

**Aging and Adult Dependent Care Committee  
(AADCC)**

**July 28, 2020  
WebEx  
2:00 PM to 4:00 PM**

**Attendees:** Ms. Carla Alvarez Mells, OCPL/OD/NIH; Ms. Faith Apeti, ORS; Ms. Jill Bartholomew, NCI; Mr. Louis Brennan, ORS; Mr. Virgilio Bundoc, NIAID; Ms. Susan Cook, ORS; Mr. Christopher Gaines, ORS; Mr. Ryan Gonzales, NIDDK; Dr. Deborah Henken, NICHD; Dr. Chao Jiang, NIAID; Ms. Linda Kiefer, ORS; Ms. Martina Lavrisha, CC; Dr. Dawn Lea, NHGRI; Ms. Tonya Lee, ORS; Ms. Sonia Marable, NIAID; Ms. Cooper McLendon, NIA; Dr. Lisbeth Nielsen, NIA; Ms. Brittany Patterson, OHR; Ms. Melissa Porter, NCI; Dr. Mark Rubert, CSR; Ms. Dede Rutberg, NIDCR; Dr. Elka Scordalakes-Ferrante, NIDCD; Ms. Anna Verschoore, ORS; Dr. Dan Xi, NCI

**The July 28 PowerPoint presentation is attached for your reference.**

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

**Introduction of Keynote Speaker**

Co-Chair Cooper McLendon opened the meeting and shared an introduction of keynote speaker Dr. Lisbeth Nielsen, Director of the Division of Behavioral and Social Research (BSR) at the National Institute on Aging (NIA). Since joining NIA in 2005, Dr. Nielsen developed numerous research initiatives in the psychology of aging, served as liaison to the Resource Centers on Minority Aging (RCMAR) program, and helped spawn several transdisciplinary aging research networks. Nielsen has been an advocate for the study of aging processes across the full life course, including research on early life influences on later life outcomes and on processes in midlife that play a causal role in shaping trajectories of aging.

**II. Special Guest - Dr. Lisbeth Nielsen, Director, Division of Behavioral and Social Research, National Institute on Aging**

**A.** Dr. Lisbeth Nielsen presented an insightful presentation about how factors such as social isolation and loneliness can impact individuals in midlife and older age. Loneliness is described as the feeling of being left out or not included and can be measured by looking at companionship. It is apparent that aging brings an increase in world knowledge, improvements in wellbeing and world knowledge. Furthermore, life satisfaction can improve with age. However, social isolation and impoverished social environments are some of the greatest disadvantages to aging. Dr. Nielsen emphasized that social isolation and loneliness are not the same, but loneliness can increase the risk of social isolation.

Below are highlights of the presentation.

- i. Loneliness is one strong predictor of increased mortality risks, furthermore, considered a predictor for increases in systolic blood pressure over time.
- ii. A lack of good social relationships poses equivalent mortality risk to smoking.
- iii. Objective and subjective isolation are both moderately correlated to increasing health risks. Objective isolation focuses on physical and social isolation/ separation while subjective isolation focuses on loneliness and the feeling state of being alone.
- iv. Living alone is becoming an extremely prevalent phenomenon.
- v. As age increases, the percentage of individuals that live alone increases as well; living alone is not the same as social isolation but it increases the likelihood of social isolation.
- vi. 24% of community-dwelling adults age 65 + in the US were categorized as being socially isolated and 4% were severely socially isolated.
- vii. Loneliness is not a permeant stage; over multiple time periods some people may become lonely or recover from loneliness.

- viii. According to the National Social Life, Health and Aging Project over 5 years, 15% of older adults became lonely, 12% recovered from loneliness, 18% were consistently lonely.
  - a. Functional limitations, low family support, and strained friendships predict increase in loneliness and becoming lonely.
  - b. Better self-rated health, higher levels of socializing frequency, and lower family strain predict recovery from loneliness.

