



AREA AGENCY ON AGING ADVISORY COUNCIL

778 W. State St., El Centro, CA 92243
800.510.2020 | 442.265.7030 | www.aaa24.org

Meeting Minutes: Thursday, June 17, 2021

Proceedings:

The Imperial County Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council met for a regular meeting on Thursday, June 17, 2021, at 9:00 a.m. via ZOOM:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89725703645?pwd=QU1YSTNKT3lMbTg1aGZ1d3ZwR0ZzZz09>

Phone Number: +1 669 900-6833 | Meeting ID: 897 2570 3645 | Passcode: 286939

Voting Attendees:

Patsy Becerra
AJ Gaddis
John Hernandez
Benjamin J. Horton
Sup. Ray Castillo
Paul R. Monarrez
Virginia Ward
Mike Lara
Veronica Wright
Helen Lopez
Oreda Chin
Lourdes Ramirez
Javier Moreno
Sedalia Sanders
Terry Swing
Ismael Lopez
Manuel Sanchez

Representing Sector:

District 2
District 3
District 4
District 5
County of Imperial
Disabled Interest
League of Cities
Senior Advocate
Senior Advocate
CSL – Senate
Senior Organization
HICAP
Law Enforcement
At-Large
At-Large
At-Large Alternate
At-Large Alternate

Non-Voting Attendees/Providers:

Madeline Dessert
Karla Flores
Joanna Zepeda
Monica Veliz De Leon
Layla Sarwari
Polo Salazar
Ivan Romero
Guadalupe Rodriguez
Gil Rebollar
Blanca Morales
Lacy Johnson-Bathurst

ICAAA Department Fiscal Manager
ICAAA Long Term Care Ombudsman Coordinator
ICAAA Administrative Analyst I
ICAAA Information & Assistance Coordinator
County of Imperial, Council
Catholic Charities, Program Manager
Catholic Charities, Quality Assurance Manager
Catholic Charities, Director of Outreach Imperial Valley
County of Imperial Executive Office, Public Information Officer
Calexico Wellness Center, CEO
Southern Caregiver Resource Center, Program Manager

Absent:

Gloria Grijalva
Patricia A. Thompson
Daniel Romero
Sup. Mike Kelley

District 1
Service Provider
CSL – Assembly
At-Large Alternate



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Agenda Item / Action Taken:

I. FLAG SALUTE, ROLL CALL (MEMBERS), AND INTRODUCTIONS (GUESTS):

Chair Virginia Ward called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. Flag Salute and Roll call were completed and quorum was established. Staff introduced guests.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

AJ Gaddis motioned to approve the May 20, 2021, Advisory Council meeting minutes and the June 3, 2021, Advisory Council special meeting minutes as presented. Ismael Lopez seconded the motion. Chair called for vote. The motion passed unanimously with no nays nor abstentions.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Chair Virginia Ward opened up the floor for Public Comments; none received.

IV. ACTION ITEMS:

a) Advisory Council to provide Vote of Confidence to the Executive Officers for Fiscal Year 2021-2022

Helen Lopez motioned for the Advisory Council to follow the recommendation of the Ad-hoc Nominating Committee and provide a vote of confidence to the current Executive Officers. Veronica Wright seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously with no nays or abstentions.

Executive Officers receiving vote of confidence are:

- **Virginia Ward, Chair**
- **Lourdes Ramirez, Vice-Chair**
- **AJ Gaddis, Secretary**
- **John Hernandez, Past Chair**

No further discussion.

b) Council Members with Terms Ending in 2021

Helen Lopez motioned for the Advisory Council to follow recommendation of the Ad-hoc Nominating Committee and provide a vote of confidence to the Council Members whose terms are expiring in 2021. Patsy Becerra seconded the motion. Motion carried with no nays or abstentions.

Council Members receiving vote of confidence are:

- Paul R. Monarrez, Disabled Interest Member
- Oreda Chin, Senior Advocate Member
- Sedalia Sanders, At-Large Member
- Terry Swing, At-Large Member
- Manuel Sanchez, At-Large Alternate Member
- Supervisor Mike Kelley, At-Large Alternate Member

c) Chair to appoint new councilmember to committee(s).

Member currently not sitting on a Committee: Gloria Grijalva



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Madeline Dessert reported to Advisory Council that Member Grijalva had notified staff that she was resigning from the Council. It is not necessary to appoint. Item skipped.

