



TEXAS HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

FINAL DRAFT: AGING TEXAS WELL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ATWAC)

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 2, 2022

9:00 a.m.

Hybrid: TEAMS Meeting

Physical location: Health and Human Services Commission

Winters Public Hearing Room

701 W. 51st Street

Austin, TX 78751

Table 1: ATWAC member attendance on Wednesday, November 2, 2022 meeting.

MEMBER NAME	YES	NO	MEMBER NAME	YES	NO
Bordie, Patricia	X		Mermelstein, Tammy	X	
Crocker, Andrew	X		Pittman, Greg	X	
Ghesani, Aftab	X		Vacant		
Gray, Anna	X		Vacant		
Jackson, Patrick	X				
Johnson, Larry	X		Medina, Angela (Ex-Officio)	X	
Leo, Lucia		X	Stark, Crystal (Ex-Officio)		X
			Taylor, Lynda (Ex-Officio)		X

Yes: Indicates attended the meeting

No: Indicates did not attend the meeting

Agenda Item 1: Welcome, Opening remarks and Roll Call

The Aging Texas Well Advisory Committee meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m. by Ms. Angela Medina, Presiding Officer. Ms. Median welcomed all and introduced Ms. Kayla Cates-Brown, Facilitator, with the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), Advisory Committee Coordination Office (ACCO).

Ms. Cates-Brown read the logistical announcements, stated the meeting was being conducted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, conducted member roll call, and noted that a quorum was present for the meeting.

Agenda Item 2: Consideration of August 3, 2022 meeting minutes

Ms. Medina, Presiding Officer, requested members review the draft minutes and provide applicable edits. Hearing none, Ms. Medina called for a motion from the members to approve the August 3, 2022 meeting minutes.

MOTION: Mr. Greg Pittman moved to approve the minutes as presented and Ms. Tammy Mermelstein seconded the motion. Ms. Cates-Brown conducted a roll call vote of the members and the motion passed with six approvals (Crocker, Ghesani, Jackson, Johnson, Mermelstein, Pittman), no disapprovals, and no abstentions.

Agenda Item 3: Special Topic Presentations

Ms. Medina, Presiding Officer, introduced Ms. Kathy Green (Director, AARP State and Federal Strategy) who provided a presentation on AARP (Association for Advancement of Retired Professionals) Texas' priorities for the upcoming legislative session in the spring of 2023.

Agenda Item 4: HHSC Division Updates

- a. Foster Grandparent Program** – Ms. Emily Dressen, Director, provided an overview of Foster Grandparent Program, as well as updates on program operations. She shared the program was awarded funds through the American Rescue Plan Act to expand the program to the Temple-Belton-Killeen and Fort Worth areas. She explained they are actively recruiting new volunteers and volunteer hosts sites and invited anyone interested to contact her for more information.
- b. Office of the State Long-term Care Ombudsman (OSLTCO)** – Ms. Alexa Schoeman, Deputy for State Long-term Care Ombudsman Office provided an update on their Annual Report of long-term care ombudsman activities over the 2021-2022 period. She touched on several areas of the report, including an overview of the volunteer ombudsmen status, number of complaints the ombudsmen received about facilities and any resolutions, and other concerns ombudsmen are seeing in long-term care facilities. The [report](#) is available on the HHSC website to view and download.
- c. Office of Disability Services Coordination** – Ms. Naomi Scheer, Disability Services VISTA Member, provided an update on a new project focusing on the direct service workforce development taskforce. The project seeks to explore strategies to improve the recruitment and retention of direct service professionals, including community attendants and other professionals. She shared they are currently researching ways to partner with a Senior Community Services Employment Program to recruit, employ, and train adults age 55 and older as community attendants. She plans to share her research and recommendations with the direct service workforce development taskforce.
- d. Office of Aging Services Coordination** – Ms. Holly Riley, Director, provided updates on new projects and initiatives. She shared a marketing vendor has been

selected to assist HHSC in implementing a statewide caregiver campaign and will begin their activities soon. She also shared that her office, in collaboration with the offices of Disability Services Coordination and Veterans Services Coordination, has received a grant to assess Texas' No Wrong Door system and strengthen its governance structure. She also stated that the ASC office has officially been realigned under the new Community Services Division, as of November 1. Additionally, she shared that ASC will be presenting on the Aging Texas Well Strategic Plan at the upcoming American Public Health Association's conference.

Agenda Item 5: Committee Operations

Ms. Medina, Presiding Officer, turned the meeting over to Ms. Cates-Brown, ACCO, HHSC to conduct the Office Elections for ATWAC Chair. Ms. Cates-Brown read the Officer Election Procedure aloud for the record and responded to member questions.

a. Officer Election Procedure Highlights –

- Members were able to provide nominations for Chair prior to the meeting by submitting names to the program area staff.
- A roll call vote of all members must be conducted in a virtual setting.
- Members were given the opportunity to provide additional nominations from the floor prior to the election for Chair.
- The nominee receiving the most votes will be elected as the Chair.
- If only one nominee is received for the position, members will vote to approve the election of the nominee by acclamation vote.

Ms. Cates-Brown requested a motion from the members to adopt the Officer Election Procedure.

MOTION: Mr. Greg Pittman moved to adopt the Officer Election Procedure as presented in the meeting. Mr. Jackson and Ms. Bordie seconded the motion. Following a roll call vote of the members, the motion passed with eight approvals (Bordie, Crocker, Ghesani, Gray, Jackson, Johnson, Mermelstein, Pittman), no disapprovals and no abstentions.

