

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL
ELDERLY and DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES for December 8, 2015

The DVCC Elderly and Domestic Violence Committee met on December 8, 2015 at 2:30 p.m. at the Carvel State Office Building, Wilmington. Attending the meeting were: Gina Schoenberg, Department of Justice, Kim Buiano, DHSS Adult Protective Services; Tonia Bell-Delgado, Delaware Center for Justice; Gail Weinberg, Ombudsman; Sharon Merriman-Nai, Center for Drug and Health Studies (CDHS), University of Delaware; Pamela Williams and Kathleen Weiss, DHSS APS and Pat Kwetkauskie DVCC staff.

Call to Order: Gina Schoenberg called the meeting to order and welcomed Pam Williams and Kathleen Weiss.

Introductions: Attendees introduced themselves.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the meeting held on September 10, 2015 were reviewed. Tonia Bell-Delgado made a motion to accept the minutes; Sharon Merriman-Nai seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by consensus.

Gina announced she is leaving the Domestic Violence Unit, Family Division and will be joining the Consumer Protection Unit, Fraud Division. She noted she will remain involved with the DVCC Elderly and Domestic Violence Committee and the DOJ's Senior Protective Initiative.

On-going Business:

- Continue to Obtain and Examine Data on Elderly and Domestic Violence:
Pat reported on the data that has been obtained. This includes domestic violence-related case information involving older adults from Mary Post (DOJ); Tonia Bell-Delgado (DCJ), Kim Buiano (APS); and data (2014) from DELJIS related to victims age 65 and older, the types of crimes reported, and the relationship of the victim to the offender provided by Peggy Bell.

The Committee has not received the similar data related to 2004 from DELJIS. Pat will follow up with Peggy Bell to request 2004 data related to victims age 65 and older, the types of crimes reported, and the relationship of the victim to the offender.

Sharon offered to help compile an overview of the data once all of it is received.

- Obtain Information and Input Directly from Constituents in the Community:
A workgroup to plan town hall meetings was established. The workgroup will meet in January and town hall meetings will be planned for March. Gina suggested inviting Veronica Rempusheski from the University of Delaware to join the workgroup. The Committee previously identified several potential locations for the town hall meetings. These include Sacred Heart Village, Newark, Garfield Park, and Hockessin Senior Centers in New Castle County; Modern Maturity Center in Kent County; and CHEER in Sussex County.

- DHSS Adult Protective Services:

Pamela Williams and Kathleen Weiss from Adult Protective Services provided information about Delaware's continued need for emergency shelter and corresponding services for abused elderly adults. Pam provided a comparison of national and state resources allocated for child abuse and elder abuse. She noted that there are about one-half dozen standalone shelters for abused seniors in the US. She reported that 10 to 15 years ago a committee in Delaware unsuccessfully tried to locate a building for emergency shelter for elderly who were abused.

Ms. Williams explained that a program to provide "safe haven" to elderly who are in need of an emergency placement due to physical abuse, neglect or financial exploitation currently is offered at a high rise apartment building in New Castle County. She reported elder victims stay from three days to one month and 8 to 9 abused elders per year have utilized the Safe Haven program.

The Committee inquired about approaches used by other small states. Ms. Williams noted that Connecticut implemented a model that could be replicated in Delaware. Connecticut established a consortium which includes 12 community partners from high rise apartments, nursing homes, extended stay hotels and adult foster care providers. She indicated that this type of collaborative and cooperative approach would ensure that safe haven services could be easily accessed by elderly who are abused throughout Delaware, including those residing in Kent and Sussex Counties.

Lastly, there was discussion about the need for additional resources as well as appropriations for the 2010 Elder Justice Act at the federal level.

Other

- A statewide Conference on Elder Abuse will be held in May 2016. Sharon will provide additional details as they become available.
- Community Legal Aid Services – There was consensus to invite CLASI to speak with the Committee about legal services provided to older Delawareans. In addition, it was agreed to ask a representative from CLASI to join the Committee. Sharon will contact CLASI.
- Also, Tonia suggested inviting a representative from the St. Francis LIFE Center in Wilmington to join the Committee. Tonia will forward a name and contact information to Pat.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the DVCC Elderly and Domestic Violence Committee will be held in February 2016.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pat Kwetkauskie, DVCC Staff
December 16, 2015