

**City of Alexandria, Virginia**  
**Department of Community and Human Services**  
**Social Service Advisory Board Meeting Notes**  
**April 15, 2024**

**Present:** Abby Horrell (Chair), Samantha Pedrosa (Vice-Chair), Rachel Dienna, Karen Carter, Maura Miller, Allison Greenleaf, Ann O’Hanlon, Ashley Caison, Michael de La Guardia, Jordan Nally, Ashley Caison, Lesa Gilbert (DCHS Staff), Pam Austin (DCHS Staff)

**Absent:** Shauna Gary, Angela Almonte (DCHS Staff)

**Call to Order/Welcome:** The meeting was called to order by Abby Horrell (Chair) at 7:00 p.m., and SSAB members were welcomed to the March meeting. SSAB members also welcomed new members Maura Miller, Ashley Caison, Michael de La Guardia, and Jordan Nally to the board.

**Guest Speaker: Pam Austin, Resource Coordinator, Division of Aging and Adult Services:**

- The main mission of the Aging & Adult Services Division is to provide supportive home and community services to eligible older adults. It is considered the Area Agency on Aging and creates a comprehensive coordinated system of care, which includes division programs such as Meals on Wheels, Senior Centers, Adult Day Centers, and Caregiver Services.
- The division has a Certified Information and Referral Specialist available Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m., to support older adults.

***Programs:***

- Care coordination: This team of social workers will meet with individuals at their homes to do a comprehensive assessment. The assessment looks at the home's accessibility, whether the individual can bathe themselves or take their medication, and whether its primary objective is to provide support to help people stay home. People 60 and above and adults 18 years older with disabilities are considered eligible for services.
- Medicare education: Informational Medicare sessions are held for anyone in the community, and there is no income requirement.
  - Safety and Protection: Adult Protective Services is housed within the division. It differs from Child Protective Services; calls received are more about neighbors checking in on their neighbors they have not seen for a while. The primary goal is to assess the support necessary for people to stay in their homes. Removal can be recommended in severe cases. However, this process can take years through a process that only a judge can decide.
- Long-term care and legal services: The division participates in the Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.
  - Legal services are provided at little to no cost and can provide information on the power of attorney.
- Personal Emergency Response System: A program that provides a small transmitter that someone wears. There is a button to press for incidents like a fall where they can talk with someone and call emergency services dispatch. The city provides transmitters to

those who qualify based on income, history of falls, mobility issues, or other qualifying medical conditions.

- Currently, there are sixty people in the program. Social workers are doing more screenings for long-term care; in this case, Medicaid will pay for the transmitter.
- Transportation: A shuttle takes people to places like Walmart and the international food store. It operates at various times and days and serves various communities.
  - Discounted yellow taxi services, a quarterly program that costs \$30, and the benefit participants receive a credit of \$170 for taxi fare, but there is an income requirement of \$28,000 household income. General funds fund this program.
- Senior summer program: In collaboration with Dominion, this program provides fans and air conditioners for those in need.
- Supportive home and community care: The largest program is the homemaker services program, where an individual receives an aide to help with laundry or personal care. If there is a need for more than a once-a-week service, then a long-term care assessment is conducted, and Medicaid provides a waiver to receive daily support.
- Assisted living/nursing facilities: There are two nursing homes in the City.
  - If the person qualifies for subsidized assisted living/nursing facilities after completing a long-term care assessment, they are referred to places closer to the North Carolina/Virginia State line.
- Caregiver resources: There are adult day centers for people who require support during the day. This service allows caregivers to work during the day.
- Senior Center: There are two places for independent seniors to have social activities, one in the west and one in the east. Transportation is available to take seniors to the center.
- Meals on Wheels: Offers two meals to anyone 60 years of age, and to qualify, the individual must be home-bound (unable to leave home unassisted).
  - This is not a substitute for SNAP benefits.
  - Senior Services of Alexandria manages the private program to deliver more meals or groceries.

### ***Challenges***

Currently, people are being discharged, and the discharge plan includes calling the division of aging and adult services. This should be done before patients are discharged to best serve the community.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from March were reviewed and accepted by SSAB members.

### **DCHS updates:**

- The City has hired a new Deputy City Manager, Alethea Predeoux. DCHS, IT, HR, Labor Relations, Race and Social Equity Office, and the Office of Human Rights have been assigned to her portfolio.
  - DCHS leadership met with her recently to give an overview of the department's programs, services, and priorities.

### ***Budget:***

- Two work sessions remain before the May 1st adoption.
  - During the budget work session on April 3rd, DCHS recapped 2022-2024 investments.

- This includes using ARPA funding, youth employment expansion, and Del Pepper Community Center investment.
- For FY'25 funding, DCHS is in the budget for:
  - Food Hub that ALIVE will run.
  - Youth Safety and Resilience - 10 youth ambassadors and coordinators.
  - State-funded FTE for a supervisor for the DCHS residential program.
  - Account clerk that will be billed through Medicaid.
- The additional budget sessions scheduled for April 24th and 29th will be the add/delete sessions.

***State legislature updates:***

Governor Younkin approved the bill to have multiple languages for leases to support housing stabilization.

- DCHS staff toured the new Minnie Howard High School campus.
  - The campus includes a family resource center with behavioral health services for students. Benefits and Workforce Development Center will also be co-located.

**Follow-up to food insecurity presentation, information on Double Dollars at Farmers**

**Markets:**

- The double-dollar program is designed to help low-income communities access healthy food. SNAP benefits can be doubled to 40 dollars for shopping at the farmers' market.
- There are currently four farmers' markets that operate throughout the City.
  - Old Town, Del Ray, Four Mile Run, and Southern Towers.
  - Southern Towers farmers' market is operated by DCHS and participates in the Double Dollars initiative.
- There is interest in expanding the program, but support is needed to administer the Double Dollar initiative. Staff need to build a volunteer base to support the initiative's expansion. However, creating a volunteer base has been a challenge. Suggestions from SSAB members: Short hours to split time between volunteers. Knowing how many markets are utilized to assess volunteer needs would be helpful. SSAB members will seek additional information on the Volunteer Alexandria website if they are interested in volunteering.

**Upcoming guest speakers and potential outreach efforts:**

- There will be a guest speaker from Workforce Development in May.
- Abby Horrell (President) will send a list of previous SSAB guest speakers to all SSAB members.
- ARISE guaranteed income pilot will receive information from researchers in the Fall and will have more updates to provide then.
- Climate Action Office updates from last year.
- Lesa Gilbert will inquire if new citywide programs being implemented have updates to share with the SSAB.

**Upcoming meeting dates:**

- Monday, May 20
- Monday, June 17

***Discussion on summer dates for the next meeting:***

- Monday, July 15
- Monday, August 19

**Meeting adjourned: 8:13 pm.**