



## NH Alliance for Healthy Aging Quarterly (Virtual) Meeting

September 8, 2021

9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Via ZOOM

Meeting Highlights

### Community Design and Healthy Aging

**Robin LeBlanc**, Executive Director, [Plan NH](#), provided an overview of her organization followed by a presentation on how the design of communities can support older adults in NH. This process is vital to the overall health of communities. 20% of our overall health is connected to health care and services, 80% is dictated by where we live and how we live. This includes access to local services and programs, neighbors close by, transportation access, green space, and ways to address/combat social isolation and loneliness. Future community design can be done in ways that supports all these factors.

Two critical factors to good health for seniors and others are regular physical activity and social interactions. Walkable towns and cities are also important. This includes:

- Sidewalks in good repair
- Areas well lit
- Access to restrooms
- Access to benches (and benches that face one another)
- Cross walks well marked
- Things to do and look at
- Services such as stores, hair salons, libraries, etc.

Ideally, town centers are accessible by foot. Forethought when planning given to people with mobility challenges. All these lead to higher quality of life/better connections for older adults.

At the end of the day, how can we bring people together to work on ways for it to be easier to get older?

In her presentation, Robin also referenced the town of Arnsberg in Germany, known as one of the most age friendly places in the world. Learn more at <https://www.goodnet.org/articles/discover-worlds-most-agingfriendly-town>.

Robin shared that she is retiring from Plan NH and that **Tiffany Tononi McNamara** has been named as Plan NH's new executive director.

## **NHAHA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Update**

**Jennifer Rabalais** shared a brief update of NHAHA's DEI activities and how the work is being incorporated going forward. Part of NHAHA's work is to deepen collective impact by creating new connections with like-minded organizations, one of which is the [NH Council on Developmental Disabilities](#). Jennifer then introduced **Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre, MSW**, executive director of the Council, to provide an overview of her organization and its [Five year plan](#).

### **NH Council on Developmental Disabilities**

Isadora shared that the organization seeks to connect and engage organizations across the state in support of the un-served and under-served. There are councils in every state and territory across the country. The membership of each council is divided as such: one-third of those in the disability community, one-third families of those with disabilities and one-third state agencies. These appointments are 3-year terms and made by the local governments in each state. The council also includes 5 committees: finance, policy, member relations, program, and planning and executive. There are also workgroups that cover membership, LGBTQ issues, accessibility, and workforce.

The 5-year plans are required by the government and the next one runs from 10/1/21 – 9/30/26. Key elements include identifying barriers and seeking public input. All donations, contributions and sponsorships must be invested back into Council's work.

Target populations include:

- Racial and ethnic backgrounds
- Non-English-speaking population
- Those who use sign language to communicate
- People who are non-verbal
- Those who need intensive levels of support
- Older adults
- Those who live in rural communities and may lack access to essential services.

NHCDD also provides small grants to support organizations that are start-ups as well as established organizations to help build capacity and enhance leadership. Larger grants have been provided to local organizations such as the UNH Bridges Program and NH Leadership Series. Isadora is excited about the opportunity for the Council to be more closely connected to NHAHA and the DEI work.

## Legislative Update

**Heather Carroll**, Director of Advocacy for NHAHA provided an update on what was a very involved legislative and budget year at the NH State House.

Key take-aways included:

- Session contentious/heated at times
- Wins and losses for NHAHA and partner organizations
- Real success in rallying advocates to testify and share stories
- Increase in CFI waiver achieved
- Bi-partisan support for increases in other areas
- We are asking for an increase in adult day care services reimbursement; NH is well below national average
- Line item for senior center support was last minute deletion from budget; we continue to advocate strongly to restore those funds
- Working with advocates and other to advise on use of funds from the American Rescue Plan; NHAHA submitted a letter which was used by state in outreach to CMS
- NHAHA, New Futures, and the NH Public Health Association are teaming to offer listening sessions to gather input for 2021-2022 legislative session
- Advocacy items will likely include:
  - Enabling remote access for people to testify at hearings; critical for those who live a distance from Concord or have other access challenges
  - Increased broad band access to rural parts of state
  - Oral health
  - Senior Centers (a critical hub for many services including Meals on Wheels)
  - Caregiver respite support

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m. All materials will be posted to NHAHA website.

Next meeting will take place on **Thursday, December 9<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m.** (via ZOOM)