



TEXAS HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

**FINAL DRAFT: AGING TEXAS WELL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ATWAC)
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 4, 2021
9:00 a.m.**

TEAMS Live Event Meeting

Table 1: Aging Texas Well AC member attendance at Wednesday, August 4, 2021 meeting.

MEMBER NAME	YES	NO	MEMBER NAME	YES	NO
Bordie, Patricia	X		Taylor, Lynda (ex-officio)	X	
Crocker, Andrew	X		Vacant (ex-officio)		
Flores, Richard	X		Vacant (ex-officio)		
Ghesani, Aftab	X				
Gray, Anna	X				
Jackson, Patrick		X			
Johnson, Larry	X				
Leo, Lucia	X				
Mermelstein, Tammy	X				
Pittman, Greg	X				

Yes: Indicates attended the meeting

No: Indicates did not attend the meeting

Agenda Item 1: Welcome and opening remarks

The Aging Texas Well Advisory Committee meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Ms. Tammy Mermelstein, Interim Vice-Chair, who presided over the meeting.

Mr. Eric Owens, Facilitator, Advisory Committee Coordination Office, Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), announced that the meeting was being conducted via a Teams Live Events virtual platform in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, conducted roll call, and noted that a quorum was present for the meeting. Table 1 notes committee members' attendance at the meeting.

Agenda Item 2: Approve May 5, 2021, meeting minutes

Ms. Tammy Mermelstein, Vice-Chair, called for a motion to approve the minutes of the May 5, 2021 meeting.

Motion:

Mr. Greg Pittman moved to approve the minutes from the May 5, 2021 meeting as amended. Ms. Lucia Leo seconded the motion. The Committee members majorly approved the minutes by a roll call vote conducted by Mr. Owens, with nine approves, no disapproves, and no abstention.

Agenda Item 3: Special Topic: TMF Health Quality Institute

Ms. Nanci Newberry and Ms. Julie Baran, provided a presentation on the TMF Health Quality Institute.

Agenda Item 4: Division Updates

- a. **Community Access, Access and Eligibility Services:** Heather Brown MDCP Policy Analyst, and Maria Hernandez, Senior Policy Analyst, presented on efforts to draft the new State Plan on Aging. The plan is the guiding document submitted to the federal Administration for Community Living that outlines how HHSC and the state's aging network will meet the changing needs of older Texans and implement Older Americans Act services over the next few years. The plan provides a framework for activities related to programs, services, and supports for older adults and identifies state goals and objectives which must be evaluated and updated based on data analysis and stakeholder feedback. A draft of the plan will be shared with the public and posted on the HHSC website in January 2022 to solicit feedback. Additionally, two public feedback hearings will be scheduled in 2022 and will be webcast for those unable to attend in person.
- b. **Office of the State Long-term Care Ombudsman:** Alexa Schoeman, Deputy State Ombudsman, announced ombudsmen are now back to making in-person visits to every facility. Additionally, she shared their recent legislative activities, stating that State Ombudsman, Ms. Patty Ducayet, testified on several different bills that related to the lives and care of long-term care facility residents. She also provided an overview on two bills that passed this session that impact residents:
 - Senate Bill 25 protects a residents' right to an essential caregiver during future pandemics or emergencies. This essential caregiver can visit in-person and not have the visit waived except in limited circumstances.
 - Senate Bill 3961 will require long-term facility providers to include contact information for the Long-term Care Ombudsman program on their websites, including the statewide telephone intake number.
- c. **Texas Targeted Opioid Response:** Kaleigh Becker, Prevention Lead, shared updates on Opioid Misuse Prevention in Older Adults project that the Aging Services Coordination office implements. Funding has been renewed for another year and new activities for the project include developing virtual trainings on opioid use and misuse in the older adult population. The project will continue to include funding for area agencies on aging to provide medication reviews, conduct capacity-building efforts, and offer chronic pain management classes.

d. **Aging Services Coordination:** Holly Riley, Manager, provided updates on two bills the office tracked during the 87th Legislature:

- House Bill 4572 – required creation of a statewide aging coordinating council comprised of state agency representatives. This bill did not pass.
- Senate Bill 1917 – creates an outreach campaign for older adults with vision loss. This bill passed and is assigned to Aging Services Coordination to implement. The ASC will work with other HHSC offices, state agencies, and external stakeholders to implement the bill requirements.

