

*Chair  
Lee Ann Clark* *to follow up on report*

Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging (M4A)

Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 8, 2018

The M4A Board of Directors met on Thursday, November 8, 2018. Board members in attendance: Mr. Richard Lovelady (Chairman), Rev. Glenn Bynum (Vice-Chairman), Ms. Lee Ann Clark (Secretary), Ms. Gay West, Ms. Sherry Reaves, and Ms. Robyn Cobb. M4A Staff members in attendance: Ms. Carolyn Fortner (Executive Director), Ms. Tammy White (Fiscal Director), Ms. Crystal Crim (Administrative Director), Ms. Maranda Johnson (Director of Programs), and Ms. Robyn James (Marketing & Development Director).

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Richard Lovelady at 10:05 am. There were proxies (Judge Chris Green and Commissioner Tommy Bowers). The proxies were given to Rev. Glenn Bynum and Ms. Lee Ann Clark, respectively. A quorum was declared. Rev. Bynum led the prayer.

- A. Chairman Lovelady asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. West made a motion. It was seconded by Ms. Clark. All in favor; no one opposed.
- B. Chairman Lovelady asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the previous Board Meeting. Ms. Clark made a motion. It was seconded by Ms. Reaves. All in favor; no one opposed.

C. Executive Director's Report by Carolyn Fortner

- 1. Integrated Care Network and Slot Monitoring Report Update: Ms. Carolyn Fortner updated the Board on where M4A stands in relation to the other AAA's regarding our Medicaid Waiver slots. Currently, M4A has a maximum of 475 slots. Presently, 64 slots are listed as unfilled with 382 slots listed as active or with active clients. The state average for filled slots is 35% and M4A currently sits at 20%. This is not a concern at this time, due to there being valid reasons as to why M4A is currently at 20%. Specifically, M4A is down three Case Managers. All of the other Case Managers, as well as Ms. Maranda Johnson and Ms. Lisa Adams, are seeing additional clients. M4A has hired a part-time employee to assist with filling slots. Also, M4A is in the process of hiring three Case Managers at this time. Ms. Fortner also pointed out that RPCGB, the agency in Jefferson County that houses the Jefferson County Medicaid Waiver program, is currently at 17% filled. One reason for the low percentage may be that both M4A and RPCGB send client Medicaid applications through the Birmingham Medicaid District office. This office has a high application volume which may contribute to the slow rate of review, including approvals. Filling our slots is critical because if we do not fill them asap, both ADSS and our new partner, Alabama Senior Select, will take the slots away and redistribute. This will happen to any agency that does not fill its slots. All of the AAA's are attempting to fill all of their slots by the end of January 2019. This will allow Alabama Medicaid to

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release 821 additional slots and potentially over \$1 million in funds. If this occurs, M4A will receive additional slots. As all these changes have taken place, the Case Managers have not experienced a reduction in workload. They continue to do more paperwork and duplicate entries in multiple client management systems, as well as prepare for NCQA Accreditation. M4A does, however, have a plan of action to increase our filled slots.

Regarding funding for the month of October, M4A came out in the black. Ms. Tammy White discussed that M4A will be just over \$3,000 in the black for October. This number, per Ms. White, is interesting due to numerous retroactive bills due in October that came out in November. M4A had a slight overall “profit” in Medicaid Waiver in October even though the ACT (Alabama Community Transition) Waiver operated at a deficit. Because of the intense case management required for ACT clients, most if not all AAAs will operate ACT at a deficit which will have to be subsidized by any “profit” made in the Elderly & Disabled Waiver Program.

2. Nutrition Program Update: Ms. Fortner updated the Board on new developments with the Nutrition Program. Ms. Fortner discussed a letter she would like the Executive Board members to review, sign and allow her to forward to ADSS. She drafted this letter after hearing from several board members and local officials who called Ms. Fortner about their concerns and frustration with the operations and food quality of the new food service vendor, GA Food. A couple of board members had suggested a letter which Ms. Fortner said she would draft. The letter she drafted outlines the issues M4A has experienced with the new food service provider, GA Foods, as well as offers local assistance to help improve the situation. The following are the frequently reported food and operations issues: food not temping, food not being delivered or being delivered late, and partial meal orders being delivered (ordered 40 meals but received only 25 meals). Ms. Fortner explained further that, across the nation, only two states have statewide meal contracts: Alabama and Mississippi. Alabama was the first state to leverage its bargaining position to attempt to obtain the best meal price for the Elderly Nutrition Program and the Medicaid Waiver Program. By doing so, Alabama, which is a Medicaid state, was able to feed more people, a critical boon for the state that currently ranks 40 in senior food insecurity but only 21 in home-delivered meal service. Valley (which is based out of Jackson, MS) previously had Alabama’s statewide meal contract and still has Mississippi’s state contract. With that being said, Ms. Fortner asked the Board to review and vote on whether

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or not they would like to send a formalized letter to the Alabama Department of Senior Services (ADSS) regarding the matter. Ms. Fortner also discussed memos that M4A recently sent out to each center manager acknowledging the issues with the new food service vendor and asking for feedback on the issues center managers and participants may be experiencing.

