



TEXAS HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION

AGING TEXAS WELL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ATWAC)

FINAL DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 8, 2023

9:00 a.m.

Hybrid: TEAMS Meeting

Physical location: Health and Human Services Commission

John H. Winters Building Public Hearing Room 125

701 W. 51st Street

Austin, TX 78751

Table 1: ATWAC member attendance on Wednesday, February 8, 2022 meeting.

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

Yes: Indicates attended the meeting

No: Indicates did not attend the meeting

Agenda Item 1: Welcome, logistical announcements, roll call, and opening remarks

Ms. Tammy Mermelstein, Chair, convened the Aging Texas Well Advisory Committee (ATWAC) meeting at 9:00 a.m. and welcomed attendees. Ms. Francesca Kupper, Project Manager, Advisory Committee Coordination Office (ACCO), Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), provided logistical announcements, conducted the roll call and noted a quorum of the members were present.

Agenda Item 3: Special topic: Presentation on Supporting Older Adults with Vision Loss

Mr. Larry Johnson, ATWAC member, provided a presentation on "Supporting Older Adults with Vision Loss."

Agenda Item 2: Consideration of November 2, 2022, meeting minutes

Ms. Mermelstein asked called for any edits and/or changes to the draft; receiving none, Ms. Mermelstein called for a motion.

MOTION:

Mr. Larry Johnson moved to approve the November 2, 2022, meeting minutes as written. Mr. Quincy Dunlap seconded the motion. The motion was approved by roll call vote with five approvals (Q. Dunlap; D. Harrell; P. Jackson; L. Johnson; and, T. Mermelstein); one abstention (G. Maestre); and, no nays.

Agenda Item 4: Updates

- a. Local Access and Support.** Ms. Dana McGrath, Associate Commissioner, Local Access and Support, introduced herself and provided an update on the new Local Access and Support (LAS) section in Community Services Division. She shared that her oversight includes the Office of Area Agencies on Aging and Office of Aging and Disability Resource Centers and noted that the new alignment of these offices in Community Services will promote more coordination across program areas. She shared updates on initiatives LAS is leading or participating in, including the No Wrong Door Grant Project to assess and strengthen Texas's system of access to long-term services and supports (LTSS). Additionally, she shared LAS is leading the Respite Innovative Technology Enhancement grant project to conduct a needs assessment of state respite services and enhance the Lifespan Respite Care program. She also noted that the Texas Respite Advisory Committee was in the process of confirming new members and the Aging and Disability Resource Centers Advisory Committee was currently soliciting for new members.
- b. Office of Aging Services Coordination.** Ms. Olivia Burns, Aging Texas Well Coordinator, provided the Office of Aging Services Coordination (ASC) update. She shared that the vendor designing the *Strengthen the Care You Give* caregiver campaign had begun gathering feedback on the campaign materials through a mobile immersion tour, social media, TV, and radio ads. She also provided the campaign website www.texascaregivers.org. Additionally, she shared that the Vision Loss in Older Adults launched in February and includes resource sheets on available programs and services for older adults, and a tip sheet for providers serving older adults. The HHSC website for the campaign is hhs.texas.gov/vision-loss. She shared more information on the No Wrong Door Grant Project that ASC is leading, noting that HHSC will be hosting six listening sessions in Fort Worth, San Antonio, El Paso, McAllen, Amarillo and Tyler. The first session will be held Fort Worth on March 15 and

16 and the next will be in San Antonio March 30 and 31. She also shared that a statewide survey would be launched later this year as part of the project, on access to LTSS. Lastly, she welcomed Stephanie Taylor, the new ASC Research Specialist.

Agenda Item 5: Committee Operations

- a. Welcome and introduction of new members.** Ms. Mermelstein welcomed and introduced the new ATWAC members: Quincy Dunlap, Demetress Harrell, and Gladys Maestre. She also thanked the ATWAC members whose terms had expired and were leaving the advisory committee and thanked members who had volunteered to score the nominees for the HHS Innovators in Aging award.
- b. Conduct vice chair election.** Ms. Mermelstein noted the vice-chair election was tabled for a future meeting.
- c. Updates regarding activities to develop 22-23 committee priorities.** Ms. Mermelstein shared that each of the three subgroups working on issue briefs were in various stages of progress and that more updates would be shared at a later meeting. She also shared that she will reach out to the new members to have discussions regarding joining the ATWAC subcommittees.
- d. Updates from members on external activities as they relate to committee's focus.** Ms. Mermelstein requested members share updates from their organizations:
 - **Patrick Jackson** did not have any organizational updates. He thanked the committee and shared he enjoyed his experience serving on the committee.
 - **Larry Johnson** thanked HHSC and the committee for allowing him to participate on the committee. He also shared that the Bexar Area Agency on Aging has been hosting a town halls series for community members and the next will be focused on services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
 - **Quincy Dunlap** shared that the Austin Urban League will be hosting a cross-generational mental health awareness event in July and that he would provide more updates at the next meeting.
 - **Demetress Harrell** shared that Hospice in the Pines would be starting a Conversations Symposium in April. She also shared that the Texas-New Mexico Hospice Association will hold their convention in February and that she would send more information about those events via email.
 - **Angela Medina** shared that the 40th Adult Protective Services conference will be held October 10-13 in Austin and the theme is "Unsung Heroes." She shared she will send more information to the committee via email.
 - **Crystal Stark** shared her specialty is low vision and blindness and that she has been working for the state for 18 years. She is currently a program specialist with the Older Individuals who are Blind Program at the Texas Workforce Commission.
 - **Tammy Mermelstein** shared that CARE is in the process of kicking off their next iteration of the Adopt a Grandparent Program. CARE will also be starting an initiative called the Care Index, utilizing American Community Survey data

to rank zip codes in Harris County to understand the distribution of vulnerable older adults across the community. CARE will use the data to adapt their service to meet the needs of these older adults where they reside.

Agenda Item 6: Public Comment

No public comment was received.

Agenda Item 7: Action/ agenda items for next meeting, wrap-up, and adjourn

Ms. Mermelstein announced that the next meeting will be May 3, 2023. She noted that members interested in the ATWAC Vice Chair position should reach out to Ms. Burns and adjourned the meeting at 10:49 a.m.

Please click on the link to the archived HHSC video to view, and listen to, the entirety of the February 8, 2023, Aging Texas Well Advisory Committee (ATWAC) meeting; this video will be available for approximately two years from the date the meeting video is posted in accordance with the HHSC records retention schedule:

[Aging Texas Well Advisory Committee](#)