

# Mayor's Council on African American Elders

C/O – Aging and Disability Services, Seattle-King County  
Mailing Address: PO Box 34215, Seattle WA 98124-4215  
Office Address: Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 5<sup>th</sup> Ave, 51<sup>st</sup> Floor  
(206)684-0706 \* TTY (206)684-0274 \* FAX (206)684-0689  
Website: [www.seattle.gov/MCAAE](http://www.seattle.gov/MCAAE)

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September 18, 2020

Zoom Meeting

**Members Present** – Brenda Charles-Edwards, Chair; Dr. Benjamin Abe, Dr. Brenda Jackson, Paul Mitchell, Mattie Taplin (Emeritus), Claudette Thomas

**Absent** – Janice Davis; Tricia Diamond, Ina Howell, Cynthia Winters

**Guests** – Senayet Woldermariam, Kline Galland Home, Maggie Harger, Hopelink

**ADS Staff** – Brent Butler, Cathy Knight, Mary Pat O'Leary, Karen Winston

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## I. Falls Prevention Presentation

ADS planner, Mary Pat O'Leary, and physical therapist, Senayet Woldermariam, provided a presentation on falls prevention. September is National Falls Prevention Awareness Month but it is usually recognized on the first day of fall.

### Falls and Fall Risk

- What is a fall? It is defined as an event that results in a person coming to rest inadvertently on the floor or other lower level.
- About 28% of WA residents over age 65 fall annually and less than half of talk to their doctors about it.
- Fall-related injuries account for more than half of all injury-related deaths of adults aged 65+, and 70% of all injury-related deaths for adults aged 85+.
- In 2018, there were 20,994 hospitalizations for falls among adults age 65+.
- In 2018, WA State had the 5th highest rate of self-reported falls and the 16th-highest rate of fall-related deaths in the nation for adults age 65+.
- From 2007 to 2017 fall death rates in the U.S. increased by 30% among older adults.
- Studies have shown there are several harmful long-lasting implications of falls - hospitalizations, significant injuries, prolonged pain, decreased independence.

### Fall Risk and Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias

- Alzheimer's disease and related dementias increase the risk for a fall.
- About 50% of those living with dementia experience falls every year.
- Dementia has been linked to several risk factors, including diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, socioeconomic characteristics, and lack of exercise.
- A single major stressful event in early life is equal to four years of cognitive aging.
- There are marked differences in the rates of dementia by racial/ethnic groups. African Americans are diagnosed at two times the rate when compared to Whites.

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**So, what can you do?**

Michael C. Patterson and Roger Anunsen are co-founders of [MindRAMPS Consulting](#). MindRAMPS is an organization dedicated to developing brain health programs that effectively prevent cognitive decline, delay the onset of dementia, and enhance mental capacity. MINDRAMPS organizes **eight protective factors** around key areas that promote brain health:

<b>Physical Exercise and Movement</b>	<p>Any type of regular physical activity is good, but...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balance and strengthening exercises are <u>key</u> components to fall prevention.</li> <li>• Intensity matters—the more the better.</li> <li>• Chair exercises count!</li> <li>• Key message =&gt; KEEP MOVING!</li> </ul>
<b>Mental Stimulation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental challenge builds healthy brain structures that can become a form of “Brain Reserve”</li> <li>• Brain exercises could help compensate for natural wear &amp; tear of the brain and thereby protect against decline.</li> </ul>
<b>Social Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human beings thrive when engaged with other living things and suffer when isolated and/or feeling lonely.</li> </ul>
<b>Stress Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chronic, unrelieved stress is toxic to our brains and bodies. It lowers our ability to fight illness and our ability to recover.</li> </ul>
<b>Diet and Nutrition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat a largely plant-based diet with daily fruits and vegetables.</li> <li>• Limit or avoid fried/processed foods.</li> <li>• Avoid overeating</li> <li>• Hydrate often!</li> </ul>
<b>Sleep and Mental Rest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our brains and bodies are restored and repaired during sleep.</li> <li>• Memory consolidation occurs during sleep.</li> <li>• Goal - 6 to 8 hours a night and “mindful” naps.</li> </ul>
<b>Medical Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medications</li> <li>• Vision/Hearing</li> <li>• Accessibility to care</li> <li>• Chronic illness</li> <li>• Get medications reviewed and eyes/hearing checked BEFORE a fall happens.</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of resources or clean conditions</li> <li>• Pollution</li> <li>• Home modifications</li> <li>• Assistive device</li> </ul>

