



**September 22, 2021**  
**3:00 – 4:30 p.m.**  
**Via Zoom**

## **MINUTES**

**Attendance:** Gabby Chambers, Mark Contois, Ashley Costa, John Crowell, Jessica Cruz, Chris Donati, Victoria Doss, Esmeralda Estrada, Jennifer Griffin, Alma Hernandez, Cheri Jasinski, Shannon Kenny, Valerie Kissell, Maribel Landeros, Kembra Lawrence, Jacob Lesner-Buxton, joyce ellen lippman, Marco Quintanar, Sanford Riggs, Anthony Rodriguez, Stacey Rosenberger, DeAnn Rosenberry, Judi Sotelo, Frank Thompson, Maria Vega, Jeanne West, Monica Zarate

**Staff:** Barbara Finch and Gloria Munoz

### **1. Welcome & Introductions**

Alma Hernandez opened the meeting and introductions were made.

### **2. AAN Business**

#### **• Approve Minutes, July 28, 2021**

Chris Donati motioned to approve the minutes from July 28, 2021; Valerie Kissell seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

### **3. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **4. Agency Updates:**

- Current programs, services & priorities**
- COVID adaptations or concerns**
- Noteworthy trends or changes on the horizon**

**Public Health:** Stacey shared that the Advisory Board for the CDC is meeting today and tomorrow to discuss if they are going to be fully approving booster shots. As of last Friday, the recommendation from the FDA Advisory Committee was for Pfizer booster shots for 65 and up and potentially individuals with specific health issues as well as health care workers. The CDC Advisory Group will look at this and there should be a vote on that tomorrow. After this, it will come to our western states Advisory Committee, they will take a look at it, and the California Department of Public Health will then provide information to all the providers that are providing the vaccine. Stacey clarified that the booster shot boosts your immunity and the third/additional dose is for those who are immunocompromised (no age limit). Currently, you can go to the pharmacy and get a third/additional dose if you are immunocompromised.

They are encouraging facilities and individuals that have immunocompromised residents, staff, and family members to look into getting the dose. They hope to have more guidance on boosters by the end of the week and start on the doses in the beginning of October. They are also looking forward to the approval for kids 5-11 to be approved to get the doses. As a county, COVID-19 rates have gone down and outbreaks are lower. Within the senior living facilities, outbreaks have been very small since vaccines became available. They will be at 100% vaccination rate or very close to it come September 30th because many of them will have that requirement for their staff. Stacey added that their Mobile Vaccine Program is currently working in the North and Mid County to do something with flu shots. As a county, they will not be doing a large flu vaccine clinic this year.

**Senior Expo:** Jeanne stated that they are working with the Public Health Department to reach communities and will be focusing on low income senior housing. As this point, they will be giving flu shots and depending on the outcome from the CDC, possibly booster shots. They are aiming for the third week of October. Their clinical support will be Public Health nurses and the Medical Reserve Corps.

**Housing Authority of the County of Santa Barbara:** Sanford thanked Jeanne for the work that she does. He added that the early on work from the county in rolling out vaccines at their housing developments helped keep their cases down. He appreciated the work that Stacey and her team did. He added that they have not had any employees report coming down with COVID. When COVID started they shifted into a more digital platform and see people by appointment only.

**Family Service Agency:** Dee mentioned that they shifted to telehealth and it has been working very well. She stated that once the pandemic lifts they will continue seeing a lot of their senior clients virtually, especially those that have trouble with mobility. Unfortunately, their waitlist continues to grow because the need is greater than what they can provide right now. They currently have some active groups – a Spanish speaking caregiver support group in Santa Maria (currently virtually), an English speaking caregiver support group in Lompoc, a women's support group in Santa Barbara and a men's support group in Santa Barbara. She added that FSA is signed up in a Learning Community called Trauma Informed Resiliency Oriented Community. It is comprised of different agencies across the state. They meet individually with their own agencies and then meet as a group with guided teachings and trainings from the Learning Community. The aim of this group is to help the agencies deliver trauma-informed care while creating a whole trauma-informed culture including staff, office managers and IT.

