

**Issues and Advocacy Committee  
Meeting**

MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, March 18, 2021

**SSAC/DSAC/ADRC Operations Council Members Present:** Suzanne Lazaro, Co-Chair; Mike Volpe, Co-Chair; Mitzi Naucler; Richard Montgomery; and Doris Lamb.

**Guests:** Cathy Savage.

**Members Absent:** Lee Strandberg; Bill Turner; and Saleem Noorani.

**Staff:** Randi Moore, Senior and Disability Services (SDS) Director; Ann Johnson, SDS Program Supervisor; Kim Cooper, SDS Executive Assistant; and Terri Sharpe, SDS Administrative Assistant.

**1) Welcome and Call to Order (Co-Chair Suzanne Lazaro):**

IAC Co-Chair Suzanne Lazaro called the meeting to order at 10:04 am.

**2) Developing Our Legislative Priorities and Action Steps (All):**

Co-Chair Suzanne Lazaro went through the bills that were addressed at yesterday's Aging and People with Disabilities (APD) Legislative Update session and are an interest to APD. Any bill that wishes to continue through the session must have a work session scheduled by Friday in order to proceed. She is uncertain that they have time to advocate for any bills of interest that do not have a work session yet scheduled. Suggested steps the IAC could take are:

- Reaching out to Legislators;
- Compose a letter for bills that are up for testimony;

Bills of interest:

- HB2394 – preventing isolation in facilities by finding ways of safe contact.
- HB2397 – requires Long-Term Care Facilities to work with emergency providers in emergency preparation through pilot projects. There is wide support for this.
- HB2417 - Oregon Health Authority (OHA) initiative asking for grants to go to Counties to operate mobile crisis intervention teams.
- HB2552 – limits the number of residents in foster homes but does not change staffing ratios or safety features.
- HB2595 – O4AD initiative - staff work load analysis prepared before the budget is released.
- Restoration of the Gatekeeper program. There is a March 19th deadline for a scheduled work session and it's not looking good. Suggested the IAC look ahead for supporting this next year.
  - SDS Director Randi Moore believes the program was cut due to the difficulty in showing the impact of the program. OCWCOG has it as a goal in their Area Plan to do outreach to community partners, using the same red flags to watch for that was in the Gatekeeper program, using Older Americans Act (OAA) funds. Discussion revolved around:
    - Using the OAA funds in advertisement to educate everyone on what red flags to watch for and who to call.
    - Find volunteers to do community outreach using the old Gatekeeper training material such as Meals on Wheels volunteers or the volunteers under Community Services Programs.
- HB2822 – O4AD initiative - Insures when someone is getting mental health services from OHA and transfer to Department of Human Services (DHS) they will receive the same level of service.

- HB2938 - AARP initiative to set up a task force to look at age discrimination. A public hearing took place on March 15th but there is no scheduled work session as of yet. Possibly something the IAC could advocate on.
- HB2952 – O4AD initiative to allocate money to the AAAs to meet a wide array of unmet needs for older adults due to COVID.
- HB2138 – Insuring Long-Term Care residents have provisions for emotional support and supplemental care during pandemics to help with isolation.
- HB3146 - General bill with no work session that addresses hard of hearing services in institutions.
- HB3276 - Restores funding for behavioral health services that had been cut back.
- HB3346 - Study on staffing in community care, residential, and public services.
- SB556 – Requirement of in-person inspection by regulatory agencies in facilities. With the pandemic this has been done remotely. **Important to support\***
- SB584 – Individuals with disabilities in an employment program will not lose their Medicaid support services. Modification of a State plan. **Important to support\***
- SB700 - People with traumatic and acquired brain injuries receives a service coordinator.
- SB703 - Additional people added to the Quality Measure Council along with quality metrics for caregivers.
- SB719 – Introduced by Senator Sara Gelser. Requires minimum staffing standards for Residential Memory Care Facilities. The hearing is today. **Important to support\***
  - Legal Aid Representative Richard Montgomery explained that the problem with Memory Care Facilities and ratios is if Legal Aid tries to get involved the facility will run away from the problem with no long term change taking place. The facilities need the funding to be able to support the staffing requirements that are in place to actually get the changes and give the people better care. All the provisions the Legislators puts into the bill helps Legal Aid keep the residents from being evicted, it does not address the care that is being received.
  - **Co-Chair Suzanne Lazaro suggested talking to Senator Sara Gelser regarding the unattended consequences that can take place.**
  - Richard Montgomery clarified that the increased staffing levels protect the residents from being evicted. However, the underlying issue is how to keep and maintain the staff and get them trained. Entry level staff do not stay due to low wages. Better paid staff would be better than more staff. He doesn't think it is something that necessarily needs to be brought up now.

