

Mayor's Council on African American Elders

C/O – Aging and Disability Services, Seattle-King County
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May 20, 2022

Members Present – Dr. Benjamin Abe, Charlotte Antoine, Pamela Williams, Paula Williams, Paul Mitchell, Claudette Thomas

Members Absent – Sheila Mary, Dr. Brenda Jackson

Guests – Margaret Boddie, Edna Daigre

HSD/ADS Staff – Mary Mitchell, ADS Interim Director, Dinah Stephens, Karen Winston

I. Foundation for MCAAE Priorities: A look at Local Data on African Americans Age 60+

Myduc Ta, Epidemiologist Public Health: Seattle-King County, and Karen Winston, Sr. Planner, Aging and Disability Services, presented local data on African American older adults in King County. (See PowerPoint slider included as a separate document.)

Key Take-Aways

- Growth in older adults 60+ population occurred in north and south (urban and rural combined) King County subregions.
- Older adults of color in King County, including African American experience elevated rates of:
 - Disability
 - Poverty, especially in combined south urban and rural areas
 - Housing cost burden, regardless of whether they rent or own their homes
 - Chronic disease deaths, and
 - Lower life expectancy
- Social Determinants of Health – Acknowledges that health is shaped by many factors and **health equity is achieved when every person can attain their full health potential.**
- Public Health continues to work toward equity where every person can attain good health.

To reference data resources, visit the websites below:

- **ADS Area Plan:** www.agingkingcounty.org/data-reports/area-plan
- **African American Alzheimer's Fact Sheet:** www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/dementia-action-collaborative
- **Community Health Indicators:** www.kingcounty.gov/chi
- **Health Disparities Dashboard:** <https://www.communitiescount.org/health-disparities-dashboard>
- **King County, WA COVID 19 race/ethnicity dashboard:** <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/covid-19/data/race-ethnicity.aspx>

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Questions

1. **Why is there high mortality death rate for diabetes? Does it mean they are tested and being treated, or just ignored?**

Response: Data from death certificates does not allow us to answer the why. Instead, it allows us to describe the who, the what, and where, about what's going on in this population. It would require additional studies or other data sources to understand what the contributing factors are. By looking at the social determinants of health, reasons can be due to social and economic factors, how opportunities are structured in our society (i.e., are not the same for everyone) including access to medical care.

2. **Does the data include information from long-term care facilities?**

Response: This data is from death certificates that are compiled by the state. The state then sends data to the CDC, and the CDC compiles all death certificate data and returns it back to state agencies.

3. **What does “essential primary” mean?**

Response: Essential primary refers to the main cause of an individual's death, which is often high blood pressure (HBP). For example, it may be listed as pneumonia, but the essential primary is HBP.

4. **Does healthy eating, exercise, and lowering your stress levels help to avoid getting diseases?**

Response: Yes, it helps and there are studies that have proven their effectiveness.

Comments/Discussion: What are potential activities, strategies, and partnerships the MCAAE can pursue to address these disparities?

- Community clinics are not offering the same level of care. There is a lack of consistency. I used to go to the International Community Health Center but switched to a new doctor at Neighbor Care. I noticed that I am not getting the same level of services at Neighbor Care. For example, they didn't have the shingles shot or the COVID booster shot, and I can't get my blood drawn and receive the results on the same day. I think health outcomes are related to where/who is providing your health care.
- Having the knowledge of what's available is also an issue for our people. Not everyone understands Medicare/Medicaid options or may not have the right contacts to get the information.
- Prevention is key—especially for high blood pressure, which can lead to heart disease and strokes. Many individuals have had HBP for years and didn't know it, and when it was finally diagnosed, many drugs were prescribed to address it.
- Education, promoting awareness, and screenings are important, especially for HBP.

- How diligent are studies related to health? They seem to have preconceived outcomes for African Americans. For example: At a recent appointment, the doctor was surprised by how good my blood pressure was. When I asked why, the response was, “It’s usually high among your people.” That comment was not very professional.
- Prevention is key and doctors must give us a regimen to follow to prevent and/or manage chronic conditions. Don’t just tell us that we are sick. Tell us what we can do to get better and/or better manage a chronic conditions.
- A lot of times we are not getting the information because we do not ask. It is important to be prepared with questions at medical appointments and tell them to explain it in lay terms and not medical terms. It is also good to take someone with you.

II. Digital Equity Learning Network

- Charlotte reported that the DELN is working to expand Cyber Seniors and is working to identify students who would like to assist older adults with learning to navigate the internet.
- Claudette also noted that the Goodwill is giving away free computer notebooks. Call the 206-424-4976 to determine if you qualify.

III. ADS Updates

- The Washington Association of Area Agencies on Aging (W4A) was able to secure about \$37.5 million in funding for the state-wide case management program. Through our advocacy the amount was \$25 million, and the state put forward an additional \$13 million. Currently we are negotiating with the state to determine how the funds will be dispersed among the 13 Area Agency on Aging (AAA) in WA state.
- Internally, ADS is working on a strategic plan. The plan will allow us to move forward thoughtfully in addressing staffing, determining where additional support is needed, and strengthening relationships with our community partners.

IV. Seattle Age Friendly Updates – Tabled for the June meeting.

V. Announcements

- Congratulations to **Margaret Boddie**, AAEP Program Manager, for being the WINNER of the 2022 Inspire Positive Aging Award – Health & Wellness category! Well deserved!

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m. The next meeting will be on **Friday, June 17, 2022.**