

**MORRIS COUNTY  
ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING, DISABILITIES &  
VETERANS  
Morris Township  
virtual  
April 9, 2021**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Rebecca Abenante  
Emerson Crooks  
Kyra Faison-Gardner  
Tom Mazzaccaro  
Loretta White

**STAFF PRESENT**

Shawna Bailey  
Kasey Errico  
Christine Hellyer  
Pat Petrillo  
Maria Rosario  
Jen Van Natta  
Michael Williams  
Rhea Young

The meeting was called to order at 1:33 pm by *Tom Mazzaccaro*, the 2021 Chairman of the Council, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

*Christine* announced that the meeting is being recorded.

The staff introduced themselves, followed by *Christine* introducing the *Council* members.

The February 4, 2021 minutes were accepted and approved with the request to correct the date.

**Motion: L.W./R. A.**

*Tom* added that he has recently received a Morris County newsletter: "This Week in Morris County".

*Christine* added it is published by the County, and added we will share the link with to the members.

<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/a077p7C/signup>

Kasey added it would be a good idea to get the weekly newsletter out to all County committees.

### **Chairperson's Report-Tom Mazzaccaro**

At the last meeting we discussed members responsibilities. There as 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, today.

### **Staff Reports-**

#### **Director of Human Services-Katharine Errico**

*Morris County* recently announced that they will be partnering with the State to provide emergency rental assistance funding, with \$14.6 million reserved for County residents. We also partnered with the State and their vendor that will administer the State dollars, the larger \$353 million monies allocated under the statewide *CVERAP-II*, for *COVID* related issues. The State has a list of all eviction cases on the State dockets, and the tenants are being sent this information.

#### **Director of Aging, Disabilities, and Community Programming**

##### **Christine Hellyer**

On *April 12, 2021*, from *10am to 1pm*, the *County and Aging Department* will be at the *Morris County Library*, (it is a drive-through event) we are holding a *COVID-19 Wellness Event*, with a wellness kit, it is for adults 60 years of age plus adults with disabilities. It also contains informational pamphlets (from *St. Clare's, Morris County Sheriff's Office*) on keeping yourself healthy and vaccination information. It is for seniors 60 years of age plus adults with disabilities.

- Touchless tool kit
- Hand sanitizer
- Reusable mask, and a lanyard
- Hands-free door opener
- Jar opener (from *St. Clare's*)

It is also available for homebound residents, delivery available through *Interfaith Food Pantry, NORWESCAP*, and several senior housing units.

- Our *Nutrition Department* will also deliver about 1,350 kits to home-delivered clients.
- We hope to reach about 2,000 seniors
- *Hope One* will be available to discuss substance abuse and Navigating Hope will also be there to discuss what services are available in *Morris County*.

We also have funding still available from last year from APC funding for Emergency Services available to *Morris County residents over the age of sixty (60)*. This is payor of last resort.

- **House Cleaning**
- **Emergency Food**
- **Shelter Assistance**
- **Utility Assistance**
- **Minor Home Repairs**
- **Other Emergency Services (microwave, stove issues, air conditioner)**

*This service is one time only, once per contract year.*

Funeral Assistance is being provided by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) for COVID 19 related funeral expenses incurred after January 20, 2020, we will e-mail that information also. See attached

This week myself and my staff put together a mini program, *Social Isolated Program* internally for 60 + clients only, funded by our *Older American's* monies. We will purchase and provide items up to \$40.00 per person such as: paint by numbers kits, decks of cards, books, novels. This should be a two-week turnaround. *Pat* will e-mail the process, a fillable pdf (portable document format), who will identify the client 60 and over, with item requested and price estimate, and how it will combat isolation, and we will approve it.

**The Aging Department Public Hearing for 2022 Funding**, will be held **May 4<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am**, virtually.

The difficulty with virtual is "will we have enough participants". We want to make sure we don't have to hold the meeting twice, we are asking each of you to ask one additional person to attend.

We need to know what the population needs and priorities in our services are, and what areas are being served well for the input for our 2022 funding.

Are there any areas in our continuum that we need growth in because of the pandemic; or are there any gaps in services.

**See attached flyer**

<https://www.morriscountynj.gov/Departments/Human-Services/Human-Services-Boards-Committees/Advisory-Council-on-Aging-Disabilities-Veterans>

Shawwna added that the attendees can be people not receiving County services, and tell us what they see as a rising need as well.

Christine added we like to receive feedback on services we provide already and should continue to provide and where there are gaps.