Mattie announced that Sound Generations provides virtual Matter of Balance participatory classes and are available for anyone. The classes focus on strength and balance exercises. Contact Deidre to register at [deidred@soundgenerations.org](mailto:deidred@soundgenerations.org).

## II. MCAAE Chair Update

- Brenda reported that for in-service day AARP members were given 20 greeting cards (with a script) and asked to write to nursing home residents who are isolated. She said it was a good activity to let the residents know that someone cares.
- Brenda also reminded everyone to register to vote. The ballot will be mailed 18 days before the election. Mail it in early!

## III. ADS and COVID-19 Updates

Cathy started with good news regarding the legislation to transfer City ownership of the Central Area Senior Center and Byrd Barr Place to the community. The legislation for Byrd Barr Place had gone to the City Council's Finance and Housing Committee who voted to approve, and Full Council is scheduled to vote on Monday, September 21. Negotiations are still ongoing for CASC, but ownership transfer is in process!

### Federal

- There is a small group of both Democrats and Republicans in the House of Representatives who are working on an agreement for a smaller scale relief package that would include funding for state and local governments, but not sure if it is getting any traction. If something does not happen soon, there may not be a federal relief package before the election. Any relief from the federal government would help the dismal budget outlook for the state.

### State

- On September 16, DSHS submitted their decision package to the Office for Financial Management, the entity that develops the Governor's budget. The Governor's budget will be released in December. All state department decision packages had to include budget reductions.
- A stakeholder's letter was sent on September 15, from Bill Moss, Secretary for the Aging and Long-Term Support Administration. The letter included the impacts that budget cuts will have on people, a list of investments (e.g., PPEs, and other resources) and major cuts, primarily to the Medicaid long-term care budget. In WA State, 6,300 people could lose eligibility to receive those services at home. For King County, about 1,600 people could lose those in-home services.
- Other cuts could also impact people living in Adult Family Homes, Assisted Living facilities, and nursing homes, preventing them from being eligible for these services. The cuts will also impact people who need support after surviving from COVID-19. Overall, we are looking at potential cuts at a time when more people need more services and supports.
- AARP, one of the leaders in this fight, issued a press release. A letter was also sent to all legislators expressing the impact of the cuts and included several stories about clients served through Medicaid. The big push now is to try to convince the Governor to not add these cuts to his budget.
- In January, when the legislative session begins, legislators will be faced with really hard decisions to make regarding the budget. We, as advocates, will be pushing them to avoid cutting these critical services. Advocates like the MCAAE are more important than ever!

## COVID-19

- ADS case management staff continue to work remotely and are doing the best they can to keep clients safe.
- With the additional funding we received to respond to needs created by the pandemic, ADS has ramped up food delivery services, since congregate food sites are closed. Many older adults are now getting groceries and meals delivered.
- The immediate concern is the upcoming flu season and the depletion of the emergency funding.

**Question:** Would an advocacy letter from the MCAAE to the governor and state legislators be appropriate at this time?

**Answer:** Yes. The important point to make is the issue regarding racial disparities and inequities, and the disproportionate impact budget cuts would have on communities of color.

