

Mayor's Council on African American Elders

C/O – Aging and Disability Services, Seattle-King County
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October 16, 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 – Tara Bostock, WA. State Dept. of Health's COVID-19 Community Engagement Taskforce; Ann Shields, Seattle-King County Public Health

ADS Staff – Brent Butler, Cathy Knight, Maria Langlais, Karen Winston

I. MCAAE Responses to Questions re COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution

Tara Bostock, Health Educator, and Health Communication Lead in the Washington State Dept of Health (DOH) COVID-19 Community Engagement Taskforce is doing outreach for the COVID-19 vaccine planning. The department is currently in the process of gathering input from people who have been impacted the most by COVID-19 to hear what their recommendations are for prioritizing the vaccine across Washington State. It is anticipated that when a coronavirus vaccine is approved and released there will not be enough, at first, to offer it to everyone. DOH is committed to getting feedback from communities, partners, organizations, businesses, and governmental agencies about vaccine prioritization and thoughts about the COVID-19 vaccine in general.

After the engagement process, a list of recommendations will be developed and sent to DOH leadership who will finalize the prioritization and allocation for the vaccine. There will also be a Vaccine Implementation Committee that community members can join. If anyone is interested, let Tara know. DOH is in the early stages of the engagement process, so this is not the only opportunity to provide input.

Question #1 – Until there is enough vaccine for everyone, DOH will have to make difficult decisions about who will get the vaccine first. What should DOH think about when making these decisions?

- I think African American older adults should get it first since they are being impacted more.
- Depends on how much of the vaccine will be available and what the side effects are.
- I would like to first know who developed the vaccine and who is endorsing it.
- I think people in their homes or in the hospital, who are already suffering from it, should get the vaccine first.

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- Until a lot more people take it and have no side-effects, then I would consider taking it.
- From an immigrant African perspective, there is a lot of anxiety about the vaccine and drugs in general. We remember the history of the polio trials conducted in Africa. People went missing and there was a lot of fear.

Question #2 – Do you have any concerns about the COVID-19 vaccine?

- It usually takes years for a vaccine to be developed. I am concerned about a vaccine being developed by March 2021. I would not take it.
- Everyone I know would not take it. We are going to wait.

Question #3 – What would make you more comfortable about taking the COVID-19 vaccine?

- After I have seen and heard on the news that many people are doing well after taking the vaccine, without any side effects, then I would feel more comfortable about taking it. I would need to see results first.
- I do not even take the flu shot. I have only taken the pneumonia vaccine. I would have to see that people who took the vaccine are okay first, then I might consider. I do not take anything that I am unsure about. I am not a guinea pig.
- The only side effect that would be acceptable is, like the flu shot, a little soreness in the arm or maybe a little rash, but anything that could potentially impact my neurological system, I would not take it.
- There would have to be years of study before I would take it.
- Yes, and because the vaccine has been rushed, there would have to be a lot of information provided to convince everyone that it is safe and effective.

Question #4 – What do you need from the WA. Department of Health to have more confidence and trust in taking a vaccine?

- Knowing what company developed it, their reputation, and their timeline for creating it.
- A lot of visibility of BIPOC who have taken the vaccine without experiencing any harm. We need to see the effectiveness first in order to trust it.
- I have noticed in most studies they start in low-income communities to get subjects for experiments. For me to trust, start at the top. Let the doctors be the subjects first.
- Re a-symptomatic people – How can having a vaccine protect us from people who are a-symptomatic and do not think they need the vaccine? I think everyone should be mandated to have a test.
- I would need to have complete disclosure about what is in a vaccine, in laymen’s terms, so that we can understand it.

Question #5 – What can we do to make it easy for people to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

- Transparency.
- When my doctor recommends that I should take it, I will take it.
- Distribute it in the same way the flu shot is offered. Everyone should have a choice to take it or not.

Question #6 – Regarding the distribution phases, do you agree with the way the groups are prioritized and are there any other facts to consider?

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High risk health workers • First responders <p>Phase 1b</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People of all ages with comorbid and underlying conditions that put them at significantly higher risk • Older adults living in congregate or overcrowded settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K 12 teachers and school staff and childcare workers • Critical workers in high risk settings, workers who are in industries essential to the functioning of society and at substantially higher risk of exposure • People of all ages with comorbid and underlying conditions that put them at moderately higher risk • People in homeless shelters or group homes for individuals with disabilities, including serious mental illness, DDI, and physical disabilities, or in recovery, including staff • People in prisons, jails, detention centers, and similar facilities, and staff who work in such settings • All older adults not included in phase 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young adults • Children • Workers in industries and occupations important to the functioning of society and at increased risk of exposure not included in Phase 1 or 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone residing in the United State who did not have access to the vaccine in previous phases
<p>Equity is a cross cutting consideration Each population group, vaccine access should be prioritized for geographic areas identified through the CDC s Social Vulnerability Index or another more specific index.</p>			

- If kids go back to schools, teachers should be a priority in Phase 1.

