



**GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON AGING**

**June 15, 2022, 10:00 AM**

1700 West Washington Street, PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007

A general meeting of the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging was convened on **June 15, 2022**, in a hybrid format, 1700 West Washington Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85007, notice having been duly given.

Members Present (12)	Members Absent (3)
Terri Spitz, Chair	Jaime Aguilar
Belinda Akes	Tim Dunn
Bert Ijams	Brenda Holt
Steve Wagner	
Teresa Manygoats	
Carol Brown, Vice-Chair	
Shelli Silver	
Virginia Rountree	
Lisa O'Neill	
Barbara Marshall	
Bonita Imus	
Barbara Chavira (Proxy for Lela Alston)	
Staff and Guests Present (4)	
Kim Brooks	Nicole Baker
Kainoa Spenser	
Travis Price	

**Call to Order**

- **Terri Spitz, Chair**, called the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging meeting to order at **10:01 a.m.** with **12 members** and 4 staff and guests present. **Terri Spitz, Chair**, reviewed the procedures of the hybrid meeting and welcomed all those present. She reminded members that it is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and after the meeting, they were all going to take a picture together in honor.
- **Terri Spitz, Chair** mentioned that the State Plan on Aging is in its final stages and she doesn't believe any changes need to be made, they are just waiting for final approval.

**Roll Call**

- **Terri Spitz, Chair**, conducted a roll call of the Council and took note of Councilmember proxies with quorum met.

**Approval of Minutes**

- **Terri Spitz, Chair**, requested a review of the **April 13, 2022** meeting minutes.
  - **Carol Brown** moved to accept **April 13, 2022**.
  - **Belinda Akes** seconded the motion.
  - The motion passed with no dissenting votes at **10:03 a.m.**

## Funding Request Process

- **Terri Spitz, Chair**, introduced **Travis Price**, Compliance & Procurement Manager, Arizona Office of the Governor, who shared information about the funding request process. **Travis Price** began the presentation by stating that the Governor's Office of Youth, Faith and Family (GOYFF) is the fiscal agent of the Aging Council. The budget of GOYFF comes from Federal, State, and donated funds that can be used for staffing and administration needs to support the councils. It allows for some of the money available to be for potential projects or sponsorships. Many rules and regulations come along with this money since it is Federal and State funding. The biggest rule to be aware of during the procurement process is that there are certain requirements that must be met.
  - There are two categories of expenses; a majority is vendor expenses and then there is grant funding. Vendor expenses are completed through a state contract with a goods provider or service provider and cannot be over \$10,000. If it exceeds that limit, a request for quotes takes place where the selection committee looks at different bids. Grant money is used solely for funding grant programming within GOYFF.
- The GOYFF Funding request process is to find a vendor, create a Purchase Order or vendor contract, and get final approval from leadership. For the Aging council to best take advantage of funding they should work with the GOYFF team ahead of time to discuss the logistics so work can begin on the project as quickly as possible.

## Arizona Commission for the Arts: Intervention on Social Isolation

- **Terri Spitz, Chair**, introduced **Alexandra Nelson** and **Anne L'Ecuyer**. **Alex Nelson** is the Deputy Director at the Arizona Commission on the Arts. In her time with the Arts Commission, she has worked on a number of major initiatives, including the Arizona Arts Education Research Institute, Community Catalysts, AZ Creative Communities, and AZ Creative Aging. **Anne L'Ecuyer** is the Executive Director for the Arizona Commission on the Arts. She is an expert in creative placemaking and place keeping, creative industries and cultural tourism, and the integration of the arts toward educational, social, and environmental goals in communities in the United States.
- **Anne L'Ecuyer** began with her own educational journey and has spent the majority of her career working in DC. She offers a special insight into the intersection of the Arts, Community, and Business. She discussed the social impact of when businesses and the Arts come together to help the community and specifically how it can help the aging population through "Creative Aging" programs. **Alex Nelson** then introduced herself, she has been with the agency for 13 years and spent her time in creative learning with children and adults.
- **Anne L'Ecuyer** shared that the Arts Commission is a state agency that has been around for 55 years and in the most recent legislative session, they were re-authorized for another 8 years. Its mission is to allow all Arizonans to take part in creative activities as creative life is integral to our communities. They are one of 56 Arts Commissions in the country where a majority of their funding comes from the National Endowment for the Arts, an appropriation from the state, and philanthropic donors. The Commission is governed by 15 Governor-appointed members. Staff includes practicing artists, skilled administrators, and education specialists who serve in local and national arts leadership roles.
- The Commission's main roles are: Supplying grants to local organizations, creating spaces for the creative community to gather, and serving as a resource for artists and for all Arizonans to get involved with the Arts. Some of their main programs include:
  - ARTS+ Youth houses all of the programs for children such as their state-wide Poetry contest, school engagement field trips, and even a Youth Arts Council. This council oversees and determines all of the youth grants given out. They even offer Americorps internships.
  - ARTS+ Veterans is how they connect the Arizona veteran community to the Arts. More specifically it is connecting the value of service and looking to connect them with employment opportunities in the creative arts.
  - ARTS+ Seniors is to serve the Aging population by providing respite for healthcare workers, support for family caregivers, and creative aging programs for seniors. Research has shown that

