

**TRI-COUNTY OFFICE ON AGING
ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD MEETING**

Minutes

May 19, 2025, 3:30 PM

Members Present:

Mark Meadows, Vice Chair	John Andrews	Scott Hansen
Mark Mudry	Jeanne Pearl-Wright	Trini Pehlivanoglu
Bob Peña	Lucianna Solis	Dwight Washington

Members Absent:

Irene Cahill, Chair	Ryan Kost	Thomas Morgan
Chris Swope		

Staff:

Carl Buonodono	Casey Cooper	Heather Febres-Cordero
Kirsten Laing	Kate Long	Andrea Radel
Joe Reeves		

Guests:

Daniel Black, Lansing 48915	Annette Gamez, Bureau of Aging, Community Living, and Supports
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Item #1. Call to Order:

M. Meadows called the meeting to order at 3:31 pm.

Item #2. Introductions

Item #3. Approval of the May 19, 2025 Agenda:

D. Washington motioned to accept and approve the May 19, 2025 agenda.

J. Pearl-Wright supported. **Motion carried.**

Item #4. Minutes from the March 17, 2025 Meeting:

B. Peña motioned to accept and approve the March 17, 2025 minutes. **M.**

Mudry supported. **Motion carried.**

Item #5. Public Comment:

Mr. Black stated that he was looking forward to meeting with some Board members regarding issues regarding his case.

Item #6. Director's Report:

A. Radel shared federal updates and advocacy opportunities.

In late March and early April, we became aware of significant structural changes

underway at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), including a planned reduction of 10,000 employees and extensive organizational restructuring. These developments are expected to have far-reaching implications for the delivery and administration of aging-related services.

We are already experiencing disruptions in funding as a result. The Federal Notice of Awards have yet to be issued following the passage of the Continuing Resolution on March 14, 2025. As of now, we have only received federal funds through the end of March, and we do not anticipate receiving funding for several more weeks. Meanwhile, all available State funds have been allocated through June 30, 2025. We appreciate the support and partnership with our State Unit on Aging, ACLS Bureau, during this funding disruption. There have been no service delivery disruptions at this point.

Other Key Changes at the Federal Level

One element of the restructuring at HHS, is the dismantling of the Administration for Community Living (ACL), which oversees programs under the Older Americans Act (OAA). Under the restructuring, ACL's responsibilities would be redistributed to multiple federal agencies, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF).

The Older Americans Act (OAA) was first established in 1965. It was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson on July 14, 1965, as part of his Great Society reforms aimed at eliminating poverty and racial injustice in response to concerns about a lack of community social services for older adults.

Draft FY2026 HHS Budget and Implications for the Aging Network

In mid-April, the draft FY2026 HHS budget was leaked, revealing a plan to dismantle the OAA's unified structure, distributing its programs across multiple federal agencies.

Specifically:

- Nutrition programs would move to Administration for Children & Families (ACF)
- All other OAA-funded services would shift to CMS

These changes threaten the integrity and effectiveness of the Area Agencies on Aging. The OAA was designed to be administered through a unified nationwide network of State Units on Aging, 614 Area Agencies on Aging and community-based partners. It has been administered this way since it was established through an act of Congress in 1965. Splitting these programs between multiple federal agencies would increase bureaucracy, reduce coordination and limit access to services that older adults and caregivers depend on daily.

Breaking up this structure threatens to undermine services such as:

- Meals on Wheels
- Medical transportation
- In-home care
- Elder abuse prevention
- And many other critical supports that enable older adults and caregivers to live safely and independently.

Additionally, the draft budget proposes eliminating several cornerstone programs,

including:

- Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (Evidence Based Programs)
- Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program
- State Health Insurance Assistance Program (Medicare Counseling)
- Aging and Disability Resource Centers
- Adult Protective Services

Medicaid Advocacy: A Critical Lifeline

Simultaneously, there is great concern about proposed cuts to Medicaid, which remains the only insurance coverage for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) like the MI Choice Waiver Program. Medicaid is also crucial in supplementing Medicare, helping cover premiums, co-pays, and services not covered under Medicare—including long-term care.

Key statistics:

- FY2024 total MI Choice participants statewide: 16,324
- FY2025 average MI Choice daily cost: \$114.58
- FY2025 average nursing facility daily cost: \$268.41(these rates are very conservative)

(Source: MDHHS & Michigan.gov, data as of January and September 2025)

These numbers underscore the cost-efficiency and essential nature of Medicaid-funded home-based care. In addition to supporting older adult independence and choice, Medicaid HCBS services provided a \$539 million cost savings for the state of Michigan alone and the Medicaid program in Fiscal Year 2023.