II. MCAAE Chair Update

- Medicare enrollment started October 15 and will end on December 7, 2020.
- Mount Zion Baptist Church (MZBC) offers a food drive thru every Friday. Starting next October 20, Demetrius Jazz Alley is partnering with MZBC will be providing 200 meals for free, from 12 to 2 p.m.
- Expect a small cost-of-living raise starting in 2021.
- Fraud alert – Reminder to change passwords regularly and to write them down.

III. ADS and COVID-19 Updates

State

- Cathy reported that we are still in a holding pattern re the budget cuts proposals. Based on the September forecast, the deficit is not are large as anticipated, but the Governor is waiting or the November forecast. His budget will be released in December.

- On Wednesday, October 14, Cathy attended the Joint Legislative Executive Committee on Aging and Disability issues, where Bill Moss presented the same budget proposal which includes a 15 percent cut for the DSHS budget. About 60 people provided testimony about the devastating impact of the proposed cuts.
- At last month's meeting, MCAA members agreed to submit a letter to Governor Inslee regarding the proposed budget cuts and the disproportionate impact it would have on communities of color. Cathy reported that the letter was submitted to the Governor's staff and that Mayor Durkan also received a copy.
- Cathy shared the agenda and information about the upcoming W4A/SCOA statewide virtual event on Wednesday, October 21. Information will focus on the proposed cuts and the importance of our joint advocacy on issues effecting older adults in Washington State. Members were encouraged to attend.

City

- The mayor presented her budget for 2021 on September 29th. Then, on September 30, HSD director, Jason Johnson, presented what the Mayor's proposed budget would mean for HSD. The budget includes a plan to move funding from the Seattle Police Department, for 10 Domestic Violence Advocates and one Elder Abuse Advocate, to HSD. This is consistent with the perspective of taking items out of a law enforcement mentality, and into social services support for victims. The three other positions MCAA advocated, the Elder Abuse Detectives, sadly, only one will move to HSD. The other two were reassigned. The City Council will approve the final budget by Thanksgiving.

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.

Age Friendly

- Brent started with highlights from the **Age Friendly virtual Civic Coffee Hour**.
 - The October 23 program will feature a conversation with Mayor Jenny Durkan.
 - On Friday, October 30, from 2 p.m.–3:30 p.m., will be the last of three LGBTQ+2S online panel presentations focused on the BIPOC experience with vaccines and vaccination trials. The panel presentation will support enrollment in research studies among the populations disproportionately impacted.
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IV. Committee Reports

African Immigrant Outreach

- Brent reported on the excellent presentation provided by Paul Kamani, NW Kenyan Association and Dr. Abe, on the October 8, Close to Home Program. They discussed difficulties and obstacles in moving community members from informal services, provided by family and community, to formal programs and services.

Property Tax Exemption Committee

- Brenda reported that in 2019, the state legislature passed legislation to expand the qualifying income thresholds for the property tax exemption and deferral programs for low-income older adults, people with disabilities, and veterans, beginning in 2020. As a result, the King County Assessor's Office reported that applications for property tax exemptions increased by 500 percent, creating a significant backlog. Therefore, King County is extending the second half payment for property taxes until January 31, 2021, for individuals who have a senior citizen or disabled person property tax exemption applications mailed or filed on or before October 19, 2020, or do not pay their property taxes through a lender. Affected property owners will be contacted by mail and will need to need to notify the Assessors Office to opt-in to this program.

Holiday Planning Committee

- Mattie reported that the virtual holiday party is scheduled for Friday, December 18. She is working with Karen on creating a Save-The-Date.
- If members have recommendations on what organizations to invite, let her or Karen know, by the end of October. We also still need to recommendations about who to invite as a guest speaker. We would like have a motivational speaker.
- Members were encouraged to invite friends to join and also potential MCAAE members.

Advocacy for African American Elders Program (AAEP) Nurse

- Cathy reported that the department realizes the need for a nurse and is still looking for a way to fund a nurse for the program.

Hopelink – Maggie informed members of the new Orca Pass for people who qualify for SSI, starting October 15.

V. November Meeting Agenda

Karen will confirm Public Health: Seattle-King County to present the latest information about COVID-19 it at the November meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m. The next virtual meeting is scheduled for Friday, November 20, at 2:00 p.m.