creative aging programs have a positive impact on health outcomes.. Examples such as creative exercises being an early treatment for dementia and dance as a method of mobility.

- **Alex Nelson** discussed how creative aging is for everyone since we all are aging. It is an umbrella term for the national movement of using the tools of creative expression for healthy aging. It shows how it is a dual field of arts and science coming together to create the best health outcomes for seniors in all living situations. Using research from “*The Creativity and Aging Study*”, it is shown that when seniors are involved in weekly participatory creative art programs there are:
  - fewer doctor visits and less medication usage;
  - more positive responses to the mental health measures;
  - more involvement in overall activities
  - Increased self-efficiency and less social loneliness
- **Alex Nelson** shared that overall these community based creative aging programs reduce the risk factors for the need of long term care. From this study, they created the AZ Creative Aging Initiative whose core values are a process-based approach, person-centered engagement/care, and culturally responsive programs. The initiative was organized around programming that strengthened skills in the arts of creative aging, implementing those programs, and growing the creative aging field overall. Specifically helping these creative practitioners learn how to serve the aging population in the best way possible. This allows for good partnerships to take place between aging, creative, and healthcare providers. In 2019, after looking at the AZ Creative Aging Initiative programs for 3 years, they created a strategic visioning process called Creative Aging 2.0 which was their plan for programming moving forward but then the COVID-19 pandemic changed everything. Taking a look at their different community-built strategies shows how the Arts Commission stuck to its programming plan while still pivoting around the pandemic restrictions.
- **Anne L’Ecuyer** then discussed how the Arts Commission took a systemic approach of looking at their surveys and taking a field scan of the programs through a post-COVID-19 lens. From this systemic approach, they hope to get connected to other creative aging service providers and craft deeper relationships with healthcare organizations to identify how they are doing creative aging. Another Strong emphasis is on workforce development to help creative workers access professional opportunities in healthcare environments, and support resilience for all healthcare workers.
- **Terri Spitz, Chair**, shared a personal account of the impact of seeing creative aging programs take place in the Alzheimer’s community by the members forming a choir in a congregate-care facility that allowed seniors to battle social isolation and dementia through singing. **Anne L’Ecuyer** responded by saying that this is an example that shows how this helps all involved.
- **Barbara Marshall** recounts a personal experience of seeing the power of creative aging in an assisted living home where they created a group for former musicians to get together and play to provide concerts for the home.
- **Belinda Akes** talked about a program her group started called “Arts and Meals” which provides a meal after a community art class hosted in the local firefighters’ station to battle hunger and senior social isolation. **Anne L’Ecuyer** responded that is a great way to build a program in that rather than inventing something new, use local partners to create efficient, safe, and effective community response programs. She is excited to be back in Arizona to help expand their reach into more rural and tribal Arizona.
- **Bert Ijams** talked about bringing creative aging programming to home-bound seniors so they are not left out. She discussed the creative arts program she created in her local community that focused on dance, poetry, music, and the visual arts. She had great success and positive feedback from the community. She asked how the Commission for the Arts can help home-bound seniors in the Prescott area. She is looking to create a partner program for seniors and volunteers who would spend time with the seniors, not just drop off a meal. She would like to partner with the Commission closer on bringing them up to the Prescott area. **Alex Nelson** expressed she wants to continue to have this conversation with the whole council on how they can help bring creative aging into their respective communities. **Anne L’Ecuyer** responded that it is questions like this that help to allow the Commission to act as a connector to each of the service providers in this area. **Carol Brown** suggested that they look to NAU and their senior companion program which is already going into homes to help bring the creative aging programs along with them.

