

MINUTES: ADVISORY BOARD ON AGING – Wednesday, March 19, 2025 – 3:00p.m.

Office on Aging, Zoom Platform

Members Present: V. Bands, M. Brusio, A. Di Guardo, H. Murphy, D. Hanley, B. Klein, J. Parker, F. Sirkis, K. Proutt, L. Stewart **Staff:** L. Anderson, Angel Bronico, K. Winkowski, **Absent:** A. Callender, K. Clipp, K. Cooke, M. DiDomenico, P. Dresher, T. Fitzgerald, S. Haviland, J. Panowicz, J. Parker, C. Patton, T. Poffenburger, C. Scionion.

The meeting opened at 3:02 p.m. via Zoom. Minutes from December 18, 2024, meeting minutes were approved; a quorum was met on the virtual call.

Introduction: Karen Winkowski facilitated the meeting, and introductions were made by the members.

Presentation: Harford Primary Care and Upper Chesapeake Primary Care Communications Plan presented by Shirelle Handshaw, AVP of Physicians Services, and Michelle Brusio, Board Member.

Harford Primary Care and Upper Chesapeake Primary Care are Rebranding! Harford Primary Care and Upper Chesapeake Primary Care are rebranding to the Danny and Gail Jones Primary Care. Danny and Gail Jones are Philanthropists who wish to expand their services and Healthcare of the citizens of Harford County. This transition began March 10, 2025. There will be some new enhancements to the current service model, providing a new phone service which can be reached at 443-843-7000 or 800-301-4799, opening offices in the following areas in Harford County: Abingdon, Aberdeen, Bel Air, Forest Hill, and Havre de Grace. The flagship medical office will be located at Danny and Gail Jones Primary Care at MacPhail Crossing in Bel Air. There will also be a LabCorp residing in each service area for laboratory testing for the convenience of the patients. At the MacPhail Crossing office there will also be a community room allowing health-related meetings and presentations for patients and staff.

The Danny and Gail Jones Primary Care will focus on patient care and efficiency. A centralized Navigation Hub will be the center of patient communication and care. The Navigation Hub will be able to manage patient calls, address patient concerns with a Registered Nurse if needed, scheduling appointments at the various branches. The future of Patient Care will focus on team-based approaches, wrapping care models based on evidence-based efforts improving patient outcomes. In alignment with the evidence-based care model, the Danny and Gail Jones Primary Care are looking to recruit medical professionals specializing in Primary care, Endocrinology, Behavioral Health, Orthopedics, General Surgery, Pulmonary, Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Karen Winkowski asked how the patients of Upper Chesapeake Primary Care and Harford Primary Care were notified, and how will they be managed? Will those patients have to re-register for services? Shirelle Handshaw stated that they will be notified by mail, or through Patient Portal, and if the patient is already a member of the practice, the change would be seamless. Patients will not have to re-register for services. Karen Winkowski expressed concerns that often our clients do not open their mail, or are computer-savvy, so she agreed that no interruption of service would be appreciated. Karen Winkowski also asked about the capacity of the practices, as changing doctors may be difficult to locate as a new patient. Shirelle Handshaw did express that while that is a valid concern, and that current patients have booked appointments, the UCPC is constantly adding new providers to expand their new patient reach. Karen Winkowski also asked if the practice was using a “team-approach” to patient care, if the patient would see the same practitioners, or would see “whoever was available”, and Shirelle Handshaw explained that a “team approach” means that the patient would have a better opportunity to seek healthcare and may even be triaged before the appointment, may have interactions with a Nurse Practitioner in addition to their Primary Care Physician. The expectation is that patients would have a greater quality of care because of the “team-approach” methodology, and that patients could rely on seeing the same medical personnel who they have a relationship with and a comfortable relationship. Michelle Brusio reiterated the position that the “team approach” to Patient Care is supporting the Patient and their situation. Continuity of Care is critical, and it is her opinion that Patients love the staff at UCPC and want to follow them and they just want to be an extension of the Provider.

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Anne DiGuardo had a question regarding the insurance acceptance of the Practice, specifically with the Medicare Advantage Plans, and Shirelle Handshaw reiterated that UCPC will be accepting the same plans that are accepted by University of Maryland Health Systems. Michelle Brusio stated that there are some insurances that University of Maryland are in quality control contracts that enable a more patient-centered service, regarding case management, social work, and pharmacy, enabling an equitable service delivery for all patients.