#### **B. COVID-19 Behavioral and Social Research**

Dr. Lisbeth Nielson continued her presentation to discuss how COVID-19 socially and behaviorally influences the aging community. Although there is little research on this topic thus far researchers found that there is little increase in loneliness among older adults across waves. Dr. Nielson also shared that younger adults were more likely to use the internet for social gatherings. It would be valuable to consider how older adults may be able to take advantage of the internet and virtual gatherings. Most seniors will say they need help using new electronic devices. This decreases their chance to utilize telehealth services ultimately putting older adults in triple jeopardy. Dr. Nielson urges the committee to consider creating support systems and visual infrastructure to support older adults for this current and pandemics in the future.

### **III. Updates**

#### **A. 2019 Annual Report –ORS Director Response**

- i. The 2019 AADCC Annual Report was submitted to Ms. Colleen A McGowan, Director, Office of Research Services; the response was sent dated July 6, 2020.
- ii. Co-Chair Jill Bartholomew expressed her appreciation to committee members considering the impact of COVID-19 which everyone has experienced during this tough time. Jill acknowledged how it was more challenging to keep up the momentum due to increased workloads and inability to meet in person but applauds the committee for still moving forward.
- iii. The response highlights 3 important actions that ORS will take on within the next year.
  - 1. Award a new contract to Resource and Referral services and Family Education
  - 2. Redesign the ORS website
  - 3. Complete the 2021 Life@ NIH survey
- iv. Jill Bartholomew asked for input from ORS on how to maintain effective communication about when work on the website and contributions to the Life@NIH survey may occur.

Ms. Susan Cook, Director, Division of Amenities and Transportation Services (DATS) informed the committee of the DATS' ongoing effort to keep everything moving forward. She also mentioned the vital efforts of Ms. Tonya Lee, Program Manager, Child and Family Programs, Mr. Tim Tosten, Associate Director, Programs and Employees Services and herself to see how programs can be promoted better. There is no finalized timeline for the ORS website redesign, but Susan will reach out once she gets that update. The IT team has been working internally to present templates to the division.

- v. Ms. Tonya Lee reminded the committee that the Life@NIH survey will be scheduled for release in 2021. Considering the FEVS will be released in October, Tonya reminds the committee to be as strategic as possible.
  - 1. Coordination efforts are being organized with other points of contact who may be releasing surveys at the same time to inhibit redundancy.
- vi. Ms. Colleen McGowan, Director, ORS, asked the AADCC to prioritize their recommendations in its 2019 Annual Report based on greatest impact and need because of the effect COVID-19 has had on funding.

1. Ms. Susan Cook has asked for the committee to discuss internally their prioritized list of recommendations. On a later date, to be determined, Susan and the co-chairs will discuss the new list.

**B. LifeWork Strategies Inc. Resources and Referral Services Questions and Answers**

- i. The statement of work is currently being for R&R Services.
- ii. Tonya will reach out to the committee with the opportunity for a representative to serve on the technical evaluation panel. Tonya encourages the incorporation of stakeholders to provide ideal services to the NIH.

**C. 2020 Final Workplan**

- i. This meeting has included the new two-year final work plan.

**IV. Communication Workgroup Work Plan 2020 - Update**

**A.** The communications workgroup has been reviewing the current ORS website as it relates to aging and adult-dependent care content. They have suggested a more prominent, easy-to-find location for AADCC information that will promote an increased awareness and use of services. The workgroup analyzed the page from several perspectives focusing mainly on content and presentation. The workgroup emphasizes that right now is a critical time for all committee members to offer their feedback as a website user or outlet for someone who has come to you with their opinions. A strategic communications plan is in process and will be completed by the end of August. The team has also been posting on the NIH Adult Listserv on a recurring basis.

