

## Cabinet on Aging Meeting Minutes

April 25, 2003 (10:30-11:30)

### Workplan Highlights:

The meeting began with **brief highlights related to the Cabinet's workplan and priorities.**

- The first update related to the Cabinet's goal of supporting **Community Connections** to improve quality of life, inclusion, and engagement of adults. In her role as Coordinator of the Cabinet, Elizabeth Gattine been visiting several age-friendly communities in different regions of the state to learn more about their work, hear about successes and also challenges, and discuss opportunities to better align state and community efforts. Everyone has been welcoming and informative, providing valuable insights. The visits to date include South Portland, Georgetown, Chelsea, Cornish (a regional initiative covering several towns in Sacopee Valley), Bangor, and Sullivan, with the Blue Hill peninsula and Danforth scheduled over the next week. These conversations are on-going and a report back summarizing these visits will be provided to the Cabinet in the next few weeks.
- Paul Saucier, the Director of the Office of Aging and Disability Services, provided an update on progress in several areas related to long-term services and supports (LTSS) reform, part of the **Sustainable Living** goal of the Cabinet. Three key initiatives are 1) rate modernization for nursing and residential care facilities, 2) innovation and quality improvements, and 3) LTSS system mapping. These initiatives address needs in the system, made even more apparent by COVID-19. Different offices of the Department of Health and Human Services are working together on these, with provider groups and two broad stakeholder groups (one focused on quality and innovation and the other on the needs assessment for mapping). The mapping addresses the continuum of care, from in-home care to nursing facility services, geographically to determine capacity and to project future need based on demographic data.

### Guest Presentation:

Mary Lou Ciolfi, JD, MS, a Senior Program Manager at the Maine Center on Aging at the University of Maine, presented on "Reducing Ageism and Building Trust with Older People." Her presentation provided guidance on recognizing and addressing ageism, and how that builds trust and increases our social capital. Ageism exists at all levels (self-directed at ourselves, towards others, in organizations and systems) and comes at great cost. Mary Lou provided some examples of best practices regarding language including:

- Use language that is inclusive and avoids "othering." For example, use "we" and "us" when possible and avoid "them" or "their."
- Avoid using possessive language when talking about older people which can sound patronizing. For example, instead of "our seniors," refer to older adults or older people in our communities.

- Recognize the diversity of older adults, which can cover multiple generations, and be specific about age when possible. Avoid the term “elderly” which evokes negative stereotypes.

Mary Lou described some of the national and state initiatives directed at eliminating ageism. The presentation PowerPoint, and a list of resources, is attached as part of these minutes.

### **Summary of March Listening Sessions**

The Cabinet Coordinator provided a brief update of the two Listening Sessions held in March 2023 to gather input from older adults, family members and caregivers, advocates, service providers, and others on the Cabinet’s proposed goals and priorities for the coming years.

Overall participants reacted positively to the Cabinet’s priorities, with several participants noting that the focus areas and strategies generally align with the goals of most age-friendly communities. In several cases, participants provided additional information and suggested greater specificity to the priority areas. **A more detailed report of findings is posted separately from these minutes.**

A few additional priority areas were suggested, which were discussed by Cabinet members. Specifically, participants recommended more explicitly adding and referencing strategies related to the following areas:

- Elder abuse and neglect
- Food insecurity
- Recognition and support for volunteers
- Access to health care
- Health literacy

Cabinet members noted that these areas are reflective of the Cabinet’s priorities and provided some examples of activities that are underway. Cabinet members asked that the Cabinet staff review these suggestions and others from the Listening Sessions and make changes as appropriate to the workplan.

### **Reminders:**

- May is Older Americans Month. This year’s theme is “Aging Unbound,” which encourages us to explore diverse aging experiences and expose and address aging stereotypes.
- The next Meeting of the Cabinet on Aging is scheduled for June 27, 2023, from 10:30-11:30.