



RAC HEALTH CARE COMMITTEE MINUTES

July 18, 2024

CONFERENCE ROOM

Chair Janet Warren called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Members Present: Ellie Anderson, Emily Lahti, Joan Macholl, Janet Warren Lisa Frank, Director

New Members: Jan Anderson, Rosalyn Doty, Doris Ferron, Bill Ferron, Esther Hagen, Joanna Krieger, Marty Mallak, Paul Tarantino

Absent: Carl Bohnenkamp, CJ Corneliusen

The roll call confirmed attendance of four current members and Director Frank with two absent. Of the twelve members of the committee in 2023/24, three left for higher levels of care, one passed, and two did not continue, leaving six on the committee. Of the twelve persons who indicated an interest in being a member of the RAC Health Care Committee, eight persons attended as prospective members. Before the next meeting on August 8, 2024, Chair Warren will call all twelve to confirm their interest in joining the group permanently.

The June 2024 RAC Health Care Committee minutes were previously approved via email distribution and response by a majority of members. Chair Warren reviewed major decisions and individual responsibilities for action within the minutes. Ellie Anderson moved and it was seconded to confirm the review and approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Reports:

Chair Warren distributed a chronological history and calendar of committee achievements from 2022 to 2024 including the Mission Statement and Responsibilities, seminars and workshops, support groups, and quarterly newsletter Did You Know encouraging new members to read the documents and fill out an interest survey to determine areas of health care they would like to be involved in developing during the coming year. Ellie Anderson reported that the SHINE agency is always looking for coordinators and counselors at different locations, and one person on the committee should apply to be trained for that position. New members were encouraged to write articles for the newsletter and suggest topics that could be of interest to the Freedom Plaza residents, suggest professionals who would provide seminars, and to volunteer to moderate the neuropathy and hearing-impaired support groups or assist in those areas.

CJ Corneliussen will restart the cancer support group on August 15 as a moderator and there is a need for persons to assist her with that group. Ellie Anderson volunteered to help with the hearing-impaired as time allowed. She is also the organizer and moderator of the Parkinson's Support Group. Tom Altshuler, no longer a member, has said he would be willing to prepare and give a seminar for the hearing-impaired covering some of the material from his last presentation last year.

Chair Warren suggested that members visit the www.RACRep.org website for archived minutes from 2020-2024 which delineates the history of the Health Care Committee, as well as health care committee seminars that were recorded live and posted, exercise programs, Freedom Plaza Wellness and Safety handbooks, and episodes of internet health care summits and webinars.

Each member was asked to share why the Health Care Committee was of interest to them and information about their background of experience in health care or in other vocational fields. Each member, in turn, spoke about past experiences and indicated ways they could contribute.

Unfinished Business:

Chair Warren contacted Theresa Lehman, Dining Services Director to ask on behalf of Joan Macholl's request, for several menus to be printed with a larger font size for those who are seriously vision-impaired. Director Lehman wanted to know how many persons need this service. Joan will investigate and report the finding at the next meeting. Joan suggested that the RACReps help her determine how many of the residents on their floor are vision impaired. Chair Warren asked her to submit her proposal to the RAC Executive Officers at their next meeting which is usually a week before the monthly meeting. All proposals involving RACReps need to be approved by them before execution. Ellie A. suggested that a survey of residents should ask them to report their conditions of being vision-impaired, hearing impaired or having mobility issues, however Director Frank reminded that this would violate the confidentiality that she ensures for all residents. Joan M. will contact Kathy Vore to make an appointment to meet with the RAC Executive Board. Director Frank will work with her on this project and use this approach to collect information about how many are vision-impaired, possibly including numbers of those who are hearing impaired or have mobility problems.

New Business:

Ellie Anderson will submit Guidelines for the Parkinson's Support Group at the next meeting. She described the activities she has pursued so far: Building reference resources, connecting with the Parkinson's Foundation and Michael Fox Foundation, developing a list of specialists in Tampa and Orlando who can offer a higher level of care,

sharing information in common about medication and experiences with medical professionals, and developing information and securing materials about several topic areas. There are less than 20 members, but all are active participants. There have been several motivational activities that were attended by the group such as “Pump it up for Parkinsons” held at Freedom Plaza and a gathering at Tampa.