V. PRESENTATIONS:

a) Imperial County Area Agency on Aging – Long Term Care Ombudsman Program Update – Karla Flores, LTC Ombudsman

Karla Flores, LTC Ombudsman, provided an overview of the program and an update on the activities of this program for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. She provided a description of the program and an overview of items that the program can assist residents with to protect their rights. As of May 2021, Imperial County counts with 11 LTC Facilities with 497 beds total. Unfortunately, two facilities will be closing soon. The Ombudsman has the support of two volunteers who have provided a total of 82.55 hours to this program so far this Fiscal Year. As of May 2021, the LTC Ombudsman has resolved 63 complaints of the 65 total number of complaints received. The top seven complaints were listed. During the pandemic, the Ombudsman continued to work closely with the facilities to ensure that all COVID-19 guidelines were followed and residents were safe. The Ombudsman team made 350 calls to facilities and held 26 meetings through Zoom with residents and their families. During this time the Ombudsman team participated in over 453 hours of meeting, webinars, and trainings. The Ombudsman also assisted the Office of Emergency Service with 55 hours of her time. The LTC Ombudsman started visiting facilities in November 2021, and the volunteers started in March 2021. In order to conduct facility visits, the Ombudsman and her team of volunteers are required to get tested weekly to ensure they are COVID-19 free. The entire team has been vaccinated.

Karla Flores invited those present to volunteer for Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. She shared a video depicting the activities a Long-Term Care Ombudsman Volunteer does and the difference they make for an individual in long-term care as well as their loved ones. She went over the requirements and the training. She encouraged anyone interested to volunteer for this great opportunity.

Finally, Karla Flores provided a presentation on Elder Abuse Awareness and Prevention. June 15th is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. She went over the facts relating to Elder Abuse and the importance of reporting and resolving this issue. She described the types of abuse and some signs to determine if a senior is being abused. She concluded her report by providing important phone numbers on where to report abuse. She also shared two informational videos: "What is Elder Abuse" and "Elder Abuse Signs." This concluded her presentation and she opened up for questions.

Veronica Wright asked whether the home health agencies have been trained regarding the services the LTC Ombudsman program offered as well as elder abuse prevention. Karla Flores assured her that outreach is done at every opportunity to



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make this information available to residents at the facilities as well as the general population.

Blanca Morales asked that the videos regarding Elder Abuse be shared with her so that she can share it to staff and other local community based organizations. Karla Flores told her that she will be sharing the videos and flyers with all present.

John Hernandez inquires with the following questions:

1. What was the impact on COVID-19 on the facilities? Was there loss of life? Karla Flores responded that many of the seniors that were infected with COVID-19 were transferred out of the area so it is hard to provide a hard number of those that lost their life due to COVID-19.
2. Why do we always claim that we are underserved in terms of beds in the Imperial County, when Holtville counts with a large facility with many beds? Karla Flores responded that even though the Holtville facility counts with many beds it is a residential care facility not a skilled-nursing facility. Imperial County is underserved based on the level of need required for certain seniors.
3. Is there an interface between the ICAAA and Public Administrator to work on Elder Abuse? What is the allocation of funding for Elder Abuse? Karla Flores responded that ICAAA receives about \$2,500 annually to be used for Elder Abuse Prevention education.
4. Are facilities now open for visits? All facilities are open for visitation by appointment only and visitors must follow procedures in order to mitigate the risk of COVID 19 Exposure.

Ismael Lopez asked whether a facility could be certified or licensed in Calexico and whether Heffernan Memorial Healthcare District could get this done. Karla Flores responded that private companies have looked into opening a facility in Calexico but unfortunately the research has shown that opening a facility in this area would not be feasible. The average income in this area is low and a facility of this kind is expensive. Out of pocket cost to live in a facility can run over \$3,000 a month. Heffernan Memorial Healthcare District would need to answer the question about their involvement.

AJ Gaddis asked how the Advisory Council can support the efforts of staff in this matter. She suggested that more information be provided to the public to encourage the business community to open a skilled-nursing facility in our area.

Blanca Morales, Calexico Wellness Center, stated that there needs to be more awareness of the issues affecting seniors. She would be glad to share additional information regarding Elder Abuse Awareness and prevention.



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Helen Lopez asked Karla Flores if the 40 hour training required to become a volunteer Ombudsman could be completed online. Ms. Flores responded that all training was conducted online.