**Public Administrator/Public Guardian's Office:** Chris mentioned that during COVID, the Public Administrator was overwhelmed and very busy as mortuaries were piling up. Thankfully, this has eased off. On the Public Guardian side, which is conservatorships, has picked up as the courts have opened. In some areas, it has been great and they have been able to save time by attending court via zoom and it allows them to go to different departments (North, South and Mid County) on the same day. In other areas, they hope to be able to go back to normal and visit their conservatees in person. Right now, they visit them and conduct meetings via zoom.

**Senior Advocate:** Cheri shared that folks continue to have issues with technology and there is a great need and desire for training or opportunities. She is seeing building fear of slightly younger older people that there will not be resources to support them when they need it. She hopes that this can be a topic that is addressed during the work on the Master Plan for Aging.

**Prontopia:** Shannon shared that they launched a Community Caregiving Solutions pilot through Prontopia in cooperation with many local agencies as well as initial funding from Santa Barbara Foundation. This year, they will be setting out to increase the availability of the caregiving workforce in our local community along with workforce development that supports a lot of the work across these organizations in advocating for improving the quality and the trajectory of these jobs. They initially got started with a supply of paid caregivers who are available to help with simple assistance of activities of everyday living. If anyone has interested participants, please reach out to Shannon. Beginning on Monday, they will be distributing links among the referral partners and collaborators across this network for any recommendations that they might have of older adults in the community that would benefit from a little bit of assistance at home. They are doing this in a very programmatic way because they will be measuring Social Determinants Of Health metrics, intended to demonstrate in a data driven way that this type of simple assistance at home helps save time and money across the healthcare services ecosystem and creates better quality of life for the older adults in our community. They will be distributing a sign-up form for recommending older adults in the community that they think might be a good candidate to participate. The form will be ready on Monday. Shannon added that they will be mapping these metrics back to a care coordinator referral dashboard. An additional goal is to ensure that if a referral is needed beyond the interventions at home that they are able to make quality referrals and communicate to this group about the success rate for the follow-up on those referrals. If interested or if you have questions, please contact Shannon at [shannon@prontopia.com](mailto:shannon@prontopia.com).

- **Question: Do you then serve as an agency or organization that employs these caregivers or are they independent contractors?** They are all independent contractors. They are starting at the very beginning of the continuum of care, identifying older adults in the community that do not need yet or perhaps cannot afford a full home health care contract, but nonetheless, may have some mobility limitations or may need some assistance with eating a meal, perhaps companionship or check-ins. Their partner in this effort is AgeWell Global and they have launched several programs around the world demonstrating that this simple help at home generates great wellness benefits. One of the reasons that they are independent contractors at the level at which they are recruiting is because initially it needs to be people available to do light, flexible work, not necessarily seeking a job. However, they are also working on how to incentivize and generate greater awareness of prospective candidates for their local workforce at the benefits of this type of work. They are also working with local area community partners, Care Academy, and George Washington University Public Health Department to track workforce development and encourage more hires. Shannon mentioned again that they

are starting as contractors while at the same time building channels that this will encourage pathways to meaningful full-time work that can sustain them in our local community with upward mobility.

- **Question: Are you providing services countywide?** Yes, they are doing targeted recruitment. They are working on advancing their grant funding for workforce development in key opportunity zones in Santa Barbara County where the critical need of this labor supply shortage is more severe. Shannon hopes to have more news by the next meeting.
- **Question: How does transportation get paid to caregivers that have to drive outside of the area?** They are required to pay mileage over five miles from home.
- **Question: Do you have a website?** Yes, it is <https://www.prontopia.com/>

**Santa Ynez Valley People Helping People:** Valerie stated that the pandemic has changed the complexion of everything they do. They have seen a dramatic increase in requests for basic services as well as seeing an older population that are finding themselves at risk of housing and food insecurity. Their Mental Wellness Program has been expanded to do more adult and senior services. Valerie added that she recently had a meeting with the local senior citizen center in Solvang to talk about ways that they can collaborate to provide some wellness programming for them. They will be celebrating 29 years of service in December.

**Goleta Valley Community Center:** Anthony shared that they will have a reopening for their Senior Center. They have redone the Equalitech space and the seniors will now have room to watch TV, a room to play cards, and a room for them to sit down and use a computer and get books. There is also an office. Invitations will be going out soon and they hope to collaborate with a lot of agencies.

