

Advisory Council on Aging

The Advisory Council on Aging meeting was held via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday, October 21, 2025.

Members Present: Cheryl Anagnopoulos, Eric Kunzweiler, Jacqueline Sly, James Severson, Erik Gaikowski, Jenna Douglas, and Michele Juffer.

Members Absent: Cody Seehafer, Brett Hoffman, and Gale Walker

Public Participants: Grace Gill (Alzheimer's Association SD Chapter), George Larson (Meals on Wheels Western South Dakota), Laura Armstrong (Minneluzahan Senior Center)

Welcome (Heather Krzmarzick)

Heather welcomed the group and asked the new members (Jacqueline Sly and Eric Kunzweiler) to introduce themselves. Heather turned over to Chairman Anagnopoulos. Chairman Cheryl Anagnopoulos called the meeting to order at 1:07 PM CST.

Approval of Agenda (Cheryl Anagnopoulos)

Michele made a motion to approve the agenda, Eric G. seconded. Motion passed.

Approval of Last Meeting Minutes (Cheryl Anagnopoulos)

Meeting Minutes from the April 2025 meeting were attached to the invite for members to review. Motion for approval by Jim S, seconded by Michele. Motion passed.

Open Meeting Laws Review:

Heather discussed the Guide to South Dakota's Open Meetings Laws (Revised 2025) with the Council pursuant to Codified Law 1-25-13. Heather noted that the Council serves in an advisory capacity only so while it may not be required to follow the open meetings laws, we want public input and want information to be transparent so it makes sense to follow and is good for members to be aware of the open meeting laws.

Long Term Services and Supports Updates:

Heather discussed updates for the Division of Long Term Services and Supports (LTSS) as follows:

State Plan on Aging

Last year, LTSS held listening sessions, including with the advisory council, as well as surveys and had the draft State Plan on Aging available for public comment. Heather shared the draft back in April. It was signed by Governor Rhoden in May before submission to the Administration for Community Living (ACL). On September 30th, 2025, ACL approved the SD State Plan on Aging. After the accessibility review, it will be posted on our DHS website. Our planning efforts are underway and we are excited about our goals. Heather shared the goals.

Alzheimer's Disease Program Initiative grant

LTSS applied for the Alzheimer's Disease Program Initiative grant (ADPI) in early 2024 as we discussed previously. The application addressed two objectives:

- The sustainability of dementia-capable services for people with dementia and their family caregivers.
- Ensure access to comprehensive, sustainable services that are dementia-capable and provide innovative services to the population with dementia and their caregivers.

In September 2024, DHS was awarded the grant. LTSS is meeting with ACL (Administration on Community Living) as it is a cooperative grant so the planning phase is up to one year, before starting in Aberdeen as the first pilot community. Next, after applying lessons learned and approval from ACL, we would pilot in Belle Fourche. Avenues to build this collaboration include:

- Dementia Dialogues – nationally recognized training
- Memory Cafes – safe and welcoming place for those living with dementia and their caregivers to socialize or be together to enjoy activities
- Trualta (online caregiver education and wellness platform, including virtual support groups)
- Caregiver classes led by Active Generations and Black Hills Aging
- Pilot family caregiver assessment from TCare
- Education and collaboration within pilot communities
- Distribution of *A Guide to Navigating Dementia* resource that LTSS developed with input from various stakeholders, including caregivers. Cheryl – really liked it; like checklist, POA, SDSU Extension
- Finding ways to align and partner with the BOLD (Building Our Largest Dementia) Infrastructure Grant with Department of Health

Heather showed the draft of *A Guide to Navigating Dementia* so the Council members could have an idea of the content of the resource. Cheryl commented that she really liked it as a resource for people navigating dementia. She likes the checklist idea at the end and feels helping people plan with power of attorney documents is crucial. Heather inquired if there were particular organizations to consider for distribution. Jacqueline asked where we have targeted for distribution. Heather said our DHS providers for caregiver outreach, nutrition, in-home agencies, etc. In addition, clinics and pharmacies. LTSS has a draft list for distribution and is also working with the BOLD Healthy Brain Coalition on distribution.

With some staff transitions, Donna Fischer will be the new ACL Administrator and State Dementia Coordinator. She will oversee the ADPI grant and officially begin her position at the end of the year, as we work to fill her current role as the State Long Term Care Ombudsman. She is a Certified Dementia Practitioner and conducts training on dementia in her current role so this will be wonderful in her role as the State Dementia Coordinator.

Caregiver Program

We recently reviewed our caregiver data for our respite program. Reminder, this program is through the Older Americans Act and there are no income or resource qualifications; however, it is intended to serve those with the greatest social and economic need. Specifically for caregivers, it is intended to prevent caregiver burnout.

Reminder on the program: A caregiver, through the respite program, can hire their own person or work with a provider. If they work with a provider, DHS pays the provider directly. If they choose to find their own respite, the caregiver submits a request to be reimbursed to DHS.