Shirelle Handshaw also stated that the location of the new MacPhail Crossing Office will be located on a bus route, and next to a grocery store, so that the elderly patients can use the bus to go to their doctor, and get groceries if needed, marking the convenience of the placement of the Bel Air location. Karen Winkowski also commented that the placement of the Bel Air office will be remarkably close to the McFaul Senior Center in Bel Air and proximity to the only hospital located in Bel Air (meaning, Upper Chesapeake Medical Center). Shirelle Handshaw also mentioned the location being easy for parking, and handicapped accessibility.

Updates: Heather Murphy announced the Caregiver's Conference to be held April 26, 2025, at the McFaul Activity Center in Bel Air. The conference will be from 8:30 am to 12:00 Noon, and features many interesting seminars for Caregivers and this conference is sponsored by G.A.I.N. The conference is open to the public, and the keynote speaker will be Generations Health.

Heather Murphy also announced that there will be a G.A.I.N. sponsored Happy Hour at Sean Bolan's at 12 S. Main Street, Bel Air, MD on Tuesday, March 25, from 5 to 7 pm. G.A.I.N. will be buying your first appetizer and first drink.

Bari Klein announced that the Committee on the Needy and Elderly for the town of Bel Air will be issuing a survey entitled, "Aging Well Within the Town." This survey will help the town access information on how people who live, work, play and worship in the town of Bel Air can gain access to these worthwhile services. The date for the release of this survey is not determined yet, but it is expected to be in the Spring.

Debra Hanley announced that Bel Air Brightview Senior Living Facilities will hold a CEU seminar (2 credits each) for Social Workers and Case Managers tomorrow (March 20, 2025), and the next in the series will be May 20, 2025, held at White Marsh Brightview Senior Living.

Vickie Bands commented that the OOA staff are immensely helpful, and that Healthy Harford was given a donation to assist in the social determinates of Health and with this gift Healthy Harford will be able to do four more sessions with the Office on Aging. Beginning in May, Healthy Harford will be able to send a Community Health Worker to provide episodic care at that center and support another food distribution center, one a Fairbrooke Senior Housing, and a Burton Manor Congregant Housing, and Havre de Grace Housing Authority, and a new location at Marian Village. Healthy Harford will be taking a Community Health Worker, a Nurse and other Healthcare professionals to assist with these health screenings.

Karen Winkowski reported the following:

A Health Screening event in partnership with Healthy Harford, Upper Chesapeake Medical System and other partners in the community was successful at the Havre de Grace Activity Center on Monday March 17, 2025. The event resulted in forty-seven attendees. Vickie Bands remarked that the PRN sales associates commented to her that the event was well-run and well-attended. More Health Screening events will be held at different Activity Centers in the future, more information will be forthcoming.

The Office on Aging has an increased call volume, counting 187 calls a day, or more. She reported that in February OOA completed 17 Health Promotion Events in our congregate housing communities serving 185 people. And completed Exercise classes serving eighty-one people in those same housing

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communities. The Office on Aging is also doing a food program with Shoprite Grocery Stores called Fresh Foods, where participants are getting ready-made food such as roasted chicken, and a side dish and suggestions for meal preparation and set up. The food consists of six bags of groceries every other week, and we served 450 meals last month in this program.

Karen Winkowski also shared the Federal Funding cuts in the budget that is affecting OOA. She shared a story of how funding cuts are putting programs at risk, which has a direct effect on programming for our Seniors. Additionally, there is a pending budget cut of \$8.5M to the Senior Care Budget recommended by the Department of Legislative Services Review of the Maryland Department on Aging budget. If this happens, critical programming that sustains seniors in their homes and communities will fail. Karen Winkowski and her peers have been speaking at length with legislators and lobbyists to try imparting upon them the importance of this money to the most vulnerable population in the State. And if this happens, what will happen next year? Ms. Winkowski further shared that she and her counterparts within the state have a regularly scheduled conference call today and would be reporting on their efforts to stop the cuts to these important programs. Ms. Winkowski also remarked on the work of former Administrator Carol Leinhard and her efforts to speak with legislators and lobbyists on the dangers of repealing the Maryland Department of Aging's budget, and discussion was held regarding how the others on the Advisory Board could support the Harford County Office on Aging in this battle. More information will be forthcoming.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:57 p.m.

Next meeting: Wednesday, Sept 17, 2025

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Anderson, Harford Co. Office on Aging