



Policy Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 27, 2025

The Policy Board of CareWell Services SW met on Monday, November 27, 2025, in the Burnham Brook Conference Room of the Kool Family Community Center, in Battle Creek, Michigan.

Board Members Present: Jim Baldwin, Allen Byam, Mary Frisby, Corally O'Dell, Sherii Sherban, Deana Spencer, Shirley Tuggle, Linda Whitfield

Board Members Absent: Jose Orozco, Jr., Clare Tanner, Meg Fairchild, Linda Maupin

Staff Present: Valerie Barnaby, Karen Courtney, John Gelletich, Paulette Porter, Brenda Holmgren, Nicho Sanchez, Stacy Wines

Staff Absent: Jodi De Jonge, Amber Logsdon

Guest Present: Julie Cortright, Regional Aging Representative, DHHS; Rod Auton, Calhoun County Senior Services Manager; Eli Gabay, CEO, True Care Living

I. Call to Order

Chair Baldwin called the meeting to order at 5:37 pm. Quorum met.

A. Introductions: Introductions made.

Porter introduced new hire, Dionisio (Nicho) Sanchez. She advised she is looking forward to retirement and Sanchez has been hired to shadow her to take over her role as the Chief Operating Officer in a year or so.

B. Action Item: Approval of Consent Agenda for January 27, 2025, and approval of Policy Board Meeting minutes for November 25, 2024, meeting.

Motion for approval of the Consent Agenda for January 27, 2025, and approval of November 25, 2024, Meeting Minutes made by Byam, supported by Tuggle for approval. Motion CARRIED.

II. Public Comment/Open Meeting

Auton provided an update that a grant has been received from the Thome Foundation to address food insecurities. CareWell is a partner in this grant. He stated he is working on the framework of stewardship to track how we are reaching people in our community.

Gabay advised on the waiver program and how CareWell is working along with True Care Living and many other entities to address the lack of Waiver increases over the past five years. His focus is senior housing and homelessness as it pairs with Waiver. He is advocating for an increase.

III. CEO Report

Wines presented a verbal report.

She reported on the NCQA Accreditation we have been working on was not as far along in the process as first thought. She advised what usually takes six months, we are now doing in four weeks. CareWell is working to get a two-year accreditation.

The Michigan Community Care Collaboration has encountered difficulty in reaching consensus on key items as each AAA has its own niche.

Increases for providers have been introduced to the Executive Team. We have people on the Waiver wait list that receive ACLS services because they do not qualify for Waiver. The Executive Team is currently looking at the federal budget and monitoring it closely.

Regarding the case that was reported to the board for the client that needed 24-hour care, we declined due to the costs involved. Licensing and Regulatory Affairs has sent notice of pending legal action. Legal counsel has been retained.

Clinical Quality Assurance Review (CQAR) has been completed and results received. The score was in the 80% range, which is lower than previous years due to some quality issues. Overall, many agencies did not receive high scores this year. Holmgren advised that this year's review was very technical, and we scored average, as were most others.

We are keeping a close eye on the Employee Sick Time Act. We are waiting for a final decision from the State, then a plan will be rolled out. Baldwin advised that there should be no financial impact that is not already accounted for. Both the House and Senate have submitted proposals. The proposals are both very different. The Act implementation date is supposed to be February 21, 2025.

Wines noted a significant amount of advocacy is being done on behalf of the Older American's Act. Porter will discuss later in the meeting.

IV. Policy Board Committee Reports

A. Executive/Personnel Membership Committee (Chair Baldwin)

Chair Baldwin wanted to touch base again on provider increases. He directed CWS to analyze and put a methodology in place for consistent increases across the agency for each provider. This will all depend on the funding levels at the Federal Government. We are currently operating under a Continued Resolution so we will continue to monitor the situation. Once it is stable, we can begin the provider increases.

1. **Action Item: Affirmation of Policy of Non-Discrimination required yearly regarding transit.**

Motion to accept the Policy of Non-Discrimination and acquire Spencer's signature made by Sherban, supported by Spencer. Motion CARRIED.

2. Chair Baldwin advised the CEO Goals for 2024 – 25 will be put on hold for today's meeting. Waiting for further information on the No Wrong Door grant funded opportunity. This item will be moved to the next meeting.