*Rebecca* offered to send the information out, if we could provide a flyer.

*Christine* agreed to have one in the next couple of days. (it was e-mailed to members)

### **MAPS**

Our vehicles are now at 75% capacity: minivans are now at 3 riders and buses depend on full capacity. We have had an increase in requests for grocery shopping, physician visits, and vaccine appointments.

We look at Public Transportation guidelines and adjust our service accordingly.

### **COVID 19 VACCINES**

We are currently working on a new project with Atlantic Health Systems, County Administration, and the Office on Aging, to connect the homebound seniors with vaccines. We also assist in registering them for the vaccination.

*Rebecca* asked if it is self-identifying or is there criteria the homebound; for those who prefer not to go to mega sites.

*Christine* replied we do probe the caller. Is transportation the problem? Is the issue you can't get an appointment? Or you don't want to visit a large mega site?

We currently have a staff person working on identifying home-bound seniors vaccinated, through our current programs, and reaching out to them to see if they are interested in receiving the vaccine.

This is *County* initiative and not *Older American* funded, so we can accommodate persons under 60 also.

We also reached out to local public health offices for their assistance for reaching homebound seniors. This is a slow process, and our list is between 400-500 seniors in need of the vaccine. Vaccinations are starting next week, and it is not daily, with a lot of particulars. So, it will take some time, maybe several weeks, but we will get through it with reasonable expectations with a comprehensive list.

*Please call 973-285-6848, and my staff will forward the referral.*

*Christine* added because we only have four members today, reminded the members the importance of attending the *Committee* meetings and the *Advisory* meetings. Many times, if we don't meet a quorum, it might delay individuals receiving the services. The sub-committee meetings last one hour. If its timing let us know. If its technology, we can supply tablets. Please let us know how we can make it easier for you to attend.

*Maria* is currently scrambling with the contract modifications calling members individually to finalize the recent modifications.

*Tom* offered to help getting more members attend both meetings.

## **Staff Reports**

### **ADRC**

*Information & Assistance* and *Case Management* phone calls for January, February and March 2021 totaled 808 calls. Monthly calls listed below:

- January: 253
- February: 224
- March: 333

The increase in the calls in March is due to calls being received for information on the vaccine. We are averaging two to three calls per day.

*Christine* added we also reach out to local Wal-Marts on a weekly basis to find out their availability/scheduling of vaccines.

*Emerson* asked if mental health service calls increased? In these challenging times, there has been an increase in veteran suicides.

*Shawwna* yes. We have seen an increase in demand and an increase in supply to meet the demand.

One of our *Providers* has reached its capacity and has a wait list. Another one has the availability to provide caregiver, in-home counseling.

*Rebecca* asked if our Department has seen any other trends that clients are requesting?

*Shawwna* replied home health aides, visiting nurses, and caregiver support for those that have returned to work without the *Adult Day Care* centers being re-opened. Some *Providers* have reached their capacity due to the increase in demand.

## **NUTRITION**

The Nutrition Project provided the following number of meals:

### **JANUARY:**

|                      |               |
|----------------------|---------------|
| Congregate Meals     |               |
| Home Delivered Meals | 28,630        |
| Weekend Meals        | 1,916         |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>30,546</b> |

### **FEBRUARY:**

|                      |               |
|----------------------|---------------|
| Congregate Meals     |               |
| Home Delivered Meals | 29,572        |
| Weekend Meals        | 1,540         |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>31,112</b> |

### **MARCH:**

|                      |               |
|----------------------|---------------|
| Congregate Meals     |               |
| Home Delivered Meals | 33,643        |
| Weekend Meals        | 1,540         |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>35,183</b> |

### **Nutrition Highlight**

- **2/4/21**- Provided emergency shelf stable meals in anticipation of snow storm.
- **3/1/21** – With the newly redesigned county website the Nutrition program now offers a seamless signup for home-delivered meals service.
- **3/2/21**- Began initiative to pre-register homebound consumers for in-home vaccination of J&J.
- **3/29/21**- Under advisement, nutritionist Pat Gibbons has diversified our weekend menu to offer seniors a better variety of meals.

## **VETERANS**

For the period January through March 2021:

703-Veteran related telephone calls made/received.

644 -Veteran related emails sent/received.

76-Faxes Sent/received.

9-Office visits with veterans, re: VA Claims, various issues. (No Contact)

251-VA Claims or Intent to File Claims, VA forms, records requests submitted.

223- Agency referrals made.