3. Annual Operating Element: Ms. Fortner asked Ms. Crystal Crim to update the Board on the Annual Operating Element (AOE). Ms. Crim shared that M4A is on track to submit its AOE on November 19<sup>th</sup>. The AOE is an annual update of the agency's goals and objectives (as outlined in the four-year Area Plan), staffing requirements, Board composition, contractor agreements and emergency preparedness.
4. SCSEP Contribution: Ms. Fortner asked Ms. Tammy White to update the Board on the SCSEP Contributions. Ms. White shared that M4A has received \$21,000 in contributions from various Host Agencies. Last FY, M4A had a \$70,000 wish-list which was sent to SSAI for review. SSAI elected to pay 80% and M4A's local funds paid around \$13,000. As additional funds come in, M4A's wish-list may decrease.
5. ACL Priority Areas/Pillars: Ms. Fortner shared that, while attending the Alabama Association of Regional Councils (AARC) Conference recently, she learned about the focus areas for the Administration for Community Living or ACL. Those areas are: connecting people to resources, protecting rights and preventing abuse, expanding employment opportunities for older individuals and individuals with disabilities, supporting family caregivers, and strengthening our network. Other focus areas related to these include depression and the opioid crisis. Ms. Fortner shared that there is a lot of opportunity for the AAA's to assist with depression, via screenings. For instance, a AAA in Alabama trained their homebound meals volunteers to recognize signs of depression and report back to the AAA. This has allowed the AAA to partner with a local Psychiatrist's office to provide care in that region.
  - i. Ms. Fortner also provided a brief overview of the recent A4A retreat which focused on how the AAAs could leverage their NCQA accreditation to diversify funding sources. One topic that came up at the AAA Directors' (or A4A) retreat was Collaborative Care Management which M4A and other AAAs could provide and obtain reimbursement from Medicare.
  - ii. Regarding the opioid crisis, a Board Member (Ms. Lee Ann Clark) mentioned that she has been approached by several people in her community (St. Clair County) about this issue and what the

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Cooperative Extension could do. Ms. Clark asked that M4A consider being on a planning committee for addressing the opioid crisis in St. Clair County. M4A will follow-up with Ms. Clark.

- iii. Regarding elder abuse, Ms. Fortner informed the Board that M4A will be reviewing a potential grant that will support community efforts to educate about abuse later in life and to provide services to older individuals experiencing abuse later in life, including domestic and sexual violence.

D. Administrative Director Report by Crystal Crim

1. NCQA/IRT Submission: Ms. Crystal Crim shared that M4A has submitted its documentation for accreditation and is now in Phase II which entails having a file survey. M4A was approached by NCQA regarding having a virtual file survey. This has been scheduled for November 14<sup>th</sup>. The review will be for Medicaid Waiver Case Files. Presently, M4A is awaiting its IRT documentation score. We hope to know this score prior to our virtual survey.

E. Fiscal Report by Tammy White: Ms. Tammy White discussed the M4A Financial Report with the Board. FY 2018 was a good financial year for M4A.

- a. Local Funding was used a bit more than was budgeted, although the actual cash expended was less than we brought in on the local funds, so it was not overspent.
- b. In 2018, M4A was overspent in SSAI Title V by \$79,164.68. Of those funds, 80% were paid to M4A by SSAI making M4A's part \$13,000.
- c. SHIP continues to be overspent because the needs of the program outpace the funding that is provided by ACL.
- d. Regarding OMB, Ms. White shared that she separated the funding into outreach and survey in order to show the Board what is being spent. M4A has control over its ability to spend the outreach funds, but no control over its ability to spend the survey funds.
- e. M4A began spending its Living Well Alabama (LWA) funds. Ms. White and Ms. Maranda Johnson discussed LWA, the Chronic-Disease Self-Management program, and the M4A Walking Group.
- f. ACT Waiver was on the low end of its budget due to rebuilding the program. With the ICN in Alabama, the number of clients on the ACT Waiver Program is projected to increase.
- g. Elderly and Disabled Waiver services were reported at \$1 million lower than what was originally budgeted. However, this may, in part, be due to the new Electronic Visit Verification and Monitoring System (or EVVM) which, like so many innovations, was intended to increase efficiency and staff time. Instead, the

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electronic system has spawned a billing nightmare for vendors. Based on this, Ms. White shared that expenditures may not be as accurate as they should be.

