

**State Comprehensive Planning Group  
NASUA TASC Conference Call Summary  
Thursday, June 19, 2008, 2:00 EDT**

**Participants:**

**AoA**

Bob Hornyak

**AZ**

Randy Scott

**FL**

Sylvia Cohen

Laurie Koburger

**IN**

Phil Stafford

**KY**

Melissa Hopkins

**MN**

Kari Benson

**NJ**

David Burdick

Gerry McKenzie

**NC**

Erin King

Abha Varma

**PA**

Gregory Darr

**TASC/NASUA**

Martha Roherty

Barbara Kelley

**NASUA TASC Welcome and Update:**

Martha Roherty, NASUA Executive Director, welcomed all participants and asked participants to identify themselves by state.

She announced that on the following Monday (June 23, 2008) NASUA would hold an all state call focusing on states that are victims of the current floods in the mid-west. Other states with emergency response experience may be able to offer advice and assistance. The call-in number will be the same as for today's call.

Secondly, she announced that the NASUA website has been updated. The new site is now up and ready for viewing. She asked states to let NASUA know if they see anything that needs correcting on the site. Also, states are invited to send in relevant items to post on the site. She pointed out that there is a space holder for a TASC blog as requested earlier. It will be operational shortly. She also reported that TASC information from the past six months will be posted within the next couple of weeks.

**AoA Update:**

Bob Hornyak encouraged everyone to take a look at the TASC Planning Zone, noting that it “looks great!” State plans are posted on the site, including a couple new state plan drafts that follow the new national model. A grantee state, Pennsylvania, followed the new format, producing a product that is succinct and complete, getting to the full intent of this project.

**Presentations: Expanding Evaluation Capacity**

Martha Roherty introduced the presenters: Abha Varma, PhD, lead planner and evaluator for the NC Division of Aging Services, and Bruce Bondo from the SC Lt. Governor’s Office on Aging.

Dr. Varma provided an orientation to the NC ARMS (Aging Resource Management System) data system and then reviewed their systematic approach toward expanding and enhancing the system. ARMS is the NC data tracking system for the OAA services which recently has been upgraded to a web-based system, allowing greater functionality. Another recent upgrade is the addition of a data tracking component for the new Family Caregiver Support program. ARMS tracks client characteristics, service data, and expenditures. With the web-based system, there are now 3 access points: the state Division of Aging and Adults Services staff, AAA staff, and over 350 local providers. The state controls access and provides different levels of access to the data. Data from ARMS is used for reimbursement, research and planning (including POMP), monitoring and quality assurance, special reports to providers for local planning, and special reports to the state legislature. Local providers and AAAs are pleased to have access to data which can be helpful in their grant writing and other resource development efforts.

The next step in expansion of their data capacity is their current involvement in building a common interface with other DHHS data systems through the Common Name Data Service (CNDS), a hub for connecting data from multiple systems. Each division has autonomy over their own data tracking system, but through CNDS they can communicate with other data systems. The time factor has been crucial. Having suspended the collection of 9 digit social security numbers, establishing a unique identifier for clients across systems through CNDS is the only way to compare data across systems. However, with the nine digit SSNs still available through the old system, data conversion is still easy and meets the CNDS governance policies. CNDS policies for inclusion did not allow for converting clients based on 4 digit SSNs. The implementation timeline calls for the CNDS – ARMS interface to go live in July 2010. The long range vision is to integrate OAA data within the larger Client Services Data Warehouse. Better data capacity through the current data expansion project will allow for more effective program planning and aligns with the goals of AoA key initiatives such as person-centered planning and POMP evaluation. Ultimately it can lead to more effective use of public dollars.

Bruce Bondo followed with a presentation of the development of a “Seniors’ Cube” for data analysis in South Carolina. The South Carolina Seniors’ Cube is a comprehensive and readily accessible statewide electronic database of the senior’s health care statistics and

services that integrates information from multiple data systems. The database allows cross-sectional analysis of data from the state's hospital system, Medicaid, Medicare, Alzheimer's disease registry and the AIM database for Older Americans Act services. Eventually Medicaid waiver services and other agency data will be added. This quick query data analysis tool shows multiple relationship factors that effect outcomes and that allow for policy development and research in a wide area of programs, services and diseases. It allows examination of many outcome questions. For example, "can provision of home delivered meals or group meals for seniors reduce hospital or nursing home usage?"

Funding has been provided through the Duke Endowment and has resulted in a partnership with the USC Arnold School of Public Health and the South Carolina State Budget and Control Board, Office of Research and Statistics. Through the assistance of the Office of Research and Statistics, multiple client databases from state agencies can be linked to medical data from hospitals and claims data from Medicaid and Medicare. An algorithm has been created to protect an individual's identity, yet allows for tracking health and human services utilization over multiple years. The Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging utilizes a statewide steering committee of major universities, AARP, the South Carolina Hospital Association, the South Carolina State Budget and Control Board, Office of Research and Statistics and other related groups. It will maintain the effort through state funds, foundation grants and access/user fees in the future.

Preliminary results from evidence-based research indicate that serving meals to seniors at least four times a week may reduce emergency department visits and inpatient hospitalizations. This kind of evidence-based research convinced the SC legislature to provide \$2.9 million in new state funds for home and community-based services for seniors. Other comparisons of home and community-based services will allow Area Agencies on Aging and others to provide seniors with the appropriate knowledge and information to make reasoned choices to reduce their risk of disease, disability, and injury which would allow them to remain independent longer. Evidence-based prevention and wellness initiatives have the potential to significantly enhance the lives of our state's seniors and save Medicaid spending on the state level, as well as Medicaid and Medicare spending on the national level. The Office of Research and Statistics has finalized access and use protocols in order that South Carolina's major research institutions will have access to the South Carolina Seniors' Cube supporting additional research efforts in aging.

Martha Roherty thanked the presenters and reminded call participants of the next monthly conference call on Thursday, July 17, 2008 at 2:00 EST. She also stated again that there will be an all-state call on Monday, June 23, focusing on emergency response efforts for areas affected by recent flooding.