Some statistics based on the caregivers we are serving:

- 65% of Caregivers are a spouse
- 67% of Caregivers are not employed or are fully retired
- 54% of Care Receivers have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's or Dementia
- Support Groups are identified as the number one support option that would be beneficial for caregivers; however, only 18% of caregivers participate in a support group.

We are working to promote Trualta as an online caregiver wellness and education platform as it also offers virtual support groups.

Another program for caregivers is Structured Family Caregiving or Paid Family Caregiver. This program is available through the HOPE Waiver so there are both Medicaid financial qualifications and functional eligibility criteria. There is a stipend paid to the caregiver to help ease the financial burden. We saw a significant increase in it. Great news that we are reaching caregivers. However, we are also finding that it would be more cost effective for in home services in some cases. This is a delicate balance. Some states have stopped offering this program due to fraud and abuse. We want to ensure the integrity of the program so that it is available for caregivers who need it.

Nutrition Program

Heather explained how the Older Americans Act Title III Nutrition Program operates with congregate (community) or home-delivered meals, for those who qualify. Heather provided an update on a provider transition in West River.

In September 2024, Meals on Wheels Western South Dakota (MOWWSD) formally notified DHS of significant service reductions or meal site closures in multiple communities. These included participant caps, limited availability of meals, and in some cases, the complete closure of sites. These changes jeopardized access to meals for older adults in vulnerable areas.

In response to MOWWSD's service reductions, DHS contracted with Mom's Meals to provide temporary supplemental nutrition services for participants who needed meals. The Department also issued a public Request for Proposal (RFP) to find a new provider to cover areas in which MOWWSD discontinued services and keep vital nutrition programs in place for older adults, as required by the Older Americans Act. Inter-Lakes Community Action Partnership (ICAP) was

awarded the contract to provide home-delivered meals in Meade, Dewey, Fall River, Perkins, and Bennett counties.

This change was not initiated lightly. This transition is not about replacing one provider with another—it is about ensuring continuity of services. DHS remains committed to protecting access to nutrition services for older adults and will continue working with communities to strengthen and expand these services.

Jacqueline asked about the different funding sources for the other providers. Heather explained that Mom's meals was with American Rescue Plan funds, which is different than our typical funding source, as it was a temporary solution to ensure no older adults lost meal service who was in need. For any other Title III C nutrition providers, the funding source is the same.

Jacqueline asked about the role of the legislature in meals. Heather explained that the state has a match. Further, there is a local match for nutrition providers whether it is fundraising or volunteer hours that are required. Additionally, it is important that participants know that the meals are not per se "free". While no one can be denied a meal for not contributing a donation, the program would not be sustainable if participants did not contribute to the cost. Heather explained that DHS awarded the same amount of funds for Federal Fiscal Year 2026 as they did for the prior 12 months. The only difference was that LTSS did the last contract as 16 months to align with the federal award timeframe on the federal fiscal year to assist with awarding grants. Heather thanked the team at ICAP for their amazing work to connect with seniors and the communities to ensure continuity of services!

Marketing and Awareness Campaign

LTSS is continuing our marketing and awareness campaign with Lawrence & Schiller for the third year of our contract. Heather showed the most recent 30-second TV video that Lawrence & Schiller sent this morning for approval. Heather sought feedback from the Council. Eric commented that he has seen the advertisements and felt it was money well spent as it is getting the message out there. He felt Lawrence & Schiller do quality work. Michele liked it and felt that having hope and home in the same sentence was great. We have focused efforts on caregivers specifically and are noticing that in our data. We track data to ensure the campaign is working. We have had more traffic on our website and an increase in calls.

Increase in the average contacts by month per fiscal year from FY 25 to FY 24 by over 200 contacts. While this is good, we also track with our services to see if we have seen a corresponding change, which we have. The services that have seen the largest increase: Structured Family Caregiver, caregiver respite services through our Title III program, and Adult companion through the HOPE Waiver.

Heather expressed her appreciation of the work of Lawrence & Schiller as they are like an extension of the LTSS team!

Council Input, Ideas or Questions

Jacqueline commented that LTSS has a lot going on with outreach, caregivers, and nutrition in particular.

Eric shared that he is looking forward to learning and sharing with the Council as a new member.

Advisory Council on Aging Membership

With the addition of Jacqueline, Judy, and Eric, all openings have been filled. If at any point in time you feel you cannot serve, whether immediately or in the future, please contact Heather so we can work on filling the vacancy.

Public Comment

George Larson, Executive Director from Meals on Wheels Western South Dakota commented that it is exciting to see the wonderful resources being developed around dementia. He thanked the Advisory Council for its efforts.

Next Meeting

April 7th from 1-3 pm. Please let us know if there are any agenda items to add for next meeting.

Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Erik G. Second by Eric K. All in favor to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM