

**MORRIS COUNTY
ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING, DISABILITIES &
VETERANS
Morris Township
April 6, 2023**

Members Present

Barbara Anderson
Christina Brino
Emerson Crooks
Joan Jensen
Tom Mazzaccaro
John Sheridan

Staff Present

Shawna Bailey
Kasey Errico
Christine Hellyer
Amy Keyishian
Patricia Petrillo
Maria Rosario
Jennifer Van Natta
Rhea Young

Guest

Timothy Jensen
Commissioner Christine Myers

The meeting was called to order at 1:03 pm by *Tom Mazzaccaro*, the 2023 Chairman of the Council, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Christine did the roll call for Council and Staff members.

The approval of February 2, 2023, Minutes

Motion: C.B./J.S.

Chairperson's Report- Tom Mazzaccaro

At the last meeting we discussed member responsibilities. There was a Signatory Page and a Biographical Profile in the orientation folder. Members who have not already done so should complete the forms and return them to Maria Rosario today.

Director of Aging- Christine Hellyer
County Announcements

SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) program is currently renewing applications, and with the pandemic ending there will be a decrease in the minimum benefit to \$50. Shortly after our meeting Governor Murphy increased the minimum to \$95 eligible individuals.

If an individual is approved to receive the federal minimum payment or any amount less than \$95 New Jersey will add a supplemental payment, so the amount received will be \$95.

We encourage seniors and disabled to apply. Disabled and seniors don't do not have a gross income eligibility, but a net income. It is now a debit card.

Barbara asked if there is an application?

Christine yes NJHelps.com

Tom asked how many residents in Morris County are on SNAP?

Christine I don't know but I can get that information. There is a low amount of seniors registered for this program. It is less than 10%. We hope the \$95 will be an incentive for more to apply.

The annual **Morris County Veterans Ceremony** will be held on May 24, 2023, 12pm at the *Administration Building*.

May 2023 is "Older Americans Month". The theme is "Aging Unbound, which offers the opportunity to explore diverse aging experiences and discuss how communities can combat stereotypes.

New Transit effective January 1, 2023, has a grant with **EZ RIDE (non-profit)**, that **offers a 50% discount for medical trips** provided through EZRyde4Life program while funding lasts.

The membership based "**EZ Ryde4Life**" program uses Lyft and Uber to Provide rides for seniors without a smartphone.

Seniors call **EZ Ride** at 201-939-4242, option#4, to request a ride, and a Transportation Coordinator will send a **Lyft or Uber** car to take them where they need to go.

The program is available statewide and requires members to **register**, set up transportation account using a credit or debit card, and then seniors can call when they need a ride. Riders pay the fare charged by Lyft or Uber and an administrative fee of \$2.50 per trip.

The discount is available to **EZ Ryde4Life** members participating in any **ONE** of the following programs:

1. **Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged & Disabled (PAAD) Program**
2. **Senior Gold prescription Discount Program**
3. Beneficiary of both **Medicaid and Medicare** programs

This targets the lower income seniors.

I have asked for clarification for persons 60–65-year-olds that don't have Medicare, but have Medicaid.

EZ Ride will provide a maximum of eight rides a month for medical purposes **ONLY**. *Dialysis patients are eligible for an additional eight rides a month*. Rides will be provided on a first come first served basis. For more *Information, please contact Kinga Skora, at 201-939-4242 ext.131.*

COVID 19 is still around and the federal government is offering free COVID 19 test. Go to COVIDTEST.GOV.

Tests do expire so check because they may give a false negative.

Please stay vaccinated and tested if you can.

The New Jersey Division of Aging Services has partnered with Get Set Up to provide free virtual classes for older adults taught by peers- ask questions, make new friends, learn new things and have fun.

Christina asked if there will be a calendar of events for Older American's Month? And will there be the Annual Art Show for seniors and disabled persons?

Christine: No, our events will be at our Nutrition sites. We can make it available. NORWESCAP recently appointed a new Director, and we haven't had an update yet.

