

Mayor's Council on African American Elders

C/O – Aging and Disability Services, Seattle-King County
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April 17, 2020
Zoom Meeting

Members Present – Benjamin Abe; Tricia Diamond; Brenda Charles-Edwards; Ina Howell; Paul Mitchell; Mattie Taplin (Emeritus); Claudette Thomas; Cynthia Winters

Absent –Janice Davis; Dr. Brenda Jackson

Guests – Edna Daigre, Lynda Greene, SESSC Director

ADS Staff – Brent Butler, Cathy Knight, Lenny Orlov, Karen Winston

I. Introductions

MCAAE members shared how they are handling the Stay at Home Order. Southeast Seattle Senior Center director, Lynda Greene, shared that the center is closed, but delivering up to 75 meals daily. The center's social worker, Jaime Clark, conducts daily wellness check-ins with members, and she is also available for counseling at 206-722-0317.

II. MCAAE Chair Update

Brenda reported that the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) reports Covid-19 related criminal activity has exploded since January. As of April 15, the FTC has received 18,235 reports of Covid-19 related fraud. The total loss was reported to be \$13.44 million. Types of fraud include:

- Fraudulent goods and services, including shoddy or non-existent masks, hand sanitizer, and other personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Scams involving test kits, “home testing” and “cures”
- The occurrence of “pop-up testing” locations
- Texts and emails announcing mandatory COVID-19 testing or certification that testing has occurred, and the recipient has tested positive for the virus
- Social media ads, emails and text barrages offering to “assist” people in qualifying or receiving stimulus checks
- Imposter calls from a local or state government agency or the IRS to “verify” recipient's data
- A large increase in general IRS scams texts and emails is being reported.

AARP is hosting a webinar on Wednesday, April 22, at noon, **Protect Yourself from Fraud and Identity Theft**. You will need to register to receive the log-in information. An option to join by telephone only is also available. Copy this link into your browser to register - <https://bit.ly/2RQADTe>.

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III. ADS COVID-19 Update

Cathy provided the following updates:

COVID-19

- All Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) throughout the country received federal funds to address issues created by the COVID-19 outbreak, and ADS is working to support community partners. The funding can be used through 2021.
- An article appeared in the Seattle Times – *These helpers are fighting the coronavirus by delivering hot lunches and groceries to Seattle area seniors*, <https://bit.ly/3cu7dlq>.
- ADS staff are currently working to get personal protective equipment (PPE) for caregivers.

IV. COVID-19 and African Americans

MCAAE members read the following articles before the meeting:

1. *What the COVID-19 Pandemic Means for Black Americans*, <https://bit.ly/2yRhbyY>
2. *Poor, Older Black Americans Are an Afterthought in the COVID-19 Crisis*, <https://bit.ly/2yRGvF4>
3. *King County Race & Ethnicity Summary*, <https://bit.ly/3chGJ6y>

The articles summarize how African Americans in the U.S. are dying at higher rates when compare to other groups. This is happening to individuals who live in poor, vulnerable communities, and lack access to health care primarily in cities where there are higher concentrations of African Americans, such as New York, Detroit, Chicago, and New Orleans.

In King County, among the confirmed cases, a limitation of the data is that race/ethnicity is available for only 51% of cases. Among deaths due to COVID-19 through April 10, 2020, 274 cases have died (6.8%). The rate of death is highest among non-Hispanic Whites (14.6 deaths per 100,000 King County residents) and is significantly higher relative to non-Hispanic Blacks (7.7 deaths per 100,000 King County residents) and Hispanics/Latinos of any race (6.3 deaths per 100,000 King County residents).

What followed was a discussion about what the MCAAE could do to address the disparities. Members discussed how more emphasis should be put on empowering our community to practice better self-care. It was suggested that the MCAAE collaborate with churches to create messages for self-care practices, including encouraging young people to wear masks. Members also discussed how seniors in south Seattle are having difficulties getting the medications they need due to fear of leaving their homes, and because some pharmacies are not offering home delivery services. Everyone was reminded of Community Living Connections as the resource to call for any type of information/service related to older adults or people with disabilities. The number to call is **1-844-348-5464**, or online at www.communitylivingconnections.org.

Lastly, members agreed to draft a letter to Mayor Durkan highlighting their concerns about the COVID-19 disparities. Karen will develop a draft and will email it for review/feedback.

V. ADS COVID-19 Update

Grandparent Day Event Planning – Karen reported that she contacted the Northwest African American Museum (NAAM). They are looking forward to working with the committee. The committee includes Brenda, Cynthia, and Karen.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, May 15, at 2:00 p.m.