**Foodbank:** Anthony is working on disaster preparedness for PSPS for seniors and our community. They are hosting the Great ShakeOut virtually and an invitation will be sent out. Barbara asked Anthony to share with Equalitech about Cheri's concerns on needing resources and trainings for our older adults that are technologically challenged. Anthony gave thanks for the information about seniors' mental health and mental wellness. He shared that attempts have gone up in our senior population and that is not what we want to see. We need to pay attention and keep our eyes, ears, and hearts open. He reminded folks to make phone calls and check on our seniors.

**CommUnify:** Kemba shared that they are currently operating all of their Senior Home Repair Programs. They are finding that the amounts of home repair are becoming greater. Mental health is also being brought into their highlight once they go into the homes. She added that since they have their own Family Self-Sufficiency Program where they are doing rental assistance it has been brought to their attention that the HOA fees for seniors are becoming an issue for them to be able to continue to manage. They brought this back to their Leadership Team and they are starting to talk

about how their Family Self-Sufficiency Program can assist under the rental component for affordable housing.

- **Question: Is your organization providing mental health services for older adults?**  
Not currently. They have the existing 211 option right now and are starting to work on a disaster case management program. They are looking to operate that in non disaster times that would allow them to make referrals to other agencies.

**Area Agency on Aging:** joyce ellen shared that they have a grant with CommUnify and Community Action Partnership for the Lompoc and Santa Maria area. She added that the nutrition program is doing very well and are getting an average of about ten referrals of new clients every week. Sometimes it takes them four or five days to get them on board but they are trying to increase that and they are still working to find temporary staff. She hopes to work with Goleta Valley if they are able to open up a congregate meal site in January. They have not received information about HR133, signed in December 2020, or the Biden American Rescue Plan Bill HR1319.

**IHSS/APS:** Mark stated that the Public Authority Program oversees the enrollment in the registry for providers who provide services for the IHSS program. They have just now resumed in person orientations and are still observing a social distancing facemask model like a lot of people. This creates some challenges for them in enrolling people because they have smaller groups and numbers but COVID has also afforded them with small opportunities to bring on a database that allows them to do online enrollment, which has permitted them to be able to add more providers to the program. On the IHSS side, tomorrow they will have the California Association of Public Authority Directors meeting where they will talk about some of the COVID regulations that are still in place, which would leave counties with the discretion of how they conduct their business (face-to-face, via zoom, telephone, etc.). In Santa Barbara County, if they have caseloads that are assigned to a social worker for the first time, they do go out and see them face-to-face. They do conduct interviews over the phone when appropriate or whenever there is a change in circumstances but they make every effort to put eyes on their clients. The biggest is in the Adult Protective Service Program because they are starting to see an increase in referrals. Assembly Bill 135 was passed into law in July and it will go into effect January 1, 2022 and this line of code encompasses an array of change of services to adult protective services and to the elder and dependent population. They meet parallel in unison with the Master Plan on Aging and they provide an opportunity to become interactive services quicker. The two changes are:

- They have lowered the age for those who are eligible for services in Adult Protective Services from 65 to age 60.
- For dependent adults who are eligible for services they have lowered the age from 18 to 59, with a combination of both the dependent disability as well as their inability to protect themselves, provide for their own interest, etc.

This bill comes with some funding attached to it because the impact of caseload management and referrals now coming into the system will be increasing. They might need to add more staff in order to accommodate providing services to this particular age group. Even though it does not come into effect until January, they average

somewhere between three to ten referrals countywide. When these referrals come in, they provide an assessment, do outreach, and go out and provide those services. Right now, the supervisors and team are starting to prepare for what they see as a significant change in best practice throughout the state of California. Many of the counties are already moving forward in staffing up their programs but the fiscal allocation has not been figured out. He added that AB135 broadens the definition of neglect and it amends the definition of mandated reporters to include IHSS and Public Authority employees as mandated reporters. It also expands adult services for individuals who receive services through the tribal health and to the tribal social service model that are eligible for adult services in California because of their age and who may be at risk for an eviction or a cease and desist with the landlord. Mark will send Gloria a webinar from the Santa Barbara County Legal Aid Foundation.