This concluded the questions for this presenter.

b) Imperial County Area Agency on Aging – Information & Assistance Program Update – Monica Veliz De Leon, Information & Assistance Coordinator

Monica Veliz De Leon provided an overview of her program including the goal and rationale behind the program. She went over each of the services/ activities provided, including a year to date number for each. As of May 31, 2021, the I&A has completed 39 public information activities. These activities include the information provided through the ICAAA website and information sent out along with the meals through Catholic Charities, as well as with the monthly relief bags/food boxes distribution. The I&A has completed 28 community education activities as of May 31, 2021. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions, it has been challenging to complete the community education activities. Regularly, the I&A participates in community events such as health fairs, conferences, and presentations with local community organizations, which were not allowed this year. In order to meet our goal, the community education program was revamped to include Virtual Education Trainings in partnership with providers. These were held on the ZOOM platform. The Community Education of 30 activities will be met by the end of the Fiscal Year. This year the I&A surpassed the outreach goal by a large margin. The reason for this was the support of volunteers at the beginning of the year who worked diligently to reach out to seniors, check on their wellbeing, and offering the agency's services. As of May 31, 2021, 1,879 contacts had been made. Finally, the Information & Assistance contacts increased tremendously due to the high demand from seniors for services. As of May 31, 2021, 1,673 contacts had been made.

Monica De Leon provided an overview with her background. She is fluent in both English and Spanish and has a large network of contact which helps her link seniors to services and continue to grow her resource directory.

Finally, Monica De Leon thanked the volunteers that included the National Guard and other private volunteers that together provided 673 hours of services to the I&A program. Without their generous support, the large majority of the calls would go unanswered.

Monica De Leon reminded the Council that they can reach the I&A for service at 442-265-7033 and ended with a quote from Tia Walker, "To care for those who once cared for us is one of the highest honors." She then opened up for questions.

Blanca Morales informed the I&A Coordinator that her organization had a large number of donations including walkers, beds, and housewares. Monica De Leon thanked her and asked her for a microwave for one of her clients.



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John Hernandez asked whether there was any activity in regards to vaccination and how requests for meals were tracked. Ms. De Leon responded that the I&A line was used to answer questions regarding vaccination from seniors and to help them to register to get vaccinated if necessary. However, those calls stopped as of May 2021. She also reported that they continue to respond to requests for meals and those are referred over to Catholic Charities for service. The number of meals served are reported monthly to the Council in the Director's Reports.

Manuel Sanchez asked what the percentage of individuals vaccinated was for Imperial County. Madeline Dessert informed him that the number would be shared during the Director's Report. She asked if there were any more questions, there were no additional questions. This concluded the presentation.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Virginia Ward asked Committee Chairs to provide a report for each committee.

Executive /Planning & Finance Committee: Ward reported that the California Department of Aging guidelines did not allow for a selection of a for-profit to be accepted to provide the meal service. The committee continues to investigate and request clear guidelines from CDA regarding the request for proposal (RFP) process.

Legislative Committee: Helen Lopez advised the Advisory Council that the Legislative Committee met this morning to discuss proposals for the next legislative cycle. The committee decided to move forward with the proposals offered in late 2019 which are:

State:

- 1) Mandate all pharmacies to enter RX information into a statewide database that will red flag any contraindications, and mandate that any flags be reported to the prescribing physician prior to dispensing
- 2) CA State Park camping fee discount for seniors and PWD; fashioned after (formerly) Golden Age Pass (now) Senior Lifetime Pass. Current Golden Bear Pass is for entry and day use parking fee discounts only

Federal:

- 1) Dedicated lane for seniors and persons with disabilities (PWD) at all US Border crossings from Mexico and Canada

She also provided a brief update on California Senior Legislature (CSL) sponsored bills moving through the legislation process. She reported that one resolution was approved and that the first Senior Malnutrition Awareness Day was held on May 4, 2021.

John Hernandez mentioned that he supported the proposal for a designated line for seniors and people with disabilities. He wondered if funding was available to support these efforts. AJ Gaddis asked John Hernandez if he saw any ADA opportunities while he crossed the border. He stated that there was always opportunities.



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Supervisor Ray Castillo reported that the Board of Supervisors would be meeting soon to discuss the best way to use the \$35 million in stimulus funds that the County would receive. He also thanked the staff and council members for hanging in there during this difficult time.

Gil Rebollar, Public Information Officer for the County of Imperial, mentioned that President Biden had designated \$103 million to complete the construction of the west port of entry in Calexico. The issues discussed should be addressed with these funds.

Sedalia Sanders also reported that the new Secretary of Transportation, Pete Buttigieg, would be looking at border crossings closely. This concluded the discussion.

Nutrition Committee: Chair Virginia Ward reported that the committee met on Tuesday, June 15, 2021, to tour the remodeled dining site. The kitchen is expected to be remodeled soon as part of the entire apartment complex remodeling. Congregate sites continue to be closed, however, Catholic Charities has started the planning process to reopen sites. The first to reopen will be the Heber Community Center since activities have already started and the site has a small group of attendees. This concluded her report.

