

Maine Council on Elder Abuse Prevention
Meeting Minutes
November 9, 2011

In attendance: Jessica Mauer, Judy Shaw, Debbie DiDominicus, Megan Stiles, Jaye Martin, Elizabeth Ward Saxl, Patty Kimball, Sharon Lewis, Deborah Danforth, Linda Weare, Gloria Payne

Overview of Elder Abuse Leadership Summit

Jess offered a quick review of the September Elder Abuse Leadership Summit –

- About 40 people attended representing nearly 50 elder initiatives.
- Participants agreed to create the Maine Council on Elder Abuse Prevention
- The mission of the Council is to:
 - Promote a unifying vision for the prevention of elder abuse that leads to action
 - Foster awareness of existing resources and efforts and opportunities for collaboration
 - Coordinate responses and solve problems (in general and case by case)
 - Influence public policy through advocacy
 - Establish and maintain a forum for communication among efforts
 - Provide a forum/think-tank for new ideas and approaches
 - Support and coordinate training and education efforts
- The Council is a member organization. All of the attendees at the summit were invited to today's meeting.

Meeting time

It was agreed that the Council will meet the first Friday every other month. The meeting will be from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. It was also agreed that the location should be able to accommodate teleconferencing.

The next meeting will be on January 6th commencing at 9:00 a.m. at the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation in Gardiner.

Information/resource sharing

Members gave updates on various events and projects they are planning or have in place.

- Judy provided information on the National Call-in Day in November. The event provides toll-free numbers for people to call in order to obtain information on financial issues, report possible financial exploitation, or report possible elder abuse. She also discussed a new initiative that will be kicked off in the spring

called EIFFE. The program will train healthcare providers how to identify patients who may have mild cognitive impairment and may be the victim of fraud or other financial exploitation.

- Debbie mentioned the Savy Caregiver II training which strives to reach primary care providers also as a way to help providers identify early stage dementia. She also mentioned the Money Minder program which, among other things, helps people balance their checkbook and complete other basic financial tasks. Debbie stated that this has been a useful tool in uncovering exploitation including exploitation by family members. The members agreed that from a prevention standpoint it is important to be able to give somebody the ability to balance their checkbook.
- Jess discussed the Coats for Seniors program which is run through the Triads. This year the Merrymeeting Triad was responsible for the program which is in its fifth year. The program asked people to donate adult sized winter coats by bringing them to the LL Bean flagship store. The coats are then cleaned and distributed through the AAAs and a few other agencies.
- Jess provided information on the next state plan on aging which is created every four years. The plan comes under the Older Americans Act and must be filed by July 1, 2012. Jess noted that the AAAs have contracted with the Office of Elder Services to help in the development of the state plan. Development of the plan will include a statewide needs assessment and a critical insights poll which will be a 12 minute survey done with a thousand Maine seniors over the age of 50. Jess noted that it is possible to buy additional questions since the survey can be up to 20 minutes long. She plans on circulating a draft survey for comment.

The planning process after completion of the survey is to take the data and develop focus group questions. The University of New England will be assisting with this part of the process. There is a desire to do some specific focus groups for underserved populations as well as service provider groups. There will also be a series of stakeholder meetings in order to discuss with agency heads how they might include the needs of seniors in their planning. Jess noted that the Council will have an opportunity to shape the state plan.

- Jess mentioned that the President's budget, for the first time, includes funding for the Elder Justice Act. She did acknowledge it is difficult to predict whether it will find its way through Congress but encouraged members to write the Congressional delegation to emphasize the Act's importance.
- Linda provided an update on Martha's Cottage. She said the word is getting out and that on average they assist 12 to 15 people with everything from transportation and court advocacy to housing. It is believed that the grant for the program ends in June of 2013. Once the grant expires funding to keep staff employed and general needs of the residents such as food and security deposits

would be needed in order to keep the program going. Jess mentioned that it would be helpful to have information regarding available resources, the level of use and the need for inclusion in the state plan. A general discussion ensued regarding lack of available emergency beds.

- Jess provided an update about the aging advocacy summit which took place in October. She said approximately 170 people attended and that Laurie Lachance did a presentation on the face of aging in Maine. Laurie's PowerPoint is on the AAAs website.
- Jaye mentioned that Evert Fowle and Dennis Culley made a presentation to the security officers of the banks which was very successful. Jess followed up by mentioning that representatives of the Maine Credit Union League and Maine Bankers Association have agreed to create a working group that would be a subcommittee of the Council in order to collaborate on issues involving elder abuse and financial exploitation. A meeting has not been scheduled yet.
- Jaye noted that there will be a special symposium on the impact of aging on the legal system as part of the Maine State Bar Association winter bar meeting. The symposium will include an interdisciplinary panel discussion along with breakout sessions.

Problem Solving/Barriers

- Judy mentioned the substantial increase in business opportunity scams noting the core issue appears to be social isolation. Seniors get calls from scam artists but are unwilling to allow the Office of Securities to put their names on the Do Not Call list. There was a general discussion regarding the problem of social isolation.
- Jess summarized the issues identified during the meeting:
 - The need for uniform elder abuse screening
 - The need for screening by doctors
 - The issue of social isolation
 - The need for transitional and emergency housing
 - The desire for a single brochure that speaks to elder abuse with all of the key resources listed
- Jess reminded the group that UMA is willing to take the existing EJP website, update it, and merge into the Council. There was discussion about possible ways to develop a single page document with the basic resources listed that anybody could drop into a brochure as an insert. The group discussed additional ways to get information out. Patty mentioned a series of posters she had been working on and Elizabeth mentioned brochures identifying available legal remedies which could be distributed if updated through the inclusion of an insert.

- Elizabeth noted that she is participating in a process intended to make major changes to the protection from harassment statute. Those participating in the process may, at some point in the future, look to engage the Council in additional advocacy.

Action Planning

- The group agreed to circulate the issues identified to the broader membership and to ask members if they would serve on a working group addressing each issue. The working groups would do their work and report back to the Council. For any issues for which they are no volunteers, the issue would be set aside for the time being.

Information Sharing

- The group discussed the possibility of sharing information between meetings and preserving meetings for issue identification, problem solving, and developing solutions. After discussion of the value of a listserv it was decided a Yahoo Group would be created. Members will be invited to join the group and for now would be limited to service providers, state level participants, and grassroots organizations. The purpose of the Yahoo group is to provide a way to share information and pose questions in order to brainstorm problems for which an answer couldn't be found at the local level. Jess agreed to establish the listserv through Yahoo Groups.

Training

- The group agreed that one of the key problems is social isolation. It was also agreed that a grassroots approach to this problem appears to be the best. The group decided to pursue the possibility of having robust community forums to discuss ways in which communities can support their elderly residents. The forums would be used as an opportunity to present viable solutions to communities for them to implement.

Expansion of membership

- There was a general discussion about inviting legislators to join the Council. The general sentiment was that the Council needs to coalesce a bit first. Judy noted that during times when the Council is discussing public policy issues which may cross into the realm of the Legislature she will need to excuse herself from the meeting.

The meeting ended.