looks forward to the day Fred reports that he has found a great nursing home.”

Caregiver Resources - Terri Tobey no report as she is unable to access her notes today.

Senior Mental Health - Susan Frederick

Susan will report out next month as they have not had their April meeting yet. Susan commented that people’s views of creativity are bias on ageism. For example a young person dyes their hair green and it is viewed as creative; but on a senior citizen it might be viewed as dementia.

Discussion

Jennifer asked about H3 (Health, Housing, and Homeless Services) and how to contact them. Levonna Martin runs H3 in Health Services 925-313-6712 or <https://ccchealth.org/h3/>.

Public Comment

Add Nutrition to the ongoing reports for the Health WG Agenda. Caitlyn Sly will report and Gail Garret for Senior Nutrition.

Action Items for Executive Committee

4/8/21 ACTION ITEM – Susan will follow up on the three suggestions for presentations.

4/8/21 ACTION ITEM – Nancy will draft two legislative letters of support for the Executive Committee’s approval.

Future Meetings – second Thursday of each month 9:30 to 11:30

Next meeting: Thursday, May 13, 2021

Zoom: <https://cccouny-us.zoom.us/j/96353466330?pwd=WTNUYk4rNFVsT2hIMVYyUmVZZ1NIZz09>

Password: 017220 By Telephone: USA (214) 765-0478 Conference code: 445291

The meeting adjourned at 11:21am

Minutes by Melanie Smith, Aging & Adult Services SSA
msmith1@ehsd.cccounty.us 925-471-2899

ATTACHMENT A: Jennifer Doran's Report

Dementia Report for HWG Minutes 4/8/21

Sources: Journal of Alzheimer Disease and Journal of Prevention of Alzheimer Disease.

Covid and the Brain.

Last month, Jennifer reported that there was concern about increased deaths from Covid in dementia patients. It has been found that a greater number of patients with diagnosed dementia had died but their comorbidities was the cause of death. One difference among dementia patients was a greater incidence of delirium.

Covid patients requiring hospitalization have shown various degrees of brain impairment. These patients need to be monitored over time for cognitive decline including attention deficit, brain fog, or AD. A baseline MRI is recommended before discharge. China showed that 45% of severe covid patients had marked neuro deficits. Three stages of "Neuro-Covid classification scheme include:

NeuroCovid I: virus damage is limited to epithelial cells of nose/mouth-loss of sense of smell and taste.

NeuroCovid II: flood of inflammation called cytokine storm beginning in the lungs and inflaming the blood vessels throughout the organs. Clots and strokes result.

NeuroCovid III: explosive cytokine storm damaging the blood brain barrier. Virus particles invade the brain. Patients develop seizures, confusion, and encephalopathy.

Some patients presented with neuro symptoms before fever, cough, shortness of breath.

Some patients would benefit from a 12 week Brain Fitness Program for improving Cognitive Function and Increasing the Volume of Hippocampus. Developed by M Fotuhi in 2016 and recognized for producing significant improvement (84%) in cognitive function. Each patient received personalized cognitive stimulation, neurofeedback training and brain coaching, Mediterranean diet, omega 3 supplement and mindfulness meditation.

Asymptomatic ALZ elderly at risk for falls.

Falls are the leading cause of fatal injuries in older adults, resulting in more than 800,000 hospitalizations and 30,000 deaths. Older people in the earliest stages of AD, are more likely to suffer a fall than those who are not on track to develop AD. Washington Univ, St. Louis, Mo, researchers have been studying this for years. They recommend that these older folks experiencing falls be evaluated for AD. Falls are possibly not just caused by loss of strength and balance. Scientists have learned that decades before memory loss and confusion become apparent, the plaques of amyloid proteins form, followed by the tangle of tau proteins and brain shrinkage. A WU study followed 83 people over the age of 65 for a year. All participants were cognitively normal as determined by a neurologist at the beginning of the study. Each participant filled out monthly calendars recording any falls and underwent brain scans for amyloid and for signs of atrophy and impaired connectivity. The presence of the amyloid alone did not put people at risk of falling but neurodegeneration did. Patients who fell had smaller hippocampi, the brain region devoted to memory and connectivity receiving sensory inputs and controlled movement showed signs of decay. Falling is most likely to occur in the neurodegeneration process phase of preclinical ALZ- a good 5 years before memory loss and confusion.

A new drug, Hydromethylthionine, has been found to block aggregation of proteins (tau and TDP43) in the brain of patients suffering from a rarer dementia - variant fronto-temporal. Alzheimer Dementia patients (mild to moderate disease) also benefited. Currently a 12 month clinical trial is ongoing at 150 sites in US and EU to further study usefulness in AD.

Jennifer received information about a webinar called Awakening from Alzheimer. A 12 day program of 1 hour sessions covering a variety of topics. Not much is known about the presenters or sponsors. It's open to all. If interested the website address will be furnished.