B. Finance/Audit Committee (Gelletich)

1. Review of Financial Statements

Gelletich reported on financials for the month of December 2024. Showing a slight increase in our Waiver surplus. ACLS and Millage are holding steady. We are also showing an increase in MI Health Link. Grants have seen a shortfall and Heritage Commons is also at a deficit. Millage funds have been received, which is helpful. Other programs are items that benefit the community. These programs are covered by a variety of different funding sources. He noted that we are at a deficit in the first quarter. Much of this comes from the Heritage Commons' deficit.

Action Item: Approval of Financial Statements for the month ending December 2024.

Motion by Byam and supported by Sherban to approve Financial Statements ending December 2024. Motion CARRIED.

C. MI Choice Waiver (Holmgren)

1. Annual Program Integrity Report

Per Holmgren this report was submitted on January 15, 2025. The report reflects all activities and outcomes that were completed by our Chief Compliance Officer. The report included the process for reporting fraud, waste or abuse. All policies and procedures are currently being worked on for the NCQA. Data mining, provider audits and pre and post payment activities were also reviewed. Education was reported on for participants as well as providers.

2. Waiver Report

We are currently enrolling ten plus into the waiver program a month. The current wait time is three to four months with a total of 127 people on the wait list. We are experiencing a rise in dis-enrollment from the Waiver program in the first quarter due to death and permanent placement into nursing homes.

D. Care Management Report (Logsdon)

Logsdon is absent, no report for this meeting.

E. Advocacy and Outreach Updates

1. Whitfield reminded all that the Guardianship did not go through last year, so we are starting from the ground up with many new members. Guardianship and MI Choice Waiver will be top priorities this year. She noted that many people do not understand what the MI Choice Waiver program does. Pay increase for caregivers will also be at the top of the list. She also reminded us that Older Michigianians Day is May 7, 2025.

O'Dell advised the Governor will be providing a speech regarding the budget on February 5, 2025, and the State of the State address on February 26, 2025. O'Dell noted there are many new challenges ahead.

2. Courtney reported on the Programs and Outreach updates. CareWell reached 11,192 people in 2024 through events attended. MMAP had above and beyond numbers for the year. She reviewed upcoming events.

Porter reported on a phone call that she had today with the U.S. Lobbyist in Washington. It was a strategy session on how to reach out to Senator Walberg.

The No Wrong Door grant funding opportunity was presented for the SHIP program and options counseling. We had a very short time frame to get the grant submitted which we did. We should hear back on Wednesday on whether we were successful. Porter advised that either way this will alter the way that we do business moving forward. This is a seven-month grant starting in March. The numbers will be calculated over seven months and that will derive how much funding we get for the next five years. We also have a request into Calhoun County Senior Millage for a mini grant for a bus for Older Michigianian's Day transportation.

V. **Policy Board Member Time/General Discussion**

Cortright advised the bureau is closely watching what is happening with the budget. Concerns are with Older Americans Act and Title V. As she knows more, she will share with the networks.

Tuggle advised letters are being drafted to the Governor regarding senior advocacy. Older American's Day is very important so you can see our legislators face to face to voice concerns with senior programs. The Ombudsman Program is still being worked on as well as many other programs that were mentioned prior. Housing and Respite care are on the docket. The March meeting will be held in Kalamazoo if anyone would like to attend.

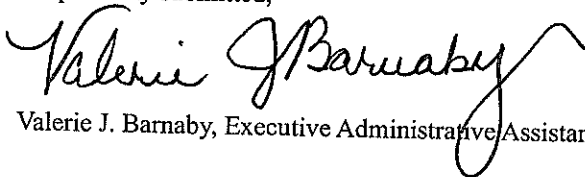
Sherban shared that Miles for Memories has a fundraiser approaching called Spin for Miles on February 22, 2025. She is hoping that all will participate. The Research Update for Miles for Memories will be held on May 6, 2025, at the Kool Family Community Center.

VI. **Adjournment**

No additional items to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 6:29 pm.

Motion for the Policy Board to adjourn by Chair Baldwin, supported by Sherban. Motion CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted,



Valerie J. Barnaby, Executive Administrative Assistant