



NHAHA Quarterly Meeting

June 9, 2022; 9:30am – 11:30am

Meeting Summary

Food Insecurity Among Older Adults

Presenter: Laura Milliken, NH Hunger Solutions and Jon Eriquezzo, Meals on Wheels of Hillsborough County (slides 6 – 51).

Laura began the presentation by discussing that NH Hunger Solutions is an advocacy organization with a mission to end food insecurity, improve access to nutritious foods and address hunger as a root cause of poor wellbeing for New Hampshire residents. Laura discussed that NH's nutritional support system is well developed in some areas but patchy in others. Further, NH has low participation in federal nutrition programs like SNAP, but data indicates that food insecurity is on the rise with 73,629 residents indicating that they do not have enough food. Laura discussed that many older adults struggling with food insecurity face challenges such as food running out, skipping meals, and choosing between medicine and food. Research shows that SNAP improves food insecurity, older adults have better nutrition, improved health, and less hospital and nursing home admissions, however 60% of eligible older adults are not enrolled in SNAP. Additionally, while SNAP is critical to nutrition support it is insufficient to meet the actual food needs in New Hampshire. For example, the average cost of a modestly priced meal across New Hampshire is \$2.50 while SNAP benefit per meal is \$2.38. Therefore, Hunger Solutions is working to improve SNAP access in NH through public awareness, advocacy, and coalition building.

Jon discussed the Hillsborough County Meals on Wheels (MOW) program. He indicated that every MOWs program is bounded by the same regulations and requirements but structurally is different. Jon discussed food deserts, specifically that hunger can be about a poor diet and a lack of proper nutrition just as much as food access which can lead to poor physical health. Jon discussed operationally that MOWs have specific dietary requirements that meals must meet for federal requirements. Further, when the meals are being delivered drivers conduct a wellness check and can make referrals to other types of services if needed. Jon also indicated that community dining is a part of Hillsborough County's program. Funding for MOWs comes from the Older American's Act which seeks to reduce hunger and food insecurity, promote socialization, and increase health and wellbeing of older people. Jon also discussed that with a grant from MOWs of America, Hillsborough County launched the Restaurant Voucher Program which seeks to allow people to use vouchers at local restaurants.

2021 NHAHA Participant Survey Results

Presenter: Alison Rataj, UNH Center on Aging and Community Living, NHAHA Backbone Staff (slides 53 - 58).

Alison provided some high-level takeaways of the 2021 NHAHA annual participant survey results. The survey was conducted from January 24th through March 11th, 2022. A

major aim of the survey is to hear directly from NHAHA participants about their experiences and feedback as a part of NHAHA. A total of 60 NHAHA participants completed the survey representing all 10 counties of New Hampshire. One key takeaway was that 75% of respondents indicated that they understand the goals and vision of NHAHA. A second key takeaway is that key benefits to participating in NHAHA include received education and awareness, expanding networks, and NHAHA acting as a leader on aging issues. Lastly, participants discussed NHAHA's greatest accomplishments with themes including: Advocacy that promotes the vision of NHAHA through sustained collaboration and education; Sustainability of NHAHA as a collective entity that focuses on all aspects of healthy aging; Engagement of stakeholders and developing partnerships; and Increasing awareness of aging issues through education and leadership.

NHAHA Advocacy Strategic Priority Update

Presenter: Martha McLeod, NHAHA Advocacy, New Futures, (slide 59)

The legislature is wrapping up their work and is sending bills to the Governor's office. The Governor has been signing or vetoing bills. Below is a status update on important bills.

- HB 414 revised the definition of Alzheimer's disease and related disorders to expand the number of caregivers who could receive respite. This bill was signed by the Governor.
- HB 1030 sought to clarify the requirements for licensed nursing assistants and alternate experiences or different pathways of reaching certification which would expand the nursing assistant shortage. This bill was signed by the Governor.
- SB 385 focused on the financial exploitation of older adults. The bill sought to clarify the roles and responsibilities of financial institutions, the department of banking, and department of health and human services are responsible for in protecting older people from financial exploitation. The bill passed and is on its way to the Governor's office.
- HB 1526 which is the Medicaid In and Out Program which seeks to expand the eligibility criteria for individuals who are slightly exceeding the income maximum and now having them spend down so that they can receive healthcare services. The bill passed and is on its way to the Governor's office.
- SB 281 indicated that if a person vacates a nursing home the family may be liable for 30 days of payment to the facility. This bill reduced that payment to 10 days. The bill passed and is on its way to the Governor's office.
- SB 404 which relates to creating a state outreach plan for SNAP. The bill passed and is on its way to the Governor's office.
- HB 103 and SB 422 both impacted the state's Medicaid program to cover dental services. Both bills passed and is on the way to the Governor's office.
- Unfortunately, some bills did not pass including most of the antivaccine bills, some housing related bills, some of the property tax relief bills, and length of time on unemployment.

Recording link:

https://media.unh.edu/media/NH+Alliance+for+Healthy+Aging+June+9%2C+2022+Quarterly+Meeting/1_0c1rr0tl

NH Alliance for Healthy Aging 2022 Meeting Schedule:

Wednesday, September 14th, 2022

Thursday, December 8th, 2022