**Ombudsman Program of Santa Barbara County:** Marco shared that they are looking to hire a new staff member who can help them in the county. If you are interested, please reach out to Marco at [marco@fsacares.org](mailto:marco@fsacares.org). They are also going to start training for volunteers via Zoom. They continue to visit facilities and are being very careful when they go inside.

**Santa Maria Wisdom Center:** Victoria shared that the Wisdom Center closed down for a couple of weeks in August but are now back open and taking new members. She added that they are doing the In Home Services and providing these services for anyone at home. This includes meals, social services, nursing, etc. Their social worker is also doing a new virtual support group.

- **Question:** *What does a membership entail?* They are contracted through CenCal, Veterans and private pay. If they are interested, folks can enroll in the program through one of those three payer sources.

**Independent Living Resource Center, Inc.:** Jenn mentioned that they have been busy working with consumers. They are able to work remotely, in person, and have outdoor capabilities for those who feel most comfortable. They also have access to COVID rapid tests that they can provide to their consumers. Currently, they are waiting to receive their next shipment and they are free to their consumers. Jenn added that they are hiring a COVID coordinator for their Ventura office. They will be working directly with their consumers and contacting each of them and setting them up with getting their third booster shot or any other shot they may need. There is also funding available that can pay for Uber and Lyft rides to and from the vaccination sites. They have also been using some of the CARES money to provide support to folks who have gotten very sick from the vaccine by sending them gift cards via DoorDash. Lastly, they have an online peer support group called Chat Space on Friday's and it has become very popular. Please reach out to Jenn if interested.

**Promotores Network:** Maribel announced that they are hosting an in person Mental Wellness Conference in Santa Maria on October 2<sup>nd</sup> in Spanish and there is limited capacity. Folks shared that they wanted to meet in person and needed that connection with others. Fighting Back Santa Maria Valley has agreed to do their Community Resiliency Model presentation and Transition Mental Health will be

providing resources. She added that they are partnering with Public Health doing vaccine clinics and have had four between September and August. They were also partnering with Cottage doing home visiting, door to door education, around COVID and a nurse was providing the vaccine for anybody that wanted it. They continue to do outreach and are partnering with Alpha Resource Center to make sure that the community has access to those services as well.

**Hospice of Santa Barbara County:** Jeanne shared that counseling has taken on a whole new picture being able to be possible via zoom. They believe that in some situations the counseling sessions have been equally as successful and powerful. They have had much fewer cancellations because it is more convenient for people to not have to worry about parking and so forth. She sees this as continuing through at least the rest of this year, if not a hybrid model going forward. Hospice of Santa Barbara received a grant to roll out and work on increasing, not just discussion and education about Advanced Healthcare Directives, but actually getting the directives completed. If anyone is interested in a presentation, please contact Jeanne. Barbara will connect with Jeanne on having a presentation for AAN members.

**District Attorney's Office Victim's Advocate Office:** Monica shared that a lot of them have returned to work at the office. Since folks have more leniency in court as far as how they can attend and participate, work has picked up.

## 5. California State Budget and the Master Plan for Aging

- **The FY 21-22 budget includes significant investments to support the Master Plan's Five Bold Goals**
- **What is your organization tracking?**
- **How does this influence local priorities?**

Due to lack of time, we did not discuss this topic. Materials on the Master Plan for Aging were sent out ahead of time to AAN members (see attached).

## 6. Announcements

- **Save the Date: MPA Event October 22, 202 9:30- Noon**  
Barbara shared that a flyer on the Master Plan for Aging event will be going out soon. Former State Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson and current State Senator Monique Limon will be guest speakers.
- Judi Sotelo had the following announcements:
  - Mindful Heart is hosting free daily mediation via Zoom for elders at <https://mindfulheartprograms.org/weekly-meditations>
  - Social Security is waiving a lot of income and property requirements during COVID. If anyone wants to sign up for benefits, right now would be a great time to do that.

## 7. Adjourn – Next meeting November 17, 2021

The meeting adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Gloria Munoz*