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May 23, 2023

VIA EMAIL

Connie Munn, Director
South Carolina Department on Aging
1301 Gervais St. Suite 350
Columbia, South Carolina 29201
CMunn@aging.sc.gov; lcogdill@aging.sc.gov

RE: Follow up to April 18, 2023, Subcommittee meeting

Dear Director Munn:

The Healthcare and Regulatory Subcommittee appreciates the Department on Aging’s participation in the oversight process. As follow-up from the April 18, 2023, Subcommittee meeting, below are questions of interest to various members of the subcommittee. Please provide this information by Monday, June 12, 2023.

As a reminder, formal written responses provided are considered sworn testimony. Additionally, please inform the Subcommittee, prior to responding, of any information requested that cannot be published online due to provisions in contract or law.

Senior Population Growth

1. According to the agency's South Carolina State Plan on Aging 2021-2025, South Carolina's senior population is among the fastest growing in the nation.
 - What challenges can the state expect to encounter as the senior population continues to grow?
 - What policy issues will the state need to consider in response to the growth of the senior population?
2. Family caregivers, according to the agency's South Carolina State Plan on Aging 2021-2025, provide 737 million hours of service to their chronically ill, disabled, or frail elderly loved ones each year?
 - Are the number of family caregivers expected to grow or decline in the next 5-10 years? If the availability of family caregivers is expected to decline, who will fill the gap and what does the state need to do to prepare?
3. Has the agency ever conducted a statewide survey, of persons 60 and over, to inquire about health, life, and safety issues; knowledge of the state's aging services network; and knowledge of programs offered by the Department on Aging and the AAAs?

Agency Budget

4. Does the agency have a marketing budget? If so, how much does the agency spend on marketing annually?
5. In the current and previous fiscal year, has the agency utilized television, radio, or print media to market agency services and programs? If so, please identify the type of marketing used and the services or programming promoted through those platforms.

AAA Corrective Action Plans

6. What steps does the agency have in place to correct AAA processes prior to placing them on a corrective action plan?
7. How many AAA's have been placed on corrective action plans in the previous five fiscal years?
8. When a AAA is placed on a corrective action plan, is the affiliated governing body informed by the Department on Aging (e.g., Appalachian Council of Governments, Central Midlands Council of Governments, etc.)?

SC Adult Guardian Ad Litem Program

9. According to agency staff, the Vulnerable Adult Guardian ad Litem program has 10 FTEs and 32 contract attorneys who represent the agency's guardian ad litem in family courts across the state. Staff testimony also mentioned the benefits of lower-case volume, which has allowed staff and volunteers the opportunity to provide the quality of service they prefer.
 - How many staff, contract attorneys, and volunteers are needed to effectively provide quality and timely service to customers served by the Vulnerable Adult Guardian ad Litem program?
 - Does the agency utilize a case staffing ratio to guide how many staff and volunteers are needed to effectively manage cases?

- Identify the number of Adult Guardian ad Litem program volunteers needed, by county, to ensure services are adequately provided to program customers.
 - Please list the counties assigned to each Adult Guardian ad Litem program volunteer. (Do not include personally identifiable information)
 - Please list the counties assigned to each of the 32 contract attorneys. (Do not include personally identifiable information)
10. According to agency staff, the total number of new cases assigned to staff and volunteers has decreased due to several factors, such as COVID and changes to the adult protective services intake and screening process.
- Please identify the changes made to the adult protective services intake and screening process and explain why these changes led to a decline in the total number of cases assigned to the Vulnerable Adult Guardian ad Litem program?

Program Volunteer Recruitment

11. According to agency staff, the Department on Aging has a volunteer recruitment and retention manager.
- When was this position created?
 - Is this staff member responsible for the agency's volunteer recruitment strategy?
 - How many agency programs rely on volunteers?
 - Provide a profile of the "typical" Vulnerable Adult Guardian ad Litem program volunteer (e.g., age, education, experience, ethnicity, etc.).
 - Provide a profile of the "typical" Ombudsman program volunteer (e.g., age, education, experience, ethnicity, etc.).
12. What are the most significant barriers to recruiting volunteers?
13. Does that agency have a volunteer recruitment strategy? If so, please list the goals associated with the strategy.
14. Please list the methods, employed by agency staff, to communicate volunteer opportunities to the public.

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP)

7. Continuing Care Retirement Communities provide services, such as assisted living, memory care, and skilled nursing. The Ombudsman program does not have authority to investigate these facilities.
- If a resident contacts the Ombudsman regarding abuse, neglect, or similarly associated issues, what recourse does the agency have at its disposal?
8. How long does it take to the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program to train staff and what is the associated cost?
9. How many of the following entities are currently operating in South Carolina:
- Nursing Homes
 - Community Residential Care /Assisted Living Facilities
 - Intermediate Care Facilities
 - Community Training Homes
 - Supervised Living Programs

- Homeshare
10. How many of these facilities closed in the last five years (list facility and county)? How many residents were affected by the closures?
 11. Does the state have enough of these facilities to meet the future needs of seniors and families?
 12. Does the agency analyze demographic trends to project the future need for additional facilities within its regulatory purview (e.g., nursing homes, etc.)?
 13. Are facilities, under LTCOPs purview, required to inform residents of their right to report concerns regarding billing; and life, health, and safety issues?
 14. What information can the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program staff request from monitored entities during visits?
 15. According to agency staff, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program has six FTEs and 55 program volunteers.
 - How many staff and volunteers, at both the agency and Area Agencies on Aging, are needed to consistently inspect facilities and provide timely service to customers served by the Ombudsman program?
 - Identify the number of volunteers needed, by county, to ensure services are adequately provided to program customers.
 - Does the agency utilize a case staffing ratio to guide how many staff and volunteers are needed to effectively manage cases and site visits?
 - Please identify the counties assigned to each Adult Guardian ad Litem program volunteer (Do not include personally identifiable information).
 - Please provide the counties assigned to each of the 32 contract attorneys.
 16. According to agency representative, Dale Watson's testimony, the Ombudsman program only receives notice of "balance billing" if informed by affected parties.
 - Are healthcare providers required to inform Medicaid and Medicare patients, who are exempt from balance billing, that they are indeed exempt and are not responsible for balances?
 - How can the Ombudsman program improve outreach and communication efforts, to Medicaid and Medicare patients, concerning balance billing and their rights?
 - Does the Department of Health and Human Services inform the Department on Aging about Medicaid fraud or abuse cases at entities monitored by the Ombudsman program?
 17. Does the Department on Aging have written policies, specific to AAA ombudsman monitoring, published for AAA staff to access?

Agency Website

18. Does the Department on Aging maintain the getcaresc.com website? If so, why is the information not maintained on the agency's official government website?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joe H. Jefferson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Joseph H. Jefferson, Jr.
Subcommittee Chair

cc: The Honorable Jeffrey E. "Jeff" Johnson
Executive Subcommittee