CJ Corneliussen will have her first cancer support group meeting August 15. She will also be presenting a series of lectures for all residents describing aspects of her work with facets of metastatic cancer and her efforts to secure funding for that field which has generally been underrepresented in scientific research.

To restart the neuropathy support group, a moderator is needed. Director Frank suggested reinstating and promoting the monthly zoom sessions with a University of Florida professor that participants have found very helpful in the past.

Ellie Anderson suggested that a session on Medicare could provide helpful information for residents in the fall. This could also involve a visit from a SHINE representative, again with the thought of someone on the committee electing to receive training and being involved with this agency.

In the absence of Carl Bohnenkamp, Chair Warren reported on the progress of several of his projects. He is in the process of providing CPR to the Dining Room staff which will also include first aid and AED training. Both Manager Melli and Associate Director Pam have volunteered for training. He is enlisting the aid of a company to provide a display of animatronic animals, possibly in the atrium. These artificial “pets” can be very comforting to some seniors. The display of legal documents to take to the hospital is still in the planning stage. He will be reporting the status of the projects at the September meeting. There was a question as to whether Freedom Plaza has enough AED’s as well as people trained to use the equipment. Yes, to both questions.

Director Frank reported that Transitions in Care Two, featuring Plaza West, will be August 20. The August 27th Symposium will include information about falls and wellbeing along with other information over a two-hour presentation. The mobility “walker” clinic will be tomorrow Friday, July 19th. Carl B, Ellie A., Janet W. and Lisa Frank will be on hand to assist. Daina Machado, bereavement counselor at Life Path Hospice will be presenting, “When You Lose A Dear Loved One” on Tuesday, July 23rd. Residents have been given three notices about these events and all are on the Did You Know calendar along with other planned activities for Fall.

The ninth edition of the Did You Know newsletter was delivered to residents July 19th. Chair Warren typed and formatted the newsletter in Ron Sweet's absence. There appears to be a very good response to the articles written for each of the editions. The tenth edition needs to be published in October as an October/November/ December sequence with an eleventh edition publication in January 2025.

Another possible support group could be established for bereavement. After discussion, the committee decided there could be several approaches. People may not be ready to discuss their concerns at a bereavement session, but a speaker could touch on the many ways we experience losses as we age and how we can cope with that. At Chair Warren's request, Daina Machado has planned to address various forms of grieving involving divorce, death and loss at her presentation in July. Also, the possibility of a support group that meets to engage in various activities like drumming, guided imagery, etc. could be of interest to residents as a form of bereavement therapy. Chair Warren will contact several people she knows who have skills to help with this project.

Marty Malak has joined the Committee as a liaison from FLICRA in the belief that the two groups can each support each other's work to address health care needs for seniors. She submitted an article that describes the use of Alexa for summoning help electronically to a source of assistance after a fall. The RAC Technology Committee is in the process of discussing how to help residents utilize the equipment they have in their apartment and will be holding workshops in the future. This project is well worth the effort to explore. There needs to be administrative clearance to proceed and funding to provide this service that permits a resident to reach a source of emergency assistance via a voice command to Alexa. This definitely is a project that would provide a valuable service to residents, given that several have recently fallen at night and lay on the floor for many hours before they were discovered. One died shortly thereafter and the other had to have hip surgery as a result of the fall. Although medical emergency buttons are given to any resident who wants them and that signal goes directly to the front desk with EMT'S on duty, residents don't always wear them at night when they should.

A concern was raised in that no information is given to let residents know how many are recovering COVID and that COVID tests are not done by the Wellness Department. Director Frank emphasized that everyone should still be cautious and protect themselves from COVID. As far as informing residents of how many presently have COVID periodically on a given date, that number is not always accurate, because people do not always share that information with the Wellness Center. There are COVID tests available for purchase for self-testing at home.

At the end of the meeting, Joan Macholl nominated and it was seconded by several (names not available) for Janet Warren to continue as chair for the 2024-25 committee year. Chair Warren called for volunteers to offer their services as secretary. She offered to provide training and assistance, however no person volunteered to be secretary.

Respectfully Submitted,

Janet Warren, Chair and Secretary