Ms. Cates-Brown announced that one nomination had been received for the ATWAC Chair position – Ms. Tammy Mermelstein (self-nomination. Ms. Mermelstein share a brief statement about her qualifications for the position. No other nominees were received from the floor. Ms. Cates-Brown requested a motion from the members to approve the election of Ms. Mermelstein as ATWAC Chair by acclamation vote.

MOTION: Mr. Greg Pittman moved to approve the election of Ms. Mermelstein as ATWAC Chair by acclamation vote. Mr. Jackson seconded the motion. Following a roll call vote of the members, the motion passed with eight approvals (Bordie, Crocker, Ghesani, Gray, Jackson, Johnson, Mermelstein, Pittman), no disapprovals and no abstentions.

- b. **Updates regarding activities focused on developing 2022-2023 Committee priorities.** Ms. Mermelstein asked the leads of the subcommittees developing policy briefs to provide an update on their progress.
- Mr. Crocker shared his group is focusing their policy brief on strategies for expanding access and awareness of aging services, including for rural older adults. They plan to highlight existing models of programs that help address barriers rural older adults may experience in accessing services.
 - Mr. Pittman shared his group is focusing their policy brief on strategies to increase utilization of existing services, like those provided by Area Agencies on Aging. The group has a detailed outline of the brief and hopes to have it completed by the end of December.
 - Ms. Mermelstein shared her group is focusing their policy brief on the topic of assistive technology and home modifications to help older adults age in place. She stated that all three groups are planning to have final drafts of the briefs ready by the end of January.
- c. **Updates from members on external activities as they relate to committee's focus:** Ms. Mermelstein called on members to provide updates on external activities as they relate to the committee's focus and charge:
- **Ms. Patricia Bordie** shared that November is National Family Caregivers Month and that the Capital Area Agency on Aging in addition to the other AAAs across the state, are implementing efforts to highlight family caregivers. She encouraged members to connect with their local AAA to see how they can support these efforts. She also noted that enrollment is currently open for Medicare through December 7. She noted that AAA benefits counselors are available to help consumers navigate their benefits, new developments in coverage, and enroll in new benefits, if needed.
 - **Mr. Andy Crocker** shared Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is coming to the end of their program year and preparing reports to share with their stakeholders.
 - **Mr. Aftab Ghesani** shared that the Aga Khan Social Welfare Board is starting in-person activities for their older adult clients. He said their clients have been excited to return to in-person gatherings.
 - **Ms. Anna Gray** shared she continues to provide virtual and telephonic services to STAR+PLUS waiver recipients at United Healthcare but is looking forward to returning to in-person service delivery soon.
 - **Mr. Patrick Jackson** shared that home health providers are anticipating changes to both Medicaid and Medicare changes in the new year and are preparing to implement new policies.
 - **Mr. Larry Johnson** shared he is a board member Bexar County Senior Advisory Committee and that he's been assisting with open houses highlighting local senior centers across the county. Three open houses were held and

community member participation was very positive. He also shared No Barriers Communication, another organization he is board member of, was invited to provide a presentation to the local AAA on ways to better serve clients who are deaf or hard of hearing or have visual impairment.

- **Mr. Greg Pittman** shared the Meals on Wheels Association of Texas is preparing for their day at the capitol to advocate on behalf of the network at the legislature. They have been discussing with HHSC the possibility of increased funding for meals programs and the impact of COVID-19 on costs. They are hoping to continue discussions with state leadership and the legislature in the new year. He noted that one of the new benefits being added to managed care plans is a limited benefit of home-delivered meals after discharge from a hospital. He explained that Meals on Wheels providers are looking into how they could provide this service, given their current program capacity and operations. He also shared many providers are implementing innovative programs across the state, using technology to assist volunteers and clients.
- **Ms. Angela Medina** shared that APS has received some grants over the past few years to create and implement specialized units focusing on financial exploitation and to partner with a forensic accounting firm to assist with investigations. She stated they are hoping to get more funding from the legislature next year to continue these efforts. She also shared the 39th annual APS Conference will be held December 5-8 and that she will the link with Ms. Burns to send to the full committee.
- **Ms. Mermelstein** shared she'll be presenting at a one-day conference hosted by UT Health on transportation empathy and encouraging attendees to think about the challenges their older adult clients may experience. She will also be presenting at the APS conference on aging services professionals who are also caregivers of older family members. She shared she's wrapping up their latest cohort of Adopt a Grandparent program and getting ready for a new one in the spring.

Agenda Item 6: Public Comment

No written public comment was submitted, and no one registered to provide oral comment in the virtual setting. No one in the public hearing room requested to provide public comment.

Agenda Item 7: Review of action and agenda items for next meeting and wrap-up

Ms. Medina led the member discussion regarding action items and agenda items for the next meeting. Ms. Medina announced the next committee meeting is scheduled for February 1, 2023 and shared that Vice Chair Elections will be held at the February meeting. If committee members are interested in running for Vice Chair, please contact the committee liaison, Olivia Burns.

Agenda Item 8: Adjournment

Ms. Medina provided closing remarks and adjourned the meeting at 11:08 a.m. CST.

Below is the link to the archived video of the November 2, 2022 Aging Texas Well Advisory Committee meeting that will be available for viewing approximately two years from date of meeting.

[Aging Texas Well Advisory Committee](#)

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