

MINUTES: ADVISORY BOARD ON AGING – Wednesday, September 17, 2025 – 3:00p.m.

Office on Aging, Zoom Platform

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

The meeting opened at 3:05 p.m. via Zoom. A quorum was not reached; therefore, the approval of June 18, 2025, meeting minutes will be conducted electronically.

Introduction: Karen Winkowski facilitated the meeting, offering informal greetings and acknowledging the smaller group. She mentioned that several board members are up for renewal, two members have relocated, one has decided not to renew, and longtime member Claudia Sconion has recently passed. Members expressed condolences and recognized her many years of dedicated service.

Presentation: Karen Winkowski reported on the U.S. Aging Nationwide conference, sharing a video and highlights from keynote speaker Ken Dychtwald, Ph.D., a leading figure in aging policy: Key points from the presentation included:

- The growing and evolving older adult population, with a need for healthcare and infrastructure systems to adapt accordingly, and the importance of setting goals and developing new life stages beyond traditional retirement.
- Although life expectancy has increased, many societal systems are still designed for younger populations.
- The aging population is rapidly expanding, with a significant increase projected between 2010 and 2030.
- Traditional age categories are outdated; Dychtwald proposed a new life stage focused on ongoing aspiration and personal growth for older adults.
- There is a call for increased geriatric training for healthcare providers and greater research and advocacy efforts, especially concerning Alzheimer's.
- Despite high healthcare spending, the U.S. lags in healthy life expectancy

To view the speaker, Ken Dychtwald, PH.D., visit: <https://vimeo.com/1109484019?share=copy>

Updates:

Debra Hanley announced her organization is hosting a series of continuing education (CEU) events, with the next event on September 30, 2025. Details will be sent by email.

Bari Klein shared information about a walkability study in Bel Air and encouraged participation from board members and the public. The study aims to assess and improve walkability, especially for older adults. The group discussion highlighted the accessibility issues on Main Street and trail limitations for individuals with mobility challenges.

Janet Parker provided updates on G.A.I.N (Geriatric Assistant and Information Network): A networking happy hour at MaGerks on September 24, 2025, sponsored by Brightstar. Coffee chat at Panera (near Wegmans in Abingdon) on October 22, 2025, 8:30 - 9:30 am. G.A.I.N continues to unite professionals and organizations serving older adults, organizing networking, educational, and fundraising events throughout the year.

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Michelle Bruiso announced the opening of Danny and Gail Jones Primary Care at McPhail, which features a community room for educational events (covering topics: elder law, Medicare, etc.). The facility is expanding to include eight providers and is accepting new patients; a provider list will be shared. A member discussed local challenges with physician availability and the value of the Health Department Care Coordination Program.

Members noted the appointment of Laura Levy as the new County Health Officer, who brings experience from Cecil County.

Karen Winkowski reported the following:

- Effective July 1, 2025, Karen has taken on the role of President of the statewide Association of Area Agency on Aging Directors, expanding her role in state and national advocacy.
- Provided funding updates:
 - Federal funding for aging programs is uncertain, particularly with the potential government shutdown.
 - Delays in reimbursement funding impact nutrition programs, senior centers, case management, and ombudsman programs.
 - The office operates on a reimbursement model, so delays in federal funds have an immediate impact.
 - Delayed funding due to administrative changes at the federal level; however, the gap was bridged with contingency plans and support from the county executive until funds resumed.
 - The Older Americans Act has not been reauthorized and remains stalled, with potential changes under discussion.
- Staffing shortages and vacancies continue to challenge the Office on Aging.

Members will receive a follow-up email with details about upcoming events, the conference presentation link, and minutes for electronic approval.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:46 p.m.

Next meeting: Wednesday, December 17, 2025

Respectfully submitted,
Francine Schott, Harford Co. Office on Aging