

Northwest Georgia Area Agency on Aging
Elder Rights Meeting – Main Group
September 13, 2007
Minutes

Those in attendance according to sign-in sheet were:

Karen Nelson-AAA

Kerry DeFoe – Georgia Cares, AAA

Carol Lockett – AAA/LLP

Donna Baxley – disABILITY Link NW

Romona Hambrick – LTCO

Jennifer Ruddell, APS

Sherry Thompson, APS

Joan Treglown, APS

Laura Rogne, North GA Community Action

Lisa Burnett, Gilmer Senior Center

Susan Greene, Healthy Feet

Norma Ferguson, Fannin Senior Center

Jane Jones, Georgia Legal Services Program

Judson P. Bruno, Verichip Corp

New members were welcomed and all who were present introduced themselves to the group.

E-mail issues: Karen reminded the group to sign in and provide e-mail address if new to the group or if e-mail has changed. All communication re: this group and updates is now done electronically via e-mail or website postings.

APS provided an update regarding possible loss of funds resulting in up to 53 Case Management positions being eliminated statewide. The State is reviewing call volume and referrals to determine the areas which will be effected by this reduction in staff. APS requested that those present who could advocate on behalf of the positions being kept please do so, with a reminder that state staff cannot do advocacy on state time and/or computers. Susan Greene will try to put together a "form letter" advocating for APS funding to be distributed to those who are willing and able to send them on to their state legislators.

Sherry Thompson took the lead in doing an overview of APS services for those present, providing examples of cases and interventions, explaining limitations on how and when APS can get involved, and answering other questions from the group about how APS serves clients in the community. Jennifer Ruddell and Joan Treglown also provided answers to questions from the group.

Kerry DeFoe updated the group on the ongoing formation of TRIADs in the region. The State TRIAD has begun the process of filing for 501(c)3 non-profit status. The Bartow County Co-Op agreement signing will take place on March 20; the chair of that group has stepped down and the position is still vacant at this time. The Pickens County Triad is still in progress, but the Sheriff in that county is hard to track down. Kerry asked for group input on training and education projects for the TRIAD. Kerry also agreed for the State TRIAD to serve as the clearinghouse for Solicitor and Vendor Forms to be distributed in the communities. These forms allow citizens to make an informed decision about high-pressure sales offers for home repairs and modifications, etc... The citizen would ask the salesperson to fill out the form to be sent to the TRIAD for verification/review before making a purchasing decision. The form reminds citizens to contact police if the salesperson insists that the work must be done immediately and that there is no time to get verification on the offer.

Kerry also suggested that this group provide input as to the type of education/training they'd like to receive at future meetings. Carol Lockett offered to do her presentation on "What They Don't Want You To Know." Kerry offered to do training on Medicare Part D changes and fraud/scams that continue to attach themselves to the program. Judson Bruno suggested training on Meds Mgmt due to the large number of people he sees coming into ERs with multiple, sometimes conflicting medications. The group briefly discussed all of these topics, but they did not have a consensus on any of them as a need for training. Other suggested training topics can be e-mailed to Karen Nelson at ktinsley@cvrdc.org.

Karen Nelson suggested two projects for the group. The first was a newsletter that can be sent out to team members and providers monthly for distribution. The newsletter will cover current information about projects, fraud, scams and community education information. The group agreed that this was a good idea, and the Senior Centers represented felt that this would be good information particularly for their homebound clients who do not get the updates that are printed and posted from the group's e-mail alerts. The second project mentioned was the development of two local awards to be presented by the group. The first would be an Everyday Hero award for a local person who acted to prevent fraud/abuse of elders in any way (i.e. intervention, public education, promoting awareness, etc...). The second award would be a Legislative Hero award to recognize public officials in our region who work to advance the issues of Elder Abuse and Elder Rights. Karen Nelson will work to develop the nomination forms, and a committee will be established to review nominations and select winners. April or May were suggested as good months to present the awards, and the group will

work toward completion of the nominating process by this time. Updates will be sent out via e-mail/newsletter, so keep your eyes open for this information.

Ramona Hambrick updated the group on DHR funding issues involving the Mental Health Ombudsman position. This is an unfunded, yet mandated position which is currently being grouped in with the regular Ombudsman positions. Funding is being sought for a specific staff position to focus on Mental Health facilities, where there may be very few residents. Ramona also discussed other budget issues including the redirecting of service dollars to the renovation of nursing facilities.

Karen Nelson provided a Save the Date reminder for May 7-8, 2008 for the Aging and Disability Resource Connection Cross-Training Conference. This year's conference will be a joint effort with the Southern Crescent Area Agency on Aging. Location TBA.

Judson Bruno did a Q&A session regarding his company's Verimed chip that will allow participating hospitals to access an unidentified person's medical information if they have a chip implanted in their right arm. Participating hospitals must agree to scan all unidentified patients for the chip, because there's no way to know who has one and who doesn't. The chip does not contain medical information, but provides the hospital with an identification number which can be entered into the company's software and will link to the patient's information and medical history (as updated by the patient).

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, April 30, 2008. 1-3 PM. Coosa Valley RDC Conference Room.