

Mayor's Commission on African American Elders

c/o Aging and Disability Services, Seattle-King County
Mailing Address: PO Box 34215, Seattle WA 98124-4215
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Website: www.seattle.gov/MCAAE

MCAAE Meeting Summary

October 18, 2024

Members: Benjamin Abe, Charlotte Antoine, Rita Howard Pamela Williams, Paula Williams; Sheila Mary; Paul Mitchell, Claudette Thomas

Members Absent: Charlotte Antoine and Shiela Mary

ADS Staff: Eldad Mekuria, Mary Mitchell

I. Welcome & Introductions – Rita Howard, Chair

II. Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) Presentation – Sam Stones, SHIBA Program Lead [[link to presentation](#)]

Sam Stone provided a detailed presentation featuring the various options offered during Medicare's open enrollment period, which is from October 15 to December 7, and a time for those already enrolled in Medicare to make changes for next year.

The second portion of his slide presentation provided an overview of Solid Ground, an organization working to end poverty and undue racism and other oppressions. They have programs to assist with housing, have a legal benefits team, and maintain an educational farm in South Park. Sam provided brochures for many of their programs. Solid Ground works in partnership with the office of the statewide insurance commissioner to run the health insurance benefits advisors program, or SHIBA. They have been one of two sponsors in King County since 2021; the other sponsor is the Chinese Information Service Center.

III. ADS Director's Update – Mary Mitchell, ADS Director

Mary said ADS is seeing more issues with clients they needed to report to the state, many are about abuse. This week was the statewide W4A advisory council meeting in Olympia; Mary co-facilitated with the AAA director in Olympia on advocacy 101. For this year, decision factors from DSHS that are moving to the state are strengthening our long-term care system. DSHS is asking for \$9.9 million for the AAAs and has requested \$35 million for ongoing funding of senior nutrition programs and are asking for \$27.3 million for WA Cares operation. The case management team is seeing more people with complex needs. There are currently six vacancies, 3 of which were added positions. The anticipated ratio is 75 to 1 when all positions are filled. Part of the struggle is when team members need family medical leave, and the remaining staff need to absorb the workload. Mary estimated there are approximately 175 case managers.

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Margaret Bodie retired as program director for the African American Elders Program. Resumes are being reviewed with the hope of filling the position to keep the program going. Mary suggested having someone from the program on a future agenda to know what kind of support is needed or ways to collaborate.

November 13-16 is the Gerontological Society of America ([GSA](#)) Conference in Seattle, the weekend after the caregivers forum. Mary is presenting on a panel about PEARLS. There will be many Black professionals in this industry in Seattle then and possibly an opportunity for a field trip.

IV. Grandmothering While Black: A Twenty-First-Century Story of Love, Coercion, and Survival – LaShawnDa L. Pittman

Members received copies of LaShawnDa L. Pittman's book, courtesy of ADS. Ms. Pittman is a sociologist and said her book was based upon work she did in Chicago with 74 grandmothers raising their grandchildren. It's the third book since the early 1990s that addresses grandparent caregiving among Black grandmothers, and the second book in the last decade that deals with skip generation families. The book has been well received and Ms. Pittman has had some good interviews. She was at the UN Commission for the Status of Women, was featured on the front page of the Chicago Tribune on MLK day this year. It's been important for her to have the caregivers she worked with read the book and begin creating activities around it. One of the chapters is called Managing the Burden and the Blessing, and they talk about what some of those burdens are and how to engage in self-care inside of that.

V. Caregiver Forum Update – Eldad Mekuria

ADS is one of the sponsors at the November 2 forum. There will be a room with different organizations at the event, and Eldad will be hosting a resource table there. She asked if anyone on the council wishes to participate with ADS staff; it would be an excellent opportunity to speak about recruitment given the number of positions with terms expiring.

Meeting Adjourned
Next meeting: **November 15, 2024**
Topic: Social Connectivity