### Update from AARP Impact of Medication Costs

- **Terri Spitz, Chair**, introduced **Brendon Blake**, Associate State Director of Advocacy at AARP Arizona. Brendon has been with AARP Arizona since 2016, focusing on advocacy work at the local, state, and federal levels, working on a variety of issues such as long-term care, housing, transportation, financial security, and utilities.
- **Brendon Blake** discussed rising Rx prices and their impact on older Arizonans. Americans pay the most for Rx drugs around the globe while the international community pays less than half (41%) for the same drugs as U.S. consumers. Researchers have deemed a term for it: American Premium. As a result, companies are able to pay their global R&D budget through purchases made by American consumers. One of the main arguments the Rx companies use to maintain high prices is that funding is needed for research and development; however, for the 210 new drugs introduced from 2010-2016, each one had received federal funding. There are two types of research: basic and applied. Basic research is exploratory and encompasses the foundational research it takes to find the building blocks of new medications. Applied research is creating the medications that are used and the NIH fund a majority of basic research in the US. Whereas only 16% of pharmaceutical companies' budgets are going towards exploratory research since it is much more expensive and doesn't always yield new drugs for that company.
- **Brendon Blake** discussed how Pharmacy benefit managers (PBM) and insurance companies play a role in Rx pricing. PBMs are the middlemen between Rx manufacturers and the wholesalers so they are making money from both the manufacturing and insurance companies.
- One common misconception is that older Rx drugs will go down in price over time but this is not always true due to generics not being created. This is due to current patents such as Pay-for-Delay Agreements which allow current name-brand drug manufacturers to pay generic drug manufacturers to not produce it so the name-brand company keeps hold of the Rx drug. Insulin is an example of a biologics patent protection as it is a living organism and is a live drug. It has not gone down in price or had a generic created since the federal government continues to give the two patents of Insulin to the same two companies, creating no competition. Insulin is the most known but this impacts a full spectrum of Rx drugs.
- **Brendon Blake** shared trends within the Rx drug market. There are constant increases in brand name medications since before the pandemic and these vastly outpace inflation. Between 2015 and 2019, the Top 50 Medicare drugs saw a total increase of \$38 Billion. There are no laws preventing Rx drug manufacturers from constantly raising the price of the Rx drug for no reason. Drugs outpaced inflation in 2022 and before the pandemic, we saw the cost of generics actually go down.
- Older Americans take an average of 4.5 medications and in 2016, the average Medicare recipient paid \$5,460 in out-of-pocket expenses. This is certainly higher due to inflation and will only continue to go up with the cost of drugs continuing to rise. The average social security check is around \$1500 a month which is not near enough to cover their medications. Due to this increase in the cost of medications, globally seniors are the fastest-growing segment of the first time homeless population. This is due to them having an income they cannot grow or not enough money to cover their medical and living expenses forcing them to choose. This forces many seniors to drive south across the border to buy their prescriptions at a reasonable price.
- **Brendon Blake** stated that there are many groups trying to help resolve this issue. AARP started a Campaign called "Stop Rx Greed" with goals at both a Federal and State level.
- The federal goals are: to allow Medicare to Negotiate for Lower Rx Prices, cap Out of Pocket Costs, end Pay-for-Delay Agreements, and an inflation-based cap on Rx drug prices. For state solutions, they are trying to implement Drug Affordability Boards to negotiate for state plans.
  - This is not the only state solution AARP supports. In Florida they supported its state importation plan. This allowed Florida to buy Rx drugs from other countries and allow it to be shipped into Florida so it can be purchased at a cheaper cost.
- These solutions are just cost-shifting measures so it means that someone or some insurance company is still going to eventually pick up the bill which causes the companies to raise monthly premiums instead. The solution is to have transparency around Rx drug costs so it can be lowered over time. This transparency is

in hopes of revealing the price so it goes down, such as with insulin but prices went up due to no actual competition in the insulin market. The only real solution is just to lower the actual price of Rx drugs.

- **Barbara Marshall** asked if there was any federal legislation in place to combat this issue. **Brendon Blake** said there is currently no legislation pending at a federal level. There is a discussion of a bi-partisan stand-alone bill that would place a \$35 dollar cap on insulin a month, and medicare negotiating Rx drug prices. A state-level AARP is working to get Arizona Senators to sign on to it.
- **Carol Brown** asked what is the age considered older in this presentation. **Brendon Blake** said that when he was referring to older Americans it was those over the age of 65.
- **Bert Ijams** asked what is the top barrier to lowering Rx drug prices. **Brendon Blake** stated there are a number of barriers and outside of advertising Rx drug manufacturers heavily invest in lobbying which makes it harder to fight. Another tactic employed by the Rx drug manufacturers is saying that they need the higher prices to help fund research for the cure to cancer and Alzheimer's disease. There are financial incentives to research certain cures.
- **Steve Wagner** stated his gratitude for giving light to an issue of this gravity and bringing clarity to the situation and the major impact this has on the aging population of Arizona.