**B.** The communication workgroup has made four suggestions for how to bolster the content on the webpage.

1. Consider adding more testimonials, pictures, and first-hand experiences, using categorization for ease of access.
2. Allow the listserv to have its own launch area
3. Consider adding a wellness tab directly onto the toolbar next to the “about us” tab.
4. Reorganize the current pages to include information in the following order.

**Resources**

- a. Aging and adult dependent care committee
- b. How to become a member
- c. Meeting dates
- d. Aging and adult dependent care committee annual reports
- e. Need more information

**C.** Social media efforts are no longer “on hold”, however, the workgroup encourages AADCC members to coordinate with their IC public affairs offices to disseminate information on their IC Intranets and other internal channels.

- i. The committee should consider if the shared information is targeting the appropriate audience.
- ii. Ms. Susan Cook has offered the AADCC access to the NIH ORS Employee Services Twitter account.

**D.** Ms. Martina Lavriha has agreed to send out reminders for the NIH Adult Listserv posts.

**V. Research Workgroup**

**A.** Overview of accomplishments:

- i. Reviewed NIH FTE Population Report
- ii. Reviewed the 2019 ORS Research & Referral Survey Report
- iii. Reviewed the Federal Employee Viewpoint (FEVS) Survey Report (aging and adult dependent care questions/responses)
- iv. Reviewed the 2017 OPM Work-Life Federal Survey Results

- v. Reviewed the NIH Exit Survey
  - vi. Reviewed the NIH 2019 ORS Resource and Referral Services Summary Utilization Report
  - vii. Creating a sub- group that will seek to identify other NIH and Non-NIH Resources and Tools (Montgomery County, Federal, other...) they will meet on July 30<sup>th</sup>
- B. Main points of discussion:**
- i. Only 3% of patron's report using NIH Resource and Referral Services but people are relevantly satisfied with the services provided.
  - ii. The NIH community is not as aware of the services as they should be.
- C. Suggestions:**
- i. Get permission from the webinars to develop a mailing list that forwards aging, adult dependent care and caregiver services and crucial information.
  - ii. Identify the gaps in the services provided.
  - iii. Contact wellness ambassadors to increase visibility and possibly collect data from them without surveying.
    - 1. Ms. Sonia Marable and Co-Chair Cooper McLendon are Wellbeing Ambassadors.
      - a. Sonia Marable mentioned the communication workgroup's partnership with Wellbeing Ambassadors to make them aware of the plethora of resources that they would like to publicize. Additionally, the communications workgroup would like to have monthly engagement with the Wellbeing Ambassadors to have a concrete line of contact.

The research workgroup would like to develop a checklist of information needed for tasks that need to get accomplished after a loved one passes away such as: funeral services and financial planning.

## **VI. Open Discussion –COVID –19**

- A.** The committee has brought up previous discussion about starting a support group. The COVID-19 pandemic is a wonderful opportunity to really connect with the aging adult and dependent care community. Ms. Susan Cook shared that Dr. Alfred Johnson, Deputy Director for Management, wants the committee's input about what the NIH community needs to support aging and adult-dependent care.
- B.** Ms. Tonya Lee encourages the committee to think out of the box and to think of ways to use current services to meet the needs of the NIH workforce during this time of uncertainty.
- C.** Ms. Melissa Porter suggested providing an activity list of engaging things that families can do that are safe but promote a feeling of normalcy. The list should consider a variety of activities for kids of all ages and adults.

## **VII. Next Steps**

- A.** Ms. Tonya Lee encourages the committee to remain aware of the other programs that are available at the NIH.
  - i. Ms. Anna Vershoore, Program Manager, Employee Assistance Program (EAP). talked about the EAP partnership with the National Institute of Mental Health, to provide a phone support initiative that has been opened to the entire workforce. This care line provides needed emotional support and assistance in finding new programs.
- B.** The committee will determine how they will use the NIH ORS twitter account to the best of their ability to reach their target audience.

## **VIII. Announcements and Adjournment**

**The next meeting will be October 6, 2020.**