Office Reports

ADRC Maria Rosario

Information & Assistance and Case Management phone calls for January, February and March 2023 totaled 964 calls. Monthly calls listed below:

- January: 394
- February: 264
- March: 306

Nutrition-Rhea Young

The Nutrition Project provided the following number of meals:

JANUARY:

Congregate Meals	3,519
Home Delivered Meals	28,040
Weekend Meals	1,540
Total	33,099

FEBRUARY:

Congregate Meals	3,434
Home Delivered Meals	25,301
Weekend Meals	1,520
Total	30,255

MARCH:

Congregate Meals	4,544
Home Delivered Meals	29,166
Weekend Meals	1,538
Total	35,248

HIGHLIGHTS

- **1/2023**- Provided all 1308 consumers with an additional emergency meal made by Health Choice.
 - Created Holiday Meal Delivery Calendar magnets for 2023 to remind seniors of the days when the program is not in operation.
 - Distributed 1332 education on Avoiding Hypothermia
- **2/2023**- Roxbury & Jefferson sites kept their congregated engaged through Tie-Dye t-shirt activity, A contest for Who can wear the "most red" for Valentines Day, and Line dancing taught by a nutrition staff member.
- **3/2023** – Distributed 1277 nutrition education on Importance of Vitamins as We Age
 - In celebration of 51 years of Senior Nutrition programs we partnered with Employment Horizons to host five cooking demonstrations at congregate nutrition sites. Sites included were Roxbury, Butler, Long Hill, Montville, and Rockaway. The demo included two simple recipes that seniors could incorporate into their meal preparation. These recipes were a pear, feta & pecan salad and a verry berry peanut butter oatmeal
 - Franklin Elementary School in Succasunna had their 4th grade class design 50 laminated placemats that were delivered to homebound seniors in the area.
 - Hosted Pizza Parties at five sites: Rockaway, Roxbury, Morris Mews, Madison and Mt. Olive. The pizza was in addition to their regular meal on that day.

The Council praised the Nutrition Project.

Joan asked if residents could go to Congregate sites not where they reside?

Christine: yes, they must be a registered client.

Christina: where do they call?

Rhea they would call the site they will visit. The food is ordered two days prior.

Christina asked for an update on the progress of the Volunteer Coordinator?

Christine we are meeting with Carol Stoltz next week. She has visited each site And knows the needs of each site.

Barbara said before she moved, she visited a nutrition site daily and enjoyed the food.

Joan how do residents know to pre-register at congregate sites, and when sites are having events mentioned in report above.

Veterans-Shawwna Bailey

VSO Data	January	February
Number of initial interviews	43	38
Number of intents to files submitted	31	14
Number of complete claims filed/submitted to VA	14	9
VA Pension (including A/A)	5	1
VA Disability Benefits	8	4
VA spousal/dependent benefits	2	1
VA Burial benefits	0	4
VA Healthcare	6	5
Number of claims that received a final decision (when reported)	0	1
100% approved	0	1
Partial approval	0	0
Denied	0	0
Number of appeals filed	3	5
Number of backlogged cases reassigned	0	0
Number of backlogged cases submitted to VA	0	0
Number of Supporting Doc Submissions	N/A	16

General Office Data	Total	Total
Number of clinic escorts	33	80
Number of Walk-ins	66	50
Number of intake calls received	139	217
Total number of unduplicated veterans served	392	257

Tom asked where do veterans go to submit a claim? Do you assist with determinations?

Shawwna: we can assist with that. I suggest calling and making an appointment. We currently have a 4 ½ week waitlist for in-person intakes. We process all paperwork for the full claim. Any denials we can assist with appeals.

We help from beginning to end. It is the "veterans claim." The veteran will receive all notifications, and they must let the office know of any document updates or requests.

Christine added we don't determine any applications made by our VSO officers. The Veterans Administration makes the reviews the claims and makes the determinations.

John asked if the Veterans Service Office is aware of veterans submitting claims at VA hospitals?