### Workgroup Update

- **Terri Spitz, Chair**, introduced **Steve Wagner** for an update from the Aging and Community workgroup. He stated that the group accomplished all but 2 of their objectives as a workgroup. The only two left are dementia education and training programs in collaboration with Adult Protective Services of DES. They are also working on creating dementia education programs for first responders and still working with DES to complete these. In other news, the Arizona Fall Prevention Coalition is excited to announce their education community is moving forward with fall recovery programs in collaboration with the University of Arizona. They are working on a robust plan that includes video content and other useful resources that could be given to caregivers and care professionals to appropriately help someone after a fall in a dignified manner.

### Councilmember & Liaison Roundtable

- **Terri Spitz, Chair**, began with her own update from the Alzheimers Association since June is Alzheimer's Awareness Month. They are working on a do-it-yourself event called "The Longest Day" on June 21. It represents and shines a light on the caregiver for all the hours they put into taking care of those living with Alzheimer's. They held an education conference in early June where they had around 400 people in attendance virtually and will continue to do these virtually since it reaches more people. They are prepping for the third "Women Conquer All" event in September which is virtual but will also have watch parties across the state. An upcoming concert later this summer from the dementia group that has been practicing in their office all year.
- **Terri Spitz, Chair**, introduced **Barbara Marshall** for an update from the Maricopa County Attorney's Office (MCAO). **Barbara** had no updates.
- **Terri Spitz, Chair**, introduced **Belinda Akes**. **Belinda** shared the article again regarding the Meals and Art program they are doing. She shared that she has the new position of Chair for the Pinal Gila Council for Seniors.
- **Terri Spitz, Chair**, introduced **Bert Ijams** for an update from the Prescott Meals on Wheels. **Bert** stated the real challenge of conducting business due to inflation and gas since they are driving all day. Even though they served a record number of in-home meals this year, looking at the next year's budget is daunting due to the current economic climate. They reimburse their drivers per mile and with the recent federal increase in the reimbursement rate, it's going to be a particular challenge in the coming future. They are very excited about the companionship program that allows for a concentrated session between the volunteers and the seniors.
- **Terri Spitz, Chair**, introduced **Carol Brown** for an update from the Western Arizona Council of Governments (WACOG) Area Agency on Aging. **Carol Brown** discussed Elder Abuse Awareness Day as it is a high priority for their office. They are looking for ways and tools to be heavily involved in advocacy and raise local awareness. Things opened up during this year due to having proclamations in each of their area's

cities, connecting with all senior centers, and having them have a personal recognition of the day. Also, WACOG made bookmarks and elder abuse prevention brochures in Spanish and English to hand out at events. Working on advocacy issues at local, state, and national levels. Each of us has the chance to stop elder abuse and sometimes all it takes is a call. Volunteer shortages are coming to the forefront as they are no longer able to keep up with the demand of the communities.