Transportation Committee: Chair Ward reported that she attended the Unmet Needs Transportation Meeting on Wednesday, June 16, 2021. The following was discussed: Ridership needs to be increased after seeing a fall during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The commission will work on increasing advertising. Some communities requested additional transportation, however, it was explained that this would be too costly at this time. If they pulled resources to make this available to one community they would take services away from another community. She reported that ticket sale locations were discussed. Chair Ward recommended for tickets to be made available at supermarkets and other more convenient locations. In the meantime, the Imperial County Transportation Commission (ICTC) will start selling them from their office in El Centro. Sales through a smartphone app was discussed as another option to make ticket purchasing more convenient. In order to encourage agencies/businesses to sell tickets, all vendors will receive 2% of the price of each ticket sold by their venue. Another, item discussed was the petition of the City of Imperial of a new stop on Marshall near all the doctor offices. Finally, Chair Ward reported that ICTC was planning a ride-along with their group. The Transportation Committee may join this tour. This concluded her report.

Social & Health Committee: Manuel Sanchez reported that the Social & Health Committee met on Tuesday, June 15, 2021. However, the two discussion items were tabled for the next committee meeting.

AJ Gaddis commented that the ICAA received a proclamation of some sort earlier this month that was presented by the Board of Supervisors. She would like the Social & Health Committee to work on an annual proclamation.

Chair Sanchez asked staff to add it to the next meeting agenda for discussion. This concluded the report for this committee.



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VII. INFORMATION:

The informational items included in the agenda packets consisted of the attendance roster and information on Coronavirus (COVID-19).

VIII. AREA AGENCY ON AGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Madeline Dessert provided the Director's Report on behalf of Sarah Enz. She reported that for the month of May 2021, 5,087 meals were provided under Title CI and 7,385 meals were provided under Title CII.

Madeline Dessert provided a COVID-19 update. The County is trending slightly above the state in terms of vaccination percentages. 47.32% of the population have been vaccinated, which translates to 168,359 individuals having been vaccinated in our County. 29% of those vaccinated are age 60 or older. As of July 1, 2021, all Public Administrator and ICAAA staff will return to the office and will no longer be telecommuting. The office has already been opened to the public but it will now be fully staffed.

John Hernandez asked for an update on the reopening of congregate sites. Madeline Dessert reported that plans are already underway to start opening the smaller sites first. Polo Salazar reported that the Heber Community Center site will reopen on Tuesday, June 22, 2021. They decided to start with this site because the site itself had already opened to the seniors and it is a small site with only 10 to 15 participants. They expect to open the El Centro Main site second. John Hernandez asked when Brawley will reopen. Polo Salazar reported that he had reached out to the staff in Brawley and he was told that the site would reopen once a coordinator was hired and the facility was no longer being used for COVID-19 Vaccines. No additional questions were asked regarding sites.

Helen Lopez asked Madeline Dessert if the percentages provided regarding the COVID-19 Vaccine included fully vaccinated individuals or if it was mixed. Ms. Dessert reported that it included both fully vaccinated and partially vaccinated individuals.

This concluded the Director's Report.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY MEMBERS:

Chair Ward opened up the floor for announcements.

Sedalia Sanders sadly announced that Mr. Ben Salomon, past mayor of El Centro, passed away on May 16, 2021. Sedalia Sanders further announced that due to her involvement in the California Commission on Aging she had participated in a video advertisement to inform the community of the need for vaccination for those that have not been vaccinated yet. The video will be shown at the next meeting of the CCOA and hopefully could be shown in the next Advisory Council Meeting.

Helen Lopez announced that pictures of both herself and Mr. Lopez would appear in the newly design COVID-19 Vaccine Brochures.

Sedalia Sanders further commented that the rural communities are no longer isolated. What is happening in rural communities now is happening throughout the state.



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X. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

Helen Lopez, in recognition that Aging & Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) is still pending since other activities have taken precedence, would like to request a steering committee of ICAAA Advisory Council Members to work with the folks in San Diego to get the ADRC Designation established. An ADRC designation would provide many new funding opportunities. Chair Virginia Ward asked Monica De Leon to include in the next meeting agenda.

XI. ADJOURNMENT: Chair Virginia Ward adjourned the meeting at 10:52 AM.

Madeline Dessert
Department of Fiscal Manager

Monica Veliz De Leon
Recording Clerk