



## **NHAHA Quarterly Meeting**

June 8, 2023

9:30am – 11:30am

Northeast Delta Dental Conference Center

### **Meeting Summary**

#### **Welcome and Housekeeping**

**Presenter: Jennifer Rabalais, UNH Center on Aging and Community Living, NHAHA**

Jennifer welcomed everyone to the NHAHA Quarterly meeting, our first in-person quarterly meeting in over 3 years! We are thrilled to be back face-to-face and are looking forward to a great meeting with opportunities to network and catch-up with colleagues and friends. Many thanks to Northeast Delta Dental for providing a great meeting space!

We are also very excited to welcome **Kristina Peterson**, Project Coordinator, Center on Aging and Community Living/Institute on Disability, to our NHAHA Backbone team!

#### **NHAHA Participant Survey Update**

**Presenter: Alison Rataj, NH Alliance for Healthy Aging Researcher/ Project Director, UNH Center on Aging and Community Living**

Alison provided a high-level overview of the annual participant survey results, key takeaways included:

- 43 people completed the survey, and 76 answered at least one question.
- Respondents were on average 62 years old and predominantly white, female, and heterosexual.
- 87% of NHAHA participants indicated that they understood the goals and vision of NHAHA and 52% indicated that they felt they could contribute to the vision.
- No respondents indicated that NHAHA has “not been successful at all” in making progress towards achieving the vision statement.

NHAHA’s greatest accomplishments over the past year include advocacy, collective effort towards a common goal, convening and engaging action, strategic priority area work, bringing relevancy to aging issues in NH, providing education, and working towards diversity, equity, and inclusion.

In tracking trends across time as it relates to strategic priority workgroup awareness, an increase in the number of people who are aware or very aware of each of the five (5) strategic

priority areas has increased from 2018 to the present day. For example, in 2018, 58% of respondents were aware or very aware of the caregiving strategic workgroup, and in the most recent survey, 84% of respondents are aware or very aware of this group.

### **NH State Plan On Aging Update**

**Presenters-Wendi Aultman-Chief, Bureau of Adult and Aging Services (NH DHHS) and Jennifer Rabalais**

Wendi and Jennifer provided an overview of the draft State Plan on Aging Survey and Focus Group Data Results. The plan is being developed by the Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services (BEAS) with support from the NH State Commission on Aging (NHCOA) and the NH Alliance for Healthy Aging (NHAHA). As part of the State Plan discussion, Wendi announced that BEAS plans to change its name to the Bureau of Adult and Aging Services to better reflect Reframing Aging guidance. The roll-out of the new name will occur slowly over time.

It was pointed out that the COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on the state's current plan on aging and that numerous mid-stream adjustments were made.

The goal of the State Plan "is to advance the state's efforts in understanding, serving, supporting and celebrating older adults across our state." The State Plan is required to be produced by the federal Administration for Community Living (ACL) and the draft is due to ACL on July 1 with the final product due by October 1, 2023. ACL's priorities are to advance equity; build a caregiver infrastructure; expand access to home and community-based services (a particular issue in rural areas); recover from the COVID-19 pandemic; and support Older Americans Act Core Programs.

Earlier this year, listening sessions were held in person and via ZOOM for audiences across the state comprised of older adults. Surveys were available on-line or on paper. 180 individuals participated in the listening sessions; 755 respondents completed the survey, with 955 individuals answering at least one question.

Takeaways include:

- Most respondents indicated that they get information about community services primarily through the internet/websites (57%), followed by family or friends, e-mail, newspaper/newsletters, social media, the local library, and/or AARP. ServiceLink was cited by 11% of respondents, although 52% answered that they were aware of ServiceLink.
- Respondents indicated that most important to aging in their community were access to healthcare (92.7%), maintaining physical health (89.9%), and financial security (87.3%).
- Rated among the most important needs were reliable internet (broadband/high-speed), social activities, information and referral, affordable housing, and oral health services. The largest barrier to addressing needs was identified as a lack of awareness of the availability of a service, followed by finances and the preference not to ask for help.

- The largest percentage of respondents (35%) rated their community as a “fair” place to age, with 27% rating their community as “good.” Regarding future concerns, a large percentage identified “feeling safe in my own home,” “affordable health insurance,” “feeling safe in my community,” as top issues.

At the listening sessions, participants were asked to share what was working well/what wasn’t working as it related to aging in their community.

Working well:

- Senior Centers as resource and gathering place.
- ServiceLink
- Community organizations and local initiatives (e.g., the community nursing project and the public health network)
- Transportation, community engagement and government programs

Not working well:

- Transportation
- Direct care workforce availability
- Funding for services
- Lack of awareness about how to access information and available resources,
- Safe and affordable housing
- Healthcare
- Broadband access in some parts of state
- Economic security

Each listening session also posed the question: What ways can the state better serve and support its aging population to be able to live independently at home?

Following the presentation, table discussions by meeting attendees were held to weigh on the plan. Feedback was gathered and will be utilized in finalizing the plan.

### **Assistive Technology in NH**

***Presenter: Linda Beliveau, ATinNH***

The presentation included an overview of tools and resources for self-care with the goal of helping those with a disability to live as independently as possible and with dignity. Linda shared that not all devices need to be high tech and with minor changes, things we use each day can be modified; she shared an example of a one-handed jar opener.

Everyone can be part of the “think tank” toward making improvements if we take a person-centered mindset. Sometimes the best way to help someone is to provide assistive support as opposed to doing something for them.

For older adults with cognitive issues, smart devices (some voice activated) in homes can be helpful as can meal services where you put a meal in the oven and scan a card to turn on the oven and cook a meal-the oven automatically turns off when the food is ready.

At a future meeting, we hope to have a hands-on demonstration from AtinNH.

### **The Care Paradox**

***Presenter-Christine Tappan, Ascentria Care Alliance***

Formed by local non-profits such as Ascentria and WayPoint among others, the Care Paradox seeks to advocate for fair funding for those in need. According to a report from the NH Fiscal Policy Institute, only 66% of those in need of support services are getting the care that they need and with organizations losing funding from other sources, this is not sustainable as they cannot continue to cover shortfalls.

The Care Paradox is an advocacy organization gathering stories from patients, family members and care givers to share with key stakeholders such as elected officials.

Thanks to support from the Endowment for Health and the NH Charitable Foundation, the Care Paradox has been running a series of ads on TV, radio and in newspapers.

### **NHAHA Advocacy Strategic Priority Update**

***Presenter: Heather Carroll, Director of Advocacy for NHAHA, NH Legal Assistance, (slide 40)***

Heather shared the latest from the statehouse, with the most critical being agreement on House Bill 1 and House Bill 2 (funding bills) that would provide multiple supports for older adults such as increased funding for Choices for Independence (CFI), ServiceLink, and increased reimbursement for non-hospital services.

This is the best budget for healthcare that Heather has seen in her time at the statehouse and all signs point favorably to Gov Sununu signing the bills into law for 7/1/23.

### **NH Alliance for Healthy Aging 2022 Meeting Schedule:**

Wednesday, September 13th, 2023

Thursday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Meetings to be held in person.