

FLORIDA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL, INC.

AGING CAREGIVER TASK FORCE REPORT

The Council's Aging Caregiver Task Force was reconvened on Thursday April 23, 2020 as a ZOOM meeting. We took a four-month hiatus, which turned into six-months, when the country was impacted by COVID 19, to study the federal and state landscape on aging issues and determine next steps for our purpose and membership.

Members were re-introduced to each other with the addition of two new members. Members of the task force, staffed by Valerie Breen, the Council's Executive Director, include Jean Sherman, serving as an aging parent for her adult son and as the Council's representative for the University of Miami's Mailman Center; Liz Perkins, serving as a researcher in the field of aging and as the Council's designee from the University of South Florida's, Center for Inclusive Communities; Madeleine Nobles, Division Director for Statewide Community-Based Services through the Florida Department of Elder Affairs; two aging parents with adult children, Lou Ogburn from Tallahassee, and Pauline Lipps from the Sarasota/Bradenton, both who Chair their respective Family Care Councils, and Susan Redmon, former Council member, who, with her husband, are the sole in-home caregivers for their 40 year old son.

Sherman reported that in January 2020 she wrote and submitted a proposal to present at the Florida Council on Aging's annual conference in partnership with the Council's Executive Director, Valerie Breen, and Chair of the Tallahassee chapter of the Family Care Council, Lou Ogburn. Just this past week Sherman was notified that the proposal presentation, "Are You Ready to Serve This Family?" was selected as one of the general workshop sessions for the Florida Council on Aging's August 2020 annual conference. They are still planning to hold the conference in person.

Sherman asked Breen to summarize the outcomes from Breen's workshop at the August 2019 Florida Council on Aging. Outcomes and recommendations included more comprehensive sharing of resources between the aging and disability communities, better understanding and assessment of family caregiving through case management, and overall understanding of the needs of aging caregivers and individuals with developmental disabilities.

Over an hour of the task force meeting was spent listening to various caregiving issues, choices and situations members of the task force face on a regular basis. In addition task force members discussed the need for better training and education for family caregivers as a whole, especially in supported decision making, advance directives and life planning (brought to the forefront in the midst of the COVID crisis); knowing what resources are available to families throughout the continuum of care; building a bigger membership in Family Care Councils with younger family members; assessing the capacity of Aging and Disability Resource Centers; and decreasing the age requirement from 70 years to 60 years for those on the Medicaid waiver waiting list. An overarching issue continues to remain what type of living environment will the persons with a developmental disability live in after their aging caregiver is deceased.

Recommendations were made for consideration to include:

- 1) The Aging Task Force members and additional aging caregivers participate in a focus group dedicated to addressing aging caregiver issues as part of the next five-year state plan data gathering and goal setting.
- 2) The Council consider holding an Aging Caregiver Summit to bring together members of both the aging and developmental disabilities communities for information sharing and strategic planning utilizing dollars under the Council's current five-year plan.
- 3) To explore cross network policy changes with the Administration for Community Living, the federal agency responsible for both aging and DD.
- 4) To hold the next meeting in late June or early July as a focus group with task force members assisting in recruitment for focus group members to attend one or two facilitated targeted focus groups on aging through the Council's new state plan provider, WellFlorida.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Sherman, Ed.D., RN, Chair