APD has a Ways and Means hearing on April 6th from 1:00 – 2:45 pm where the public can listen in. The Ways and Means public testimony is scheduled for April 13<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 – 2:45 pm. **Co-Chair Suzanne Lazaro suggested submitting a written testimony or having Mitzi Naucler testify.** Mitzi Naucler is not available on April 13th.

The Federal American Rescue Plan gave \$2.6 billion dollars to Oregon for lost revenue from the pandemic with no strings attached. The funds must be spent within three years.

APD and IDD have a measure in the American Rescue Plan for an additional 10% matching dollars of the funding. The proposed money needs to be committed to projects fully in force by March 21, 2022. The money can be applied to anything but nursing homes. This is a 16.2% increase in additional matching Federal funds that applies to home and community based care. The projects must enhance, and not supplement, other projects such as provider rate increases or new services.

APD is working on a policy development to look at community based care in the resumption of normal visits and congregate activities, when to get tested for staff, looking ahead for other issues due to pandemics, and working on stakeholder engagement during the process. The APD staff member who is coordinating the COVID response reported more connectivity in their partnerships with pharmacy's, doctors offices, and foster care facilities to make sure no one is overlooked for vaccines. As of last week there is a 56% vaccine completion rate for SDS's population.

Co-Chair Mike Volpe suggested the IAC should focus on bills that O4AD and APD are attracting. SDS Director Randi Moore agreed, suggesting that the IAC's advocacy should be with O4AD in providing the IAC with a bi-weekly report out on the bills being pushed through and the bills that need advocating on.

Co-Chair Suzanne Lazaro said the above mentioned bills are the bills APD are tracking and are important to them. She feels O4AD could be more active and support more bills.

ACTION: SDS Director Randi Moore will speak with O4AD Executive Director Phil Warnock and O4AD Lobbyist Nicole Palmateer-Hazelbaker on Monday regarding regular report outs on what is happening with the bills that O4AD and APD are supporting and tracking. She'll also ask what bills are still in need of advocacy, and ask about the Ways and Means testimony.

ACTION: SDS Director Randi Moore will email Saleem Noorani for information regarding the AARP bill.

IAC Co-Chair Mike Volpe feels it is important for the IAC to focus their efforts on a smaller number of bills that are the most important and most likely to pass.

SDS Director Randi Moore said the bill that represents older adults who are navigating behavioral health and long-term services and support systems is a bill the IAC have felt is important.

Mitzi Naucler said that what is going to happen in this session is already decided. If there is something the IAC thinks is important then they should be thinking about it for the next session.

Co-Chair Suzanne Lazaro would like to see a change in O4AD. There is a lot of after-the-fact reporting and no specific calls for action. She feels O4AD is too passive.

SDS Director Randi Moore suggested having O4AD Executive Director Phil Warnock come to an IAC meeting where the IAC can provide input on the level of service O4AD is providing to them, and how they would like a stronger level of understanding of what the advocacy efforts are before the legislative session. This should be done before O4AD puts out their RFQ for a Lobbyist. The IAC wants to be better prepared as advocates.

Co-Chair Suzanne Lazaro reminded everyone that there are some great bills that haven't made it through a work session and perhaps they should be meeting with the authors of the bills to help get them pushed through. She would like O4AD in on this as well.

ACTION: IAC Co-Chair Suzanne Lazaro will send in a synopsis of OCWCOG's SSAC and DSAC activities for the past quarter by tomorrow, Friday, March 19th for the March 23rd O4AD advocacy meeting. She'll send a copy to SDS Director Randi Moore and IAC Co-Chair Mike Volpe as well.

IAC Co-Chair Suzanne Lazaro requested SDS Administrative Assistant Terri Sharpe to send her any meeting minutes from the last quarter.

IAC Co-Chair retracted her request for past meeting minutes.

ACTION: SDS Director Randi Moore will invite O4AD Executive Director Phil Warnock to the April IAC meeting (once a new meeting date has been determined) to discuss what the IAC would like O4AD's advocacy to look like.

IAC Co-Chair Suzanne Lazaro and SDS Director Randi Moore are both free on April 15th.

ACTION: SDS Administrative Assistant Terri Sharpe will rescheduled April 8th's IAC meeting.

ACTION: SDS Director Randi Moore will email the IAC a couple of conversations on how the IAC would like to start their conversation with O4AD Executive Director Phil Warnock regarding their view on how O4AD's advocacy should look.

**3) Other Business:**

No other business.

**4) Adjournment:**

Meeting was adjourned at 11:00 am.

The next meeting is to be determined.

*Meeting Minutes were recorded by Terri Sharpe*