Despite these challenges, I want to reassure you that our Aging Network remains resilient, adaptive, and steadfast in our mission. We have served our communities for over 50 years, and we are fully committed to continuing that legacy—no matter what lies ahead.

Discussion followed.

Item #7. Advisory Council New Member Resolutions:

C. Cooper requested approval of the recommended TCOA Advisory Council agency seats for CATA and the MSU Kinship Care Resource Center. **J. Pearl-Wright**, supported by **B. Peña**, motioned to approve the TCOA Advisory Council agency appointments. **Motion carried.**

Item #8. Charity Golf Outing, June 11, 2025:

H. Febres-Cordero reminded the Board that the 37th Annual Meals on Wheels Charity Golf Outing will take place at Forest Akers West on Tuesday, June 11, 2025. We are looking for golfers and sponsors to join us. Please share event information with the community. Details: www.tcoa.org/tcoa-events. TCOA is also looking for swag bag item donations (qty 150). Contact Heather if you have a lead.

Discussion followed.

Item #9. FY 26 Annual Implementation Plan:

K. Long provided an overview of the Annual Implementation Plan, including any

updates from the public hearing and comments received, as well as next steps.

B. Peña made a motion to approve the plan. **M. Mudry** seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Item #10. Project Choices Report:

K. Laing provided the report on Project Choices programs, including an overview of the programs. The total participants and the wait lists are as follows:

Case Coordination (including Ingham County Elder Services Millage) –272 participants enrolled. The Case Coordination waitlist – 183.

Care Management – 81 participants.

MI Choice Waiver – 965 participants enrolled. The MI Choice Waiver waitlist – 313. Of those on the waitlist, 24 participants are awaiting transition from a nursing facility.

Building on compliance updates previously provided, K. Laing shared information on identifying regulatory risk, internal or external, which is another pillar of the TCOA compliance plan. In prior months, Board relationship to compliance and various reporting mechanisms were covered. External risks are items that the Office of Inspector General (OIG) requires us to monitor and internal risks are reports submitted through TCOA employees. Embedded within the MI Choice contract is OIG guidance and requirement to submit quarterly and annual reports. Compliance is ongoing.

Item #11. Nutrition Report:

C. Buonodono provided an update on the total participants in the Nutrition Program, as follows:

Home Delivered Meals – 1,113 participants. Eaton County currently has 8 individuals on the waiting list.

Carry Out Meals – 475 participants registered.

Congregate Dining – 649 participants registered.

C. Buonodono also provided a Senior Project Fresh overview and update. The program will launch with electronic benefit software effective June 1. TCOA is a Project Partner for the 2025 season.

Item #12. Financial Audit Firm Recommendation and Resolution:

J. Reeves gave an update on the Request for Proposals (RFP) process for the upcoming audit. The Finance Committee met recently to review the responses to the RFP and recommended to reengage with Maner Costersian. J. Reeves presented the Audit Firm resolution to have Maner Costersian for the audit firm for the next 3 years, FY2025, 2026 & 2027. **D. Washington**, supported by **J. Pearl-Wright** moved to approve the resolution. **Motion carried.**

Item #13. Finance Report:

A. February 2025: **J. Reeves** requested moving to the March financial reports. Permission granted.

B. March 2025: **J. Reeves** presented the March financial reports. A copy was provided in the board packet. **B. Peña** motioned to approve the

February and March financial reports. **J. Pearl-Wright** seconded. **Motion carried.**

Item #14. Disbursement Report and Resolution:

A. J. Reeves presented the March 2025 Disbursement Report and Register. A copy was provided in the board packet. **D. Washington** motioned to approve the March 2025 check ledger. **J. Pearl-Wright** seconded. Discussion followed. **Motion carried.**

B. J. Reeves presented the April 2025 Disbursement Report and Register. A copy was provided in the board packet. **B. Peña** motioned to approve the April 2025 check ledger. **J. Andrews** seconded. **Motion carried.**

Additional Discussion:

B. Peña shared information about Cristo Rey's Fiesta May 23 - May 25, 2025.

Mr. Black made an accommodation request.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:09 PM

Next meeting: July 21, 2025, at 3:30 PM