



## **NHAHA Quarterly Meeting**

March 20, 2024. 9:00am – 11:30am

### **Meeting Summary**

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

**Presenters:** *Jennifer Rabalais, UNH Center on Aging and Community Living Co-Director, NHAHA Coordinator*  
*Dick Chevrefils, NHAHA Steering Committee Chair*

Jennifer welcomed everyone to the first NHAHA Quarterly meeting of 2024. Jennifer also introduced the new NHAHA Steering Committee Chair, Dick Chevrefils. Dick previously worked for the Department of Health and Human Services for thirty-five years and the last nine years for AARP. Dick underscored the important part that each attendee plays in the collective process of coming together under the NHAHA to learn, collaborate, and increase capacity to make a difference.

#### **NHAHA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee - DEI Moments (slide 3)**

**Presenters:** *Debbie Perou, NHAHA DEI Committee member*  
*Jean Crouch, NHAHA DEI Committee member*

Led by the NHAHA DEI Committee, DEI Moments is an opportunity to reflect on, share, and elevate diversity, equity, and inclusion topics. Debbie Perou and Jean Crouch discussed the factors that may lead one to adopt biases. Jean discussed types of biases, including age bias. They also shared steps that can be taken to reduce biases, including embracing diverse perspectives, detecting the influence of stereotypes, and striving to perceive the individual and not the group.

DEI Moments will be a standing component of future NHAHA quarterly meetings and will be featured in NHAHA communications.

#### **NHAHA Direct Care Workforce Workgroup Update (slides 4-10)**

**Presenter:** *Lynn Carpenter, NHAHA Direct Care Workforce Workgroup lead and facilitator*

Lynn Carpenter, the new lead and facilitator of the workgroup confirmed the two new members of the workgroup – Karen Schoch, Chief Human Resources Officer of Catholic Charities NH, and Tom Blonski, President & CEO of Catholic Charities NH.

The workgroup is currently discussing strategies to improve direct care worker (DCW) job quality, increase the workforce to meet growing demand, provide education about the need for DCWs, and elevate the field to increase retention. Through her work with NHAHA, Lynn is also supporting the creation of a DCW council in NH that aims to provide peer to peer support, to work to promote the profession, and to inform policy. The NHAHA DCW Council Planning Committee currently meets monthly, and they hope to hold an in-person DCW Council event later this year.

**NHAHA 2023 Participant Survey (slides 11-15)**

***Presenter: Alison Rataj, NHAHA Researcher & Project Director, UNH  
Center on Aging and Community Living***

Alison provided an overview of the 2023 NHAHA Annual Participant Survey results. The survey, which is in its seventh year of implementation, was conducted from January 10, 2024 through February 5, 2024. A major aim of the survey is to hear directly from NHAHA participants about their experiences and feedback to determine what is working well and possible areas of improvement.

Below are some highlights from the survey results:

- 47 people completed the survey, and 83 people answered at least one question.
- Respondents were on average 61 years old and predominantly white, female, and heterosexual.
- 9 out of 10 NH counties were represented.
- 80% of NHAHA participants indicated that they understood the goals and vision of NHAHA and 48% 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, while 40% believe that NHAHA has been successful in making progress toward achieving the vision statement.

The survey also shed light on NHAHA’s greatest accomplishments of 2023, which include advocacy work, building awareness of NHAHA, the success of NHAHA acting as a convener, NHAHA being seen as a trusted source of information and educational opportunities, DEI work, and the work of Reframing Aging.

**NHAHA Advocacy Strategic Priority Workgroup Update (slide 16)**

***Presenter: Dawn McKinney, Policy Director, NH Legal Assistance***

The NHAHA Advocacy Workgroup is currently focused on House Bill 2’s (HB2) expansion on the state’s System of Care for Healthy Aging. They are working closely with the state to

follow the implementation of this bill. Dawn also provided an update on several important bills on the House and Senate floor:

1. [HB 1115](#) – relative to the termination of tenancy at the expiration of the tenancy or lease term. This bill is a high priority of the advocacy team to defeat as it would destabilize housing for renters across the state.
2. [SB 499](#) – relative to an Elder Simplified Application for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
3. [SB 403](#) – relative to health care workforce investments.
4. [HB 1191](#) – relative to an exemption to the meals and rooms tax for participants in the restaurant voucher program from the Meals and Rooms Tax.
5. [HB 1264](#) – relative to the definition of accessible voting systems.

Dawn also confirmed that the New Futures Policy Coordinator position is currently open for applications. The position will support the work of the NHAHA Advocacy Workgroup:

<https://new-futures.org/careers>

### **System of Care for Healthy Aging (slides 18-35)**

***Presenter: Wendi Aultman, Bureau Chief, Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services***

Wendi discussed the work being carried out under HB2's System of Care for Healthy Aging. Additional information can also be found on the [DHHS website](#). Wendi also recognized the instrumental support of Jessica Kennedy and Uma Bhusari, Division of Long-term Supports and Services at BEAS.

The System of Care for Healthy Aging aims to expand and improve access and reduce the cost of long-term services and supports (LTSS) and improve access to home and community-based services (HCBS) for older adults and adults with disabilities. The system of care will be implemented by improving upon current infrastructure to support healthy aging and by considering how to leverage the state's anticipated Multi-Sector Plan on Aging, The Commission on Aging's priorities, and NHAHA's strategies and goals.

Wendi discussed some of the work being carried out under the system of care:

- A CFI rate study will be conducted to evaluate the recent Medicaid rate increases. The resulting rate study will be released in a legislative report in July 2024, which will be used make recommendations to inform the 2026/2027 budget.
- Medicaid eligibility changes will allow for improved access to LTSS. These include changes to Spousal Impoverishment, Resource Disregard, Lookback Period, and the introduction of Presumptive Eligibility.

- Efforts to increase the access to, and investment and education for NH's Aging and Disability Resource Centers (previously branded as ServiceLink). A person-centered counseling program will also be available through each ADRC as well.

For questions on the System of Care for Healthy Aging, please contact [BEAS@shhs.nh.gov](mailto:BEAS@shhs.nh.gov).

**The NHAHA 2024 In-Person Quarterly Meeting Schedule:**

**Thursday, June 13, 2024 @ 9:00 AM**

**Thursday, September 12, 2024 @ 9:00 AM**

**Wednesday, December 18, 2024 @ 9:00 AM**