

## **MAINE COUNCIL FOR ELDER ABUSE PREVENTION**

July 10, 2015 Meeting Minutes

**Attendees:** Jean Pimental, Maranda Hitt, Steven Richard, Andi Thayer, Michelle Mason Webber, April Gostin, Carrie J. Collins, Roger Bondeson, Bonny Small, Trish Thorsen, Joel Merry, Kevin Cuddy, Margaret O'Connell, Brenda Bracy, Brianne McNally, Dan Harfoush, Steffanie Pyle, Marie Michaud, Delta Chase Patrick Hood, Jane Margesson, Cara Courchesne, Mary J. Richards

### **INTRODUCTIONS & HOUSEKEEPING**

- Welcome to new member Marie Michaud
- May 8<sup>th</sup> minutes approved unanimously

### **DISCUSSION WITH TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS**

Transportation services for MaineCare members are structured with the Office of MaineCare Services working with contracted brokers who subcontract with a number of companies to deliver transportation services. Transportation company drivers may be in a position to see red flags for elder abuse or learn of abuse, as might the call center representatives who assist with scheduling. Drivers often get quite attached to the individuals they transport and, in some cases, provide assistance getting to and from the vehicle, which means that they may see the living conditions in the home. Drivers are mandated reporters under Maine law. Although some providers may conduct training related to elder abuse, the training is not consistent across providers and may not specifically address mandatory reporter status.

Transportation companies often have high driver turnover, which can make training programs challenging to administer, and the primary focus in hiring is generally on training drivers to operate company vehicles safely. Some companies rely on volunteers to provide transportation, which can further complicate training programs, but they are still included in the mandated reporter law.

One of the issues discussed was the language of the law requiring a report to be made directly to APS as opposed to the report coming through the employer and the broker and then to APS. APS and the Long-term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) have partnered to provide training on this issue to facilities.

The APS mandatory reporting law includes an immunity provision for reports made in good faith, although it may not protect a reporting business from a lawsuit. Businesses are often put in the position of balancing the potential reputational harm from an erroneous report with the possible consequences of not reporting an ongoing abuse situation.

Even if seniors are being transported to medical provider appointments and medical providers are mandated reporters, it does not relieve the driver's obligation to report.

The Council has provided training for law enforcement, financial institutions, and is working on EMT training. APS is in discussions with MECASA about revising the APS online mandated reporter training. MECASA has proposed a 30 minute online training module that, once completed, could be used as a part of new hire orientation. The group discussed the SeniorSafe model and whether a type of teller/RADAR card could be created for drivers and other appropriate transportation staff. The group felt that the card would be a useful tool, but the print would need to be larger than the RADAR card and it would need to be available in various languages (i.e., French, Spanish, and Somalian). Terminology changes might also be appropriate for this audience. Using the word

“reporting” carries with it certain assumptions; however, “contact APS if you have concerns” or contact APS to request a wellness check might be more effective with drivers. Some drivers work with clients who are “high-need” generally, meaning that they can become hardened to some of the situations they encounter. The group agreed that any training must be tailored for the audience, emphasize the importance of repeat reporting, and demystify the APS process.

The group discussed the safeguards that are in place to ensure that drivers do not become the perpetrators of abuse, including background checks and internal protocols designed to prevent inappropriate relationships (e.g., no gifts). The challenge is the human element: drivers can become close with their passengers and may also know them from their non-professional life.

Anyone interested in the Council’s Mandated Reporter working group can contact Roger Bondeson who will connect them with Lynne Caswell, acting chair of the working group.

### **SEPTEMBER MEETING**

Humane agents/animal control officers (Dept. of Agriculture) are one of the remaining non-health care professions on the mandated reporter list. There are regional coordinators for animal control officers as well as an association that may be used as contacts. Next month’s meeting will include discussion with animal control officers.

### **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

The group discussed other training opportunities such as property management companies like Volunteers of America. Anytime Council members want training on elder abuse, they may contact co-chair Lynne Caswell or Judith Shaw.

### **COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP UPDATES**

#### Education and Awareness Committee

- The 2015 Summit evaluation overview was reviewed and more detailed feedback will be shared with the Council at the next meeting. Overall the event was a success.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Roundtable planning has started and an email solicitation will go out next week to request volunteers for a sub-group to plan for the Roundtable
- The press packets are finalized and available on the Council’s website. It will also be sent out to some identified press contacts.

#### Law Enforcement Officer

- The group completed its responsibilities and currently has no updates

#### Multijurisdictional Scams

- The group is currently working with Fusion Center to create a form that can be used by law enforcement to report scams and financial exploitation. Once the law enforcement-specific materials and process are in place, anything for public dissemination/awareness will go to the Education and Awareness Committee. The group is also working on building a checklist for packaging cases for federal handoff.

#### EMT / Mandated Reporter Working Group

- Web-based training module (similar to that used by Child Protective Services) is being discussed by MECASA and APS using grant funding. If this project goes forward, Public Safety will likely be the first to utilize this training; however, it will be available on APS website.

Council Governance and Sustainability Working Group

- The strategic planning meeting this November is fast-approaching. Council members should consider taking on leadership roles. The meeting's location has yet to be determined, but it will have a facilitator.
- **REMINDER:** Our Strategic Planning event will be held **November 6, 2015 from 9:00 to 1:00**

**DISCUSSION OF COMMUNITY BEST PRACTICES**

- LTCOP purchased some DVDs that discuss elder abuse issues and they would be happy to loan them out to those that are interested. If interested, please contact Trish Thorsen at [pthorsen@maineombudsman.org](mailto:pthorsen@maineombudsman.org).
- Androscoggin EATF event went well and included some great presentations.
- Franklin County Preventing, Recognizing and Responding to Abuse in At-Risk Populations (PRRAP) had an event at the Wilton Fire Department that was well-attended.
- FAST Team – The Financial Abuse Specialist Team, a DHHS initiative, is moving ahead with its planning meetings and will launch this fall. Partners include the Office of Securities, the Attorney General's Office, District Attorneys, Law Enforcement, and APS. The group's goal is to increase prosecutions for elder abuse.
- AARP is accepting nominations for the Andrus Award for Community Service, which honors those individuals who are sharing their experience, talent, and skills to enrich the lives of their community members. For additional information, please visit: [www.states.aarp.org/region/maine](http://www.states.aarp.org/region/maine)

**Next Council meeting:**

Friday, September 11, 2015 9:00-11:00  
76 Northern Avenue, **Kennebec Room**, Gardiner

**CALL-IN INFORMATION:**

Call-in number: 1-877-455-0244  
Conference code: 2075921645  
Leader PIN: 2317

**ELDER ABUSE PREVENTION ROUNDTABLE** is scheduled for October 29, 2015, in Bangor.  
More details will be forthcoming.