- h. Personal Choices, which is reimbursed dollar for dollar, exceeded its FY 2018 budget and the program is growing. Currently, the program employs 1.5 FTEs.
  - i. Title III/VII: ADSS provided additional funds to Cares and Nutrition.
    - i. Nutrition: Majority of the funding in Nutrition has been spent.
    - ii. Cares: There continues to be a significant amount of funding left to spend in Cares; however, it will be spent in FY 2019. Part of the challenge with the Cares program is the dearth of service providers in the M4A region. Without service providers and workers, M4A is unable to set up respite services for caregivers which means M4A is unable to spend its allocated Cares funds. M4A is working to attract more service providers and to develop other projects to help caregivers.
  - j. Assistance with Independence and Mobility (AIM): AIM is a home safety and repair program newly developed by Jeremy Raines, M4A Special Projects Coordinator. AIM will help clients with ramps, grab-bars, etc. M4A's contractor (101 Mobility) will provide M4A with in-kind forms, as well as only charge the agency for supplies. Volunteers will complete the building projects. The ramps built and provided by 101 Mobility are mobile which means that once installed, the ramps (which are made of aluminum) can be easily uninstalled, when no longer needed, and either reinstalled or stored until needed.
- F. Program Report (handout): Ms. Maranda Johnson updated the Board on the programs at M4A.
- a. ADRC: In FY 2018, M4A's ADRC program completed 4,073 phone calls. Of those calls, 2,542 clients were screened for services. This resulted in 14,297 referrals. Currently, M4A has one Coordinator and 2 ADRC Specialists in this program.
  - b. Alabama Cares Program: In FY 2018, AL Cares assisted 98 caregivers with respite and 79 caregivers with supplemental supplies. During FY 2018, M4A hired a new AL Cares Coordinator. M4A has not spent all of its Cares funding; however, this is due to a decrease in direct service providers. M4A is actively looking for providers and workers. This FY, M4A developed 2 new DSP contract agreements. Cares also recently recorded 3 videos for Caregiver Month. These will be shared on our social media and in our newsletter. Regarding the Grandparent Program, M4A has gotten creative with how it spends its money, such as paying for extra-curricular activity fees, tutoring, camp, STEM courses, supplies, holiday items, etc. Ms. Crim shared that she will send the Board members information on the grandparent's program. She also shared that she and

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Mr. Jeremy Raines have been meeting with local schools, such as the Shelby County Board of Education and the Alabaster School Board, to secure MOUs for the program. She and Mr. Raines will be reaching out to M4A's other county Boards of Education so that grandparent services can be provided through these school systems, too.

- c. MWS Program: In FY 2018, the MWS Program helped 462 EDW consumers, 6 ACT consumers and 115 Personal Choices (PC) consumers. PC currently has 15 applications pending. M4A received an email recently that the agency will be getting funding to hire an in-house Transition Coordinator. We will know more about this in January 2019.
- d. Nutrition: In FY 2018, the Nutrition Program served 146,473 congregate meals and 266,997 homebound meals. Ms. White shared a trend that M4A has noticed with the Nutrition program.
- e. SenioRx: In FY 2018, the SenioRx program assisted 1,440 clients with medication. M4A's SenioRx program was ranked number one over all of the 13 AAA's in the state.
- f. SHIP: In FY 2018, SHIP has assisted 3,294 clients.
- g. Legal Services: In FY 2018, Legal assisted 378 seniors have received legal assistance and 944 seniors have attended outreach events from Jan Neal Law Firm in M4A's region.
- h. Ombudsman (OMB) Program: In FY 2018, OMB closed 154 cases. M4A recently hired a part-time employee to assist this program.
- i. Marketing Report by Robyn James:
  - i. Dementia Friendly: Ms. James updated the Board about M4A's progress on training law enforcement and first responders to be Dementia Friendly.
  - ii. Alabama Securities Commission: Ms. James shared M4A will receive funding from the Alabama Securities Commission to conduct four, six-hour, regional Dementia Friendly trainings across Alabama. The training will also include elder exploitation and mental health training components. Trainings will begin in February 2019.
  - iii. Pocket Card: Ms. James provided the Board members with M4A's new Pocket Cards. These cards have been, and will continue to be, disseminated throughout M4A's region directing potential clients to contact M4A. To date, M4A has distributed over 9,000 pocket cards. Other AAA's in Alabama are beginning to replicate this idea.
  - iv. Legal Guides: Ms. James shared that M4A has successfully completed the Legal Guides and they are ready to be shared with the community. M4A's SenioRx and Cares Programs each bought an ad on the back of two

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guides. M4A is continuing to look for businesses who want to advertise on our guides. She provided a few to each Board Member.


- G. Old Business: Board of Directors Nomination of FY 2019-2020 Executive Board Formal Vote: Ms. Gay West spoke on behalf of the Nominating Committee. She shared that Mr. Lovelady, Rev. Bynum and Ms. Clark had all been nominated to the Executive Board. They will serve as Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary, respectively. Rev. Bynum made a motion to accept the nominations. Ms. Reaves seconded the motion. All were in favor; no one opposed.
- H. New Business: Ms. Carolyn Fortner asked the Board to vote to approve signing and sending a letter the ADSS regarding the issues M4A is experiencing with GA Food. Ms. West made a motion to approve the letter. Ms. Reaves seconded. All were in favor; no one opposed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

The next Board meeting will be on February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 10:00am at M4A.

Approved:

  
Richard Lovelady, M4A Board Chairman

  
Date