Agenda Item 5: Committee Operations:

a. Strategic Planning subcommittee Updates

- Richard Flores, subcommittee lead, shared that the subcommittee has submitted the ATWAC position statements for inclusion in the Aging Texas Well Strategic Plan.

b. Member Updates: Members provide updates from their respective organizations:

- **Patty Bordie** shared that area agencies on aging (AAA) are focusing on end of the fiscal year reporting requirements for HHSC. Collectively, AAAs are exploring ways to include lessons learned from the pandemic into future service planning, including continued opportunities for virtual service delivery. They will be working with with HHSC to determine how to include different service delivery models into their plan while keeping with Administration for Community Living guidance.
- **Andy Crocker** shared that Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is busy planning for the fiscal 2022 program year. Extension programming will continue in a hybrid model that has evolved over the past 18 months. They are slowly and cautiously returning to in-person programming at the county level but keeping some virtual programming.
- **Richard Flores** shared that Aging and Disability Resource Centers received funding to help with vaccine access and are focusing on vaccine accessibility, education, outreach, and addressing the vaccine hesitancy. The Lower Rio Grande Valley ADRC will be using funds to coordinate with community partners, emergency management, and city leaders to hold pop-up vaccination events and education across rural areas.
- **Aftab Ghesani** shared that the Aga Khan Council of the USA Social Welfare Board is embarking on a new project to provide intergenerational housing. The concept involves having younger generations live on the same campus with older adults. This project was piloted in Canada and the Board is gathering information to pilot in US. The first pilot is likely to be in Texas.

- **Anna Gray** shared that United Healthcare is continuing to virtually serve members and will begin transitioning to in-person service delivery in September. Many members that were affected by COVID now have more extensive needs.
- **Larry Johnson** provided updates from the HHSC Vision Loss in Older Adults workgroup that is identifying strategies to expand collaboration and coordination among agencies, and increase organizations capacity to serve older adults with blindness/low vision. The workgroup has divided into smaller subgroups to focus on specific projects and strategies around this effort.
- **Lucia Leo** shared that she has transferred to a new virtual position at the West Texas Veterans Affairs Office providing mental health services. The VA has seen an increase in individuals seeking psychotherapy from COVID-related anxiety and depression issues.
- **Greg Pittman** shared that the Meals on Wheels organizations across Texas are slowly resuming in-person services. Several are reopening congregate dining centers on a limited basis, while others are continuing drive-thru delivery service.
- **Lynda Taylor** had no updates.
- **Tammy Mermelstein** shared that she was working on a major grant that would establish collaboration between medical, government, and nonprofit providers with a focus on social determinants of health. Unfortunately, complications caused the grant not to be submitted. Ms. Mermelstein also shared an overview of the two presentations she will be providing at the Aging in Texas Conference. The first is on using data to identify vulnerable older adults and neighborhoods where more targeted outreach can be done. The second, is based on personal experiences of Ms. Mermelstein and a colleague on professional guilt, when professionals in the aging field face challenges providing care and support to the older loved ones in their lives.

c. Chair Elections

- Two nominations were received for Chair: Tammy Mermelstein and Richard Flores. Each candidate provided their qualifications for Chair and members took a roll-call vote. Based on the final voting count (with four votes for Ms. Mermelstein and five votes for Mr. Flores), the newly elected Chair was Richard Flores.

Agenda Item 6: Public Comment:

No public comment was offered.

Agenda Item 6: Review of action and agenda items for next meeting and wrap-up

- Ms. Tammy Mermelstein, Vice Chair, announced that the next ATWAC meeting is on Wednesday, November 3, 2021.
- With no further business, Ms. Mermelstein adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

Below is the link to the archived video of the August 4, 2021 Aging Texas Well Advisory Committee meeting that will be available for viewing approximately two years from date of meeting.

<https://texashsc.swagit.com/play/08042021-1078/2/>

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