

**Virtual D.C. Commission on Aging
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday July 22, 2020
10:00 a.m.**

Commissioners Present

Commissioner Guleford Bobo, Chairperson; Carolyn Matthews Vice-Chairperson; JoAnne Hersh; Barbara Lee; Hattie Pierce; Maria Wilson; Alice Love; Mary Taylor

DACL Staff Present

Tanya Reid, Administrative Support Manager, Lance Holt, Staff Assistant, Charanya Sundar, Public Health Nutritionist

Ex-Officio Members

Veronica Longstreth (DOH); David Quick (DCPL); Aimellia Siemson (DC Council); Mary Terrell (DOES); Vivian Guerra (DDOT)

Guest Present

John Donnelly (FEMS)

I. **Call to Order**

Chairperson Guleford Bobo called the meeting to order at 10:03 am with a moment of silence.

II. **Review and Approval of Minutes**

The meeting minutes from the Commission's June 2020 meeting were reviewed and approved without correction.

III. **Presentations**

a. **Department of Aging and Community Living Update**

Joy Evans from DPR mentioned that there would be a Caregiving Outreach at the Recreation Center July 31st at 6:00pm

b. **Right Care, Right Now**

Assistant Fire Chief John Donnelly, Sr. discussed the Nurse Triage portion of the District's *Right Care, Right Now* program. The program is designed to help get people to the right care they need. The emergency room is not always the answer for medical needs. The goal is to keep the emergency room for emergencies. When a person calls 911 for not immediately life threatening or low acuity health issues (i.e. low grade fever, stitches), the call will be transferred to a nurse line, the nurse will ask the caller questions, based on the answers the nurse will arrange transportation (i.e. Uber) to one the twenty-five neighborhood clinics. DC Medicaid patients also get a return trip.

Over the past year, there have been over 5,500 calls diverted to the nurse triage line from 911. Since Providence hospital has closed, the nurse triage line has sent clients in that area to Providence's Urgent Care.

During COVID, the nurse triage line has been able to send ready responder group, which can come to houses instead of having patients go to the emergency room. Some days, 10% of medical calls have been able to go into the nurse triage line. The average time of pick up to a clinic is 18 minutes.

Chairman Bobo asked Assistant Fire Chief (AFC) Donnelly to explain the decrease in hospitalizations and the 20 percent reduction in ambulance calls.

AFC Donnelly explained that there are not has many people in the city during the day and the nightclubs are closed at night. The hospitals are in good shape, there are rooms available; however, in May, the hospitals were close to capacity. In case there is a Fall wave there is a hospital set up in halls B & C at the Convention Center.

Vice Chairperson Matthews asked about the constituents that are illiterate or mentally challenged that cannot accurately express themselves, how will they be assisted by the nurse triage line?

AFC Donnelly responded that those callers would not go through the nurse triage line, they would go through a 911 operator.

Commissioner Wilson requested a list of senior services being offered.

Tanya Reid responded that DACL is in the process of revamping the guide.

Commissioner Hersch requested information in a written format regarding the Right Care Right.

AFC Donnelly responded he would send the information to Tanya.

c. Produce Plus

DACL's public health nutritionist, Charanya Sundar, presented on the *Produce Plus* program. *Produce Plus Direct* funded by DC health and administered by DC Greens. It provides locally grown fresh produce to DC residents July 14th through September 30th on a first come, first serve basis.

Pre-COVID participants would receive coupons to be used at any farmer's markets. Post-COVID participants are matched with one farmer's market for pick-up or delivery of a fresh produce box. Pick-ups are time slotted.

Participants get a small (feeds 1 person), medium (feeds 2-3 people) or large (feeds 3 -5 people) box that includes the produce like green beans, sweet potatoes, watermelon. The boxes also have a newsletter with recipes and nutrition tips.

To be eligible, participants must be DC residents, any participant of SNAP, WIC, TANF, WIC FMNP, Senior FMNP, Medicaid, SSI, or QMB. No documentation is required for enrollment. DC residents can register call 202-888-4834, email produceplus@dcgreens.org, or online at <https://signup.dcgreens.org>.

