

Commission on Aging Annual Report



May 6, 2014

History:

In 1969, the Board of Supervisors established the Commission on Aging (CoA). The purpose of the Commission is to serve as the Advisory Council to the Board in its role as the Area Agency on Aging for San Mateo County, to assist the County in implementation of the Older Americans Act and the Older Californians Act and other federal and state laws and regulations as appropriate, and to advocate and support senior services throughout the County.

Mission Statement:

The mission of the CoA is to maintain, enhance, and improve the quality of life for seniors and older adults in San Mateo County through the promotion of independence and self-sufficiency, mental and physical health, and social and community involvement. The CoA serves as the “Principle Advocate for Older Adults in San Mateo County.”

Membership:

The CoA consists of 21 voting members, appointed by the Board of Supervisors, of which at least 60% are aged 60 years or older. Members represent the geographic racial, ethnic, economic and social demographics of the county and at least one member must represent the interests of people with disabilities. A service provider and a caregiver must also be represented. Terms of office are for three years, for a maximum of 12 years. In addition, two Senior Assemblypersons and one Senior Senator serve as non-voting members of the Commission during their four-year terms with the California Senior Legislature. The current membership includes:

Joanne Arnos Steven Cobb Aurea Cruz Katie Eiseman Patricia Erickson (2 nd Vice Chair) Christina Kahn Sandra Lang Dr. Mary Larenas (Chair)	Melodie Lew Lynn Nieberding Denis O’Sullivan (1 st Vice Chair) Cherie Querol Moreno Francine Serafin-Dickson Evelyn Tom (Senior Assemblyperson) John Sorensen (Senior Senator) Dorothy Sorensen (Senior Assemblyperson)
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What We Did in 2013-2014:

Adult Abuse Prevention Committee (AAPC) - Worked with a consultant from Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center to develop and produce "Making the Invisible Visible", a production using the "Theatre of the Oppressed" method to highlight the issue of elder abuse. "Making the Invisible Visible" is scheduled to debut in June 2014. It will be an interactive production in which scenarios involving potential elder abuse are depicted and the audience is engaged in identifying ways to improve the outcome of the scenes depicted.

Isolated Seniors Outreach– Formerly the Adopt a Senior Center Committee, this Committee refocused its efforts to address the “missing senior” - - those who are isolated in their homes or communities and are not involved in organized senior programs or activities such as congregate meal programs. The Committee developed objectives which are to: Identify Bay Area services available to help isolated seniors and caregivers to reduce depression and increase participation in the community; and to find methods to identify and reach out to isolated older adults and caregivers.

Communications Committee – Formerly, the Social Media/Technology Committee, the focus of this new committee is to facilitate communication to and between Commissioners and CoA committees and to increase community awareness of the CoA. The use of technology and social media, such as the creation of a Facebook page was researched and implemented to increase membership and interest in the CoA.

Legislative Advocacy – Endorsed following bills:

- AB 663 (Gomez) Facilities Administrator
- SB 129 (Wright) Reauthorization of Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program
- AB 655 (Wright) Anti-Discrimination
- AB 1534 (Linden) Federal Trust Fund
- AB 1538 (Garcia) Personal Income Tax Continuance (CSL)
- AJR (Brown) Restoration of Sequestered Cuts
- S1562 (Older Americans Act)

Membership Committee – Created a new brochure for outreach and information about the CoA. Currently recruiting members for eight vacancies.

Procedural Rules Committee – With the approval of County Counsel, the Procedural Rules Committee revised the procedural rules which includes the provision of two Vice Chair positions to engage more members in the leadership of the CoA. The new Procedural Rules also clarified the language in the document to increase the functional operation of the Commission.

Education Committee – Created this year to address the need for the ongoing orientation and training of CoA members as determined by the internal survey conducted last year of the membership.

Community Based Continuum of Care (CBCC) – CBCC was disbanded since there was duplication between the work of CBCC and the New Beginning Coalition (NBC). Leadership as well as membership by community based organizations also had dropped. CoA will continue to look at the possibility of an Ad Hoc Committee related to the development of the Help at Home book since the work occurs every two years.

What's Ahead in 2014-15:

- Rethink the size of the Commission – Begin discussions regarding the number of Commissioners needed to do the work and be most efficient and effective.
- Revise recruiting efforts and process – Target recruitment processes to enhance the diversity of representation and expertise amongst the membership. Examine the vetting process of potential candidates.
- Create a new Commissioner mentorship program to improve the onboarding process for new commissioners.
- Improve the education of the Commissioners in regards to the Older Americans Act and their role as the Advisory Council for the Area Agency on Aging
- Expand the visibility of the CoA in the community – Outreach to senior housing complexes or other naturally occurring meeting places for older adults, rather than just relying on traditional senior centers to outreach to older adults in the community. Use technology to enhance the community's knowledge of the work of the CoA.
- Build a Closer Relationship with the Board to promote ongoing dialogue and exchange about issues impacting older adults in our community
- Create a culture of openness to new ideas for the future development of the CoA

"Knowledge of days gone by is a good thing, because it gives the present meaning,
and the future a framework"

Ray Ratto