

Date: June, 2015

From: Bob Schlueter, Executive Director 

To: Northwest Michigan County Commissioners – (Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, Wexford)

Re: Synopsis of Agency Programs for the Fiscal/Program Year 2014

2014 Program Synopsis

The Area Agency on Aging of Northwest Michigan is a private, non-profit corporation, designated as an Area Agency on Aging in 1974 by the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging, known now as the Aging and Adult Services Agency, a department of the newly created Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS).

As one of more than 670 area agencies on aging nationwide, AAANM is responsible for developing, managing and funding a comprehensive system of services in the ten counties of Northwest Lower Michigan – Region 10.

This year (4) out of the (10) counties that the Area Agency on Aging of Northwest Michigan (AAANM) serve, elected to receive an every other year in-person presentation from me instead of every year. (6) counties asked me to come visit them in-person as I have done in the past. One county requested a written synopsis in lieu of an in-person presentation of our activities for the 2014 program year. I have decided to provide that written synopsis to all (10) counties in our Northwest Michigan service area. I have scheduled the requested in-person presentations for the (6) counties that requested such, but would like to remind all the counties that I am happy to come visit them in person any time that they would find that helpful. Please do not hesitate to call if you would like me to present to your commissioners or committees on the programs that the AAANM offer in your specific county, or offer throughout Northwest Michigan. Since this is the first year for my new presentation schedule, I look to you for suggestions as to what information you would find helpful in learning more about the AAANM and its activities.

There have been and continue to be dramatic changes in financial and programmatic directives handed down to the local Area Agencies on Aging in Michigan (AAA), and indeed throughout the country. Most of the changes are positive in nature, and are directed at improving efficiencies in both service cost and delivery effectiveness. Some of these changes still have to play out for a while to see if they will be beneficial to the residents we serve, or whether they will be yet another road block to providing adequate services.

In the area of financial costs, the AAA network is moving quickly towards a managed care system where “capitated rates” for services are set based on a formula that a particular county resident aligns with, i.e., age, location, basic daily living/health requirements, etc.. It is up to the AAANM staff to make sure that a clear picture is painted of the service needs that an individual might have, and then the cost of providing these services must fall within the identified, newly developed cost structures of the program. The amount of funding available to serve your residents has been somewhat of a moving target while all the systems are catching up with the new way of doing business. Our main focus however will always be to provide responsive and meaningful services to your residents. Over the years we have successfully navigated many changes in the service provision world, and we will successfully navigate these current changes as well.

Nutrition programs and direct home care services continue to be the main focus of the AAANM and its network of over 70 providers throughout the ten counties of Northwest Michigan. Without the availability of these important basic services, we see a spiraling down of the general wellness of our senior residents. These areas of service are also what we spend the most time advocating for in Lansing. There is not enough resources in the system to serve all those who deserve to be served, so we continue our efforts in making our legislators aware of this ever increasing need for resources. We also have an increasing population of older individuals, many with very limited financial capabilities, and they count on organizations like the AAANM to help them remain healthy in their own homes. By remaining healthy in their own homes or another residential setting, our senior and disabled residents keep the “big picture” Long Term Care costs lower than if these services were not made available. There have been studies showing the lower costs related to keeping someone at home and out of a long term care nursing home

setting because of the services received by an area agency on aging or other home care provider such as your Commissions and Counsels on Aging. The quality nursing home setting will always be a vital resource in the long term care system, and they remain a strong partner with the AAANM long term care efforts, while we identify the most appropriate long term care needs of individuals.

With this brief summary, you will receive a copy of our 2014 Annual report. This report will show more in detail the programs we offered in 2014 and will also describe several of the newer initiatives that we are involved with, i.e., the Aging and Disability Resource Collaborative of Northwest Michigan, Veteran's Self Directed Care, and A Matter of Balance trainings. Also included is a brief description of the funding that runs directly through your Commission or Council on Aging. And as in past years, I have included a more detailed listing of the various programs we operate in your specific county and the total dollar expended in providing these services compared to the total dollar amount expended region-wide.

If at any time you have questions related to this information, please do not hesitate to give me a call or send me an email.

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As always, I look forward to talking with you.