- **Terri Spitz, Chair**, introduced **Lisa O'Neill** for an update from The University of Arizona Center on Aging. **Dr. O'Neill** attended and praised the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Conference. They received funding money to work on geriatric workforce enhancement programs focusing on certification and enhanced geriatric training for CNTs, EMTs, and Physical Therapy Assistants. She had a call with Sen. Kelly where they discussed silver alerts and GACA's involvement with the original bill when it was passed; they want to make sure this program is continued in the future.
- **Terri Spitz, Chair**, introduced **Barbara Chavira (Proxy for Lela Alston)** who is putting together information for the CLPA event in October to give to everyone.
- **Terri Spitz, Chair**, introduced **Shelli Silver** for an update from the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS). They are working on the American Rescue Plan Act which has \$5 million for strengthening and expanding community-based home services. Working to get additional payments out of the door to providers and are waiting on CMS information so they can get bonus payments out to providers. Specifically wanting to get payments out to those service providers serving and living on tribal lands but still waiting on approval. The Public Health Emergency has been extended by another 90 days which means it will be extended into about mid-October, haven't finalized this yet but highly likely. This is an important date to keep in mind for AHCCCS since it does not allow them to unenroll someone in the program.
- **Terri Spitz, Chair**, introduced **Steve Wagner** for an update from The RightCare Foundation. The Arizona Attorney General's Taskforce Against Senior Abuse recently had a meeting of their Health and Safety committee in which they are looking to nominate a Co-Chair. It will be determined at their next meeting which is at 1 pm on Tuesday, June 21, 2022, if the council members would like to attend. Seconded **Carol Brown's** acknowledgment of the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of seniors. Only 1 in 24 cases of abuse, neglect, and exploitation are reported so more attention is needed. Shared a personal experience from a shift of his job as a firefighter where they helped a senior who had unknowingly left their care facility to everyone there to showcase the intensity and lasting impact of ailments like dementia.
- **Terri Spitz, Chair**, introduced **Teresa Manygoats**, for an update from the Department of Health Services Healthy Aging Program, Office of Chronic Diseases. She relayed that the Department is getting ready to release their ADHS Suicide Prevention Plan. This was put together to support AHCCCS's grant application process for the new emergency hotline for Suicide prevention that will soon come out at a national level. They had over 100 participants from across the state at their most recent stakeholder meeting. The Department plans to hold another Strategic Planning period to develop a 2-3 year Action Plan which will be available on their website later this week. She encouraged council members to take part in the external stakeholder meetings as they will allow another Strategic Planning session and timeline for the next strategic plan. **Carol Brown** stated that this new Suicide Prevention Plan will start July 16, 2022, and the new hotline is 988 for mental health emergencies.
- **Terri Spitz, Chair**, introduced **Virginia Rountree** for an update from the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES). DES has been experienced a lot of turnover but she is happy to announce that they are starting to fill the positions most importantly an Aging administrator in the Aging and Disability Services unit while also filling other necessary supportive roles. The State Plan on Aging is in the approval process with DES and did have a public comment period that led to some changes. The plan is due to ACL on July 1, 2022, and to the Governor's office shortly after that. They are working with Triple-A's on their individual area plans to tie their area-specific goals to the larger state plan with some flexibility of goals based on region. Received extra ombudsman funding (~\$411,000) from the American Rescue Plan to primarily report on cases of abuse and neglect in adult care homes and assisted living facilities while providing an array of other services. ACL sent out a survey to learn how aging networks collaborate and see the efficacy of their programming. It has gone out to Triple-A partners and state agencies which will soon have the results sent

to the council. Very happy with the 160 in-person turnouts and positive feedback for the World Elder Abuse Conference.

- **Terri Spitz, Chair**, introduced **Nicole Baker** for an update from the Department of Veteran Services. They opened applications a couple of months ago for their Veteran Home in Yuma and should be able to admit residents starting in September. Has incredible Yuma community support rallying around the home and providing it with the resources they need plus good volunteer support. Veteran Benefit counselors have expanded their itinerant sites to 12 across the state while still offering virtual appointments as well. The department has a financial assistance program offered to all Veterans to help with basic needs. Seeing lots of first-time unsheltered veterans coming into the housing system, the Department of Veteran Services has contributed a majority of its financial service program funds to housing and utility costs. Combining inflation and housing costs, housing vouchers are no longer as impactful. Putting together a pilot program for 6 months to see their veterans who have the most critical financial and medical needs, placing them in a program with increased case management that allows for them to have temporary housing. Next, find a permanent housing situation that fits their needs the best whether that is a nursing home or specialized nursing facility. **Carol Brown** asked for a specific date in September for the opening of the home in Yuma. **Nicole Baker** said it will open on September 12, 2022.
- **Terri Spitz, Chair**, introduced **Bonita Imus** who discussed updates from the American Indian workgroup that met last month; a presentation on connecting dementia experts with Native American communities, a presentation of the ITCAAAA FY 2022 budget and annual reports, the ITCAAAA project, and services overview, upcoming awareness for Older Americans Month. Looking to recruit tribal representatives for the NACoA Board from each of the 21 tribes. Releasing the investigative reports into the federal Indian boarding schools. The next NACoA meeting which is still all virtual is scheduled for July 7, 2022, at 10 am going over Grandparents raising grandkids, dementia awareness programming, and AAPI grants.

#### Upcoming Meeting

- **Terri Spitz, Chair**, reminded Councilmembers to mark their calendars for their next meeting on August 10, 2022, in a hybrid format, with in-person and virtual options. The Aging and Community workgroup met right after the general session. Council members were asked to take a photo together in honor of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

#### Adjournment

- **Terri Spitz, Chair**, thanked everyone for being part of the meeting and asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.
  - **Carol Brown** moved to adjourn.
  - **Steve Wagner** seconded the motion.
  - The motion passed with no dissenting votes and the meeting adjourned at **11: 58 a.m.**

Dated 17 of June 2022  
Governor's Advisory Council on Aging  
Respectfully Submitted By:  
Kainoa Spenser  
GOYFF