GROWS Advocacy Committee meeting report: 11/24/20

Attendees:

Melissa Wu, David Engel, Gauri Chande, Mary Sweeney, Chuck Kauffman, Gloria Arnold and Robin Henoch

Discussion topics:

**1)** November is National Caregivers Month. Gloria created posts for the website, Facebook and Linkedin. Steve Lorberbaum spoke about GROWS on Engage@Home. The link to view is https://youtu.be/\_Oaevm5gsH8

2) Isabelle Melese-d'Hospital is working on a letter to Rev. Kaseman of MoCo Faith Community Advisory Council to collaborate spread awareness of GROWS members.

**3)** The CoA testified before the Gaithersburg City Council regarding the text amendment blocking the sale of the Holiday at 124 and 355. The letter against the text amendment will be posted on the web site.

**4) CoA, Aging in Community:**met to discuss Habitat America 121 units of affordable senior housing. The Committee is reviewing affordable housing, transportation, food insecurity, and the senior fellows program as future issues of priorities.

5) **CoA,** **Health & Wellness Committee** met to discuss the priorities of the committee for the next few months. The current priority will be Home Based Health Care. The next meeting is December 1st. The topic of discussion will be the SHIP State Health Insurance Program. The National Academy of Medicine Healthy Longevity Global Awards to kick start and support innovative ideas went out this month and Carrie Neiman of Access Hears won in the catalyst phase a $50,000 grant with the opportunity for a $500,000 in the next phase of the contest. Access Hears is a unique hearing care model using low cost personal sound amplification products to help improve age related hearing loss.

The Task Force to address social isolation and loneliness in Montgomery County had its first meeting on November 9th. The presentation will be posted on the Advocacy website. For information on the Task Force meetings, contact David Engel.

**6) CoA, Public Polic**y **Committee**: met on 11/5/2020

The Public Policy Committee testified before the HHS and the County Council about the two CoA Budget Priorities. The two are: adding 2 social worker positions in APS/ Public Guardianship and providing legal assistance to renters at risk of eviction. The letter to the County Council will be posted on the website.

The Legislative breakfast will be December 10th. It will be on Zoom at 9:30am. It would be a good opportunity to hear what the MoCo representatives to the State Legislature have in mind to advocate for in the coming session.

**7) The Commission on Aging** met on 11/19/2020

The CoA voted on the new slate of CoA Officers: Chair, Barbara Selter; Vice Chair, Eddie Rivas; Secretary, Janice Zalen, Treasurer, Dick Jourdenais.

Patrice McGhee from Kentucky has been on the job for a week as the new Director of the Area Agency on Aging for Montgomery County. There was a formal complaint from Austin Heyman that the County is spending $18,000 per month in the Beacon for a one page ad and the ad does not provide current information or change each month.

Jack VanDerhei, Research Director of the Employee Benefit Research Institute, spoke about Social Security Trust Funds and the Short term and Long term outlooks and implications on Shorfalls. The presentation will be posted on the website.

**8)** Chuck Kauffman presented the idea of a letter/ Press Release to be endorsed by GROWS and advocate on behalf of the senior population that the priority of vaccines should be to seniors. The Press Release is in draft form and will be made available to GROWS members to send out when completed.

Please check and promote the GROWS calendar for great educational and networking events.

The next GROWS Advocacy committee meeting will be December 29th at 1pm on ZOOM!