Chairman Bobo asked what the capacity of people to serve.

Ms. Sundar responded the total number is 4,000 people, each market has between 50 – 100 people. Vice Chairwoman Matthews says that enrollment happens before July and fills up quickly.

Aimellia asked if this is available in all the wards?

Ms. Sundar responded that it was available throughout the District.

Aimellia asked how long it took for delivery after signing up.

Ms. Sundar was not sure of the exact timeframe but could ask Karen Franco at DC Health. She also added that the program had reduced wait time significantly by not requiring documentation.

Chairman Bobo asked if there were any other programs like Produce Plus Direct throughout the rest of the year.

Ms. Sundar responded that there are other organizations like DC Central Kitchen throughout the year. These programs can be found on <https://coronavirus.dc.gov/food>.

Commissioner Hersh asked if the enrollment in the other sizes boxes are enrolled as much as the small boxes. If there was more availability with the bigger boxes can families share them.

Ms. Sundar responded that usage of the larger boxes is the same.

IV. Ex-Officio Update

- a. Veronica Longstreth, DC Health, reminded everyone to remain safe. This is a busy time for DC Health. She encouraged everyone to visit <https://coronavirus.dc.gov> for the most up-to-date information.
- b. David Quick, DC Library, informed the Commission that some of the libraries are open for limited service. Most of the open libraries have computers available to use for 45-minute sessions. Computers are wiped down after each session. The libraries can also print items. The Martin Luther King Jr. Library will have its reopening on September 24th.
- c. Vivian Guerra, DDOT, encouraged the Commission to continue reporting issues to on sidewalks, crosswalks, traffic signals, or anything else that impacts public space to 311. The Council approved the Omni Bus legislation for Vision Zero.
- d. Aimellia asked the Commission if they had received any issues raised by the community. Councilmember Bonds what she could do to help.
 - i. Vice Chairwoman Matthews asked if Council was considering turning Real Property tax into a “utility bill.” Aimellia responded that after budget is wrapped up, the Council will begin work on legislation. The real property tax is one of the issues they will consider. Vice Chairperson Matthews stated that the tax assessment and development is hurting the seniors.
 - ii. Chairman Bobo heard from a senior that the apartment building the senior lived in was not being maintained appropriately by the manager. Aimellia

asked Chairman Bobo to provide the specific information to her. The normal protocol is for the tenant to first contact the property manager and then DCHA.

- e. Aimellia stated that Councilmember Bonds wanted to know what the Commission's thoughts were on starting a program where volunteers go door to door to contact or find seniors to combat isolation.
 - i. Vice Chairman Bobo stated that DACL has the Call & Talk Program, DACL also has the ambassador program that will help other seniors in the community inform other seniors of programs available to them.

V. Ward Reports

Ward 1: Vice Chairwoman Matthews informed the Commission that the Taxi to Rail program has expanded, it is citywide. She will follow up with David Do, Director of the Department of For-Hire Vehicles. Chairman Bobo said he would reach out to Heather Foote from Age-Friendly City. Vice Chairwoman Matthews also pointed out that there has been more violence in Wards 1 and 4.

Ward 6: Reported she had concerns with the amount of activity on Barracks Row.

Ward 8: Senior buildings are being built throughout the city. There are a lot of proposed senior housing in Ward 8. There is one going up at Atlantic and South Capitol streets. There are 2000 applicants but only 120 units approved.

No reports for wards 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7.

VI. Announcements

September election for commissioner nominations will be August 22nd. Send nominations to Tanya Reid at tanya.reid@dc.gov. The Commission will not meet in August.

The Commission will continue on the plan created at 2019's Retreat. Chairman Bobo will send out a survey to the Commissioners about how they'd like to handle the plan.

Tanya Reid reminded the Commissioners of the attendance requirements.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:21am

These minutes were recorded by Lance Holt, Staff Assistant, DC Department of Aging and Community Living, and were formally approved by the Commission on Aging on October 28, 2020.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lance Holt

/s/ Lance Holt
Staff Assistant
DC Department of Aging and Community Living