8-Off-Site: Meetings (committee, event, vet organization), out-reach.

2-Home/Medical Facility Visits (No contact)

30-Veterans assisted up to the VA outpatient clinic.

1172-Individual veterans assisted

The above report is compiled from veteran related information that is kept in a daily log under several categories:

- ✓ Simple referral
- ✓ Complex full consultation to submit a claim

Michael added referrals have increased because of information supplied on where to receive vaccines, transportation to clinic. The VA clinic has had an increase of visits because of more vaccinated veterans.

Also, *Morris* County Distinguished Medals are currently being updated, (logo: Freeholders to Commissioners) flags/grave markers are in, and available upon request.

Emerson added that as of May 1<sup>st</sup>, all veterans/ and or spouse/caregiver with *DD214's* are qualified to receive vaccine, without being in the Veterans Administration system.

Also, if they are in the system, Lyons has week-end appointments for vaccine.

Gulf War veterans that have taken anthrax medications, can receive the vaccine.

Tom asked if vaccine calls are included in the call section of report?

Michael replied yes.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

The Committee met on March 4, 2021 and discussed the following.

- New Jersey Executive Order 225
  - VITA Income tax sites
  - Utility Assistance Programs
- See attached

### **LEGISLATIVE REVIEW**

The Committee met on Thursday March 4, 2021 and reviewed the following bills and recommend the following to the Advisory Council to endorse:

#### **State Concurrent Resolution**

**Senate No. 77-** Proposes constitutional amendment to exclude military disability income from the \$10,000 income limit for eligibility for the senior citizens and disabled persons property tax deduction.

#### **State Concurrent Resolution**

**Senate No. 89-** Proposes constitutional amendment permitting certain veterans and their spouses to receive enhanced homestead rebate amounts similar to the homestead rebate amounts allowed for senior and disabled persons.

**Senate No. 1393-** Authorizes "100 percent Disabled Veteran" license plates for qualified veterans; entitles holders to handicapped parking privileges.

**(letters sent to Senators)**

## **PLANNING PROGRAM REVIEW**

The subcommittee met on *March 4, 2021* to review and discuss the *Modification requests by several Providers, moving funding from Adult Day Care Centers to Home Health Aide and visiting nurse programs due to closure because of COVID 19.*

*Kyra* asked when the funding for *Adult Day Care* services is redistributed to *home-* health aides and visiting nurse services, what happens when COVID 19 numbers decrease and *Day Centers* can re-open at reduced capacity, how it is directed back?

*Shawwna* replied the *Agency* can then submit a modification request; it would be brought to Committee meeting, and then to the Advisory Council, and if approved a resolution would be processed to make changes. (but only 2 modifications per year per Agency per service.) (if COVID is a factor exceptions will be made)

*Christine* added we can only modify Cornerstone and VNA of NNJ that provide Day Care Centers that were approved previously for funding. We cannot fund any new Agencies for day care for 2021, because that process was done in prior years. But they can apply next year for funding.

*Tom* asked when we will have in-person meetings again? He also added many members have received their vaccines, so we are safe. I feel we relate better when we meet in person.

*Christine* replied our June meeting will be virtual; she is hoping for the fall for an in person meeting.

The Funding meeting in August, we probably hold two, because we will have also have Area Plan Contract requests, maybe we will hold in person.

Tom reminded members the Coordinator's meeting is May 6th.

Emerson updated us on the *Vet Center* he has been promoting for Morris County for several years.

We had a town hall meeting attended by many local and state legislators and it was very successful and well received.

I received many letters of support from many of the Legislators in attendance.

**Vet Centers** are community-based counseling centers that provide a wide range of social and psychological services including professional re-adjustment counseling to *Veterans* (DD2214'S needed) and families.

It was started in the late 70's. Many Viet Nam veterans that needed counseling wouldn't go to the VA (*Veteran's Administration*,) because they felt there was a political block, and so the Vet Center was invented, with no bureaucracy. There are currently five in New Jersey.

Christine added, although she didn't attend virtually, Deputy Director Gary Denamen represented our Department. She feels it would be very beneficial to our County veterans.

**New Business:**

The 2021 Needs Assessment Survey is available in a paper version upon request and one on-line below:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2021AgingNeeds>

After adjournment please don't leave. We will be holding a closed session.

Tom requested that a reminder be sent out the day before any meetings.

**Meeting adjournment 2:44pm**

**Motion: E.C./R.A.**

**Next meeting June 4, 2021**