## Age Friendly

- Brent started with highlights from the **Age Friendly virtual Civic Coffee Hours**, held every third Thursday of the month (except December). These events bring community elders closer to local government officials to explore topics of interest. Guests learn about issues, programs, and services, and officials hear from the community. The September 17 program featured a conversation with Sam Zimbabwe, director of the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT).
- Brent also talked about "**Close to Home: Stories of Health, Tech, and Resilience.**" The program is a new series of online events presented by Age Friendly Seattle and features information and resources for older people, caregivers, and their families. All programs are available on [Age Friendly Seattle](#) website. Dr. Abe will be featured on the program on October 8<sup>th</sup>. Below are past shows that featured MCAAE members.
  - Close to Home Ep15 - 9/10/20: **Traffic Safety & Grandparents Day Preview**  
Featured guests: Brenda Charles Edwards & LaNesha DeBardelaben
  - Close to Home Ep14 - 9/3/20: **R.O.O.T.S. Family Picnic Celebration**  
Featured guests: MCAAE member Paul Mitchell and William Lowe
  - Close to Home Ep6 - 6/11/20 - **Creative Aging: Radio, Recipes & Notary Services.** Featured guest: MCAAE chair, Brenda Charles Edwards
- Brent shared information about [Community Living Connections](#). Community Living Connections is a network that helps adults facing aging and disability issues get the information and support they need to make informed decisions. It is considered the front door to accessing the network of aging programs and services in King County. The program serves older adults, adults with disabilities, their caregivers, families, and professionals. Community Living Connections is supported by ADS. Should you or someone you know need assistance, the number to call is 206-962-8467 or toll free 1-844-348-5464, or visit the website at [info@communitylivingconnections.org](mailto:info@communitylivingconnections.org). All services are free and confidential.

#### **IV. Committee Reports**

##### African Immigrant Outreach

- Dr. Abe reported that he and Brent have reached out to three community leaders from East Africa, Uganda, and Kenya. They hope to have meetings scheduled soon. There are many older adults from these communities that need assistance and would benefit from the information provided about falls prevention.
- Dr. Abe also talked about the continued need for property tax assistance. He recommended continued advocacy on behalf of struggling homeowners.
- Dr. Abe also talked about his participation in the 2020 Maafa Commemoration. Maafa is a Kiswahili term for disaster, calamity, or terrible occurrence. It refers to the Black Holocaust as millions of Africans and African Americans have died during the journey of captivity from Africa to the shores of the Americas, known as the Middle Passage. The annual Maafa event was created as an African centered commemoration in honor of African ancestors and loved ones who have died.

##### Grandparents Day Planning Committee

- Brenda reported on the wonderful September 13<sup>th</sup> Grandparents Day event. The virtual event partners included AARP, the Northwest African American Museum (NAAM), and the Aging and Disability Services Division of the Seattle Human Services Department. About 30 people participated in the fun and interactive event. Alesia Cannady delivered an excellent keynote address about her experiences as a kinship caregiver, and the program she founded - Women United - that assists grandparents raising their grandchildren.

##### Holiday Planning Committee

- Mattie reported that the virtual holiday party is scheduled for Friday, December 18. She recommends inviting organizations to learn about their programs and 2020 highlights and accomplishments. Suggested organizations could include Kent Black Action Committee, WA State African American Commission, Black Lives Matter, NAAM, Byrd Barr Place, Center for MultiCultural Health, Hopelink, etc.
- We can also provide information about Community Living Connections and/or have a motivational speaker to excite us about 2021.
- Mattie would like to create a Save-the-Date flyer to share with the above-mentioned organizations.

Hopelink – Maggie is working on a SDOT partnership to do more outreach with a few senior centers. If anyone knows other groups that may be interested in learning more about transportation with COVID and meal deliveries, let her know.

Advocacy for African American Elders Program (AAEP) Nurse – No report.

Property Tax Assistance Committee – No report

## **V. October Meeting Agenda**

Karen suggested a follow-up presentation from the Mayor's staff who facilitated the MCAAE engagement session regarding the SPD budget. Input from the commissions involved were summarized in a report. Karen will ask if someone can present it at the October meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m. The next virtual meeting is scheduled for Friday, October 16, at 2:00 p.m.