Shawwna no, only if they specify, they want to be represented by the Morris County VSO. The hospital will notify us to contact individuals.

And the VSO's at hospitals are State VSO'S. (Veterans Service Officer)

The Veterans Administration recommends the veterans reach out to us directly for

Morris County representation.

Christine added the Veterans Service Office is a separate entity from the VA clinic, VA healthcare system and VA hospitals. (Veterans Administration)

Christine: we currently have 3 Veterans Service Officers:

Jessica Tomalo accredited

Andrew Cornwallis recently accredited

Jason Leffler was part-time and is now a full-time VSO awaiting accreditation.

May 1st, 2023 the Veterans Office will have walk-in hours Monday -Thursday, 8am -2pm.

Committee Reports

Community Relations- No report meeting cancelled. Council members not available

Christine announced that Amy Keyishian completed the Matrix excel sheet that the Committee submitted.

Legislative Review

The Committee met on *Monday, March 20th, 2023*, reviewed the following bills, and recommended the following to the *Advisory Council* to endorse:

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 22

Urges federal Department of Veterans Affairs to establish Vet Center in Northwestern New Jersey, Morris County.

Motion: All members of the Legislative Subcommittee fully support the bill as written with no reservation.

Motion: E.C./B.A

- Emerson added he has been advocating this idea for 10 years.
- Kasey Errico, added last August, The Morris County Commissioner passed a Resolution supporting this bill.

Assembly Bill No. A3370

Increases annual property tax deduction for senior citizens and disabled persons from \$250 to \$500.

Motion: Members in attendance recommended the tax deduction for senior and disabled persons should be higher than the proposed \$500 tax deduction. Tom Mazzaccaro volunteered to contact bill sponsor Assemblyman Brian Berger. Mr. Berger stated that he would "consider improving on this bill".

Motion: E.C./J.S.

❖ **Assembly Bill No. A2391 and Senate Bill No. S2405 were not supported by the legislative Review Sub-Committee.**

The Advisory Council did not support:

A2391 Motion: B.A/C.B.

S2405 Motion: B.A./C.B.

Planning Program Review-Christina Brino

The subcommittee did not meet on March 20, 2023, there wasn't anything to be discussed. Please be prepared for the next sub-committee meeting to review the Advisory Council By-Laws.

Tom asked are there some suggestions going to be made?

Christine we want to discuss specifically adding the ability to vote electronically. It's not in the by-laws that we can't, but it should be. And that there can be in-person, virtual, and hybrid meetings at the discretion of the Director and Council Chair.

Unfinished Business- Christine

We have 2 different types of ARP (American Rescue Program) funding: Aging Department Area Plan: doesn't include under individuals with disabilities and under 60 years of age.

We have 4 new programs that this Advisory Council approved and went to the Commissioners meeting:

- ***Jewish Family Services*** providing quality care coordination services to Morris County residents.
- ***Morris County Organization for Hispanic Affairs*** providing quality Socialization and Recreation to the frail and/or vulnerable clients over the age of 60 in Morris County.
- ***Zufall Health Center*** providing oral dental services for seniors in Morris County. It will include dentures, root canals, and caps.
- ***Silver Bills*** is a new program with an accountant that will set up a budget to assist seniors, manage/pay their bills. It will be virtual and in person if necessary.

This will probably be available by June because it is a new company.

Also, our commissioners wanted to further support the veterans initiative by allowing MAPS to expand the *LYFT*, with *Avenues in Motion* program.

This will enable Veterans under 60 years of age to participate.

Also support for mental health, housing, and food issues.

New Business

Our yearly "Needs Assessment" are out. We have them available for you today. Please feel free to take some. They are also on our website. Remember this is how the funding is guided.

Due back April 30, 2023.

Commissioner Myers would like more information on Silver Bills.

Christine added the Council members make an effort to attend the Sub-committee meetings.

Adjournment: 2:33pm

Motion: B.A./E.C.

Next Meeting June 1, 2023.