

## **AGENDA ITEM # IV.**

### **Proposal to Incorporate Options Counseling into the Five County Area Agency on Aging's**

#### **Home & Community Based Case Management Services**

As the Area Agency on Aging Director, I am requesting approval from the Steering Committee for the Five County Association of Governments (Area Agency on Aging) to receive funding from the Aging And Disability Resource Center (ADRC) and the Veteran's Administration (VA) to become an Options Counseling Site. By doing so, we can enhance the ability of Senior's, people with disabilities and their families in making informed decisions regarding their long term care needs. This will optimize choice and independence, encourage personal responsibility and empower these individuals in their decision making. In return, we can potentially prevent and/or delay more costly forms of long term care; including over-reliance on federal and state programs.

We will be able to easily incorporate this service into our current I&R (Information & referral) and Intake process using existing program and case management staff. Options counseling will enable us to enhance and improve I&R (Information & referral) services; enabling us to take this process one step further than we currently can with existing funding and resources. Options counseling provides more in-depth support to senior's, Veterans, people with disabilities, and their family caregivers regarding their long term care needs and assists them in looking at resources and care options that enable the individual to access the services they need in the least restrictive and most cost effective way; ultimately saving tax payer's dollars.

*The main goals of Options Counseling include:*

- *Facilitating informed decision-making about Long Term Supports and Services.*
- *Serving a key role in streamlined access to supports; both, formal and informal, private and public.*
- *Providing a clear pathway (a single point of entry) for individuals to access Long Term care Supports and Services.*
- *Help to prevent or delay premature institutionalization by offering options to help individuals spend resources wisely in the community; in particular publicly funded programs.*

As the designated Area Agency on Aging for Five County, we are required as part of the Older Americans Act (OAA) to provide information, referral and assistance to seniors and their caregivers in regards to long term services and supports. By becoming an options counseling site and receiving additional funding; we can not only enhance and improve the current services we provide but potentially free up other funding sources, such as Older American Act (OAA) funds which can be more effectively used to provide direct services at the local level. If approved, we would receive an additional \$10,000 in funding annually from the Aging and Disability Resource Center; as well as funds for up to a ½ FTE from the Veteran's Administration. As noted previously, we can incorporate the additional services as part of our existing Home & Community Based Services and do not anticipate needing to bring on new staff. In addition, coordination with the ADRC and the VA will only enhance all of our programs and services and has the potential to bring in additional funds to support existing programs.

**AGENDA ITEM # IV. (Continued)**



**Utah Commission  
On Aging**

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*Chair*

**ANNE PALMER PETERSON**  
*Executive Director*

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*Governor*

**GREGORY S. BELL**  
*Lieutenant Governor*

Steering Committee Members  
Five County Association of Governments  
1070 W 1600 S  
Saint George, UT 84770

July 31, 2013

Dear Colleagues:

I am writing to encourage the steering committee of The Five County Association of Governments to support joining Utah’s Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) in the Five County area. Joining the network would bring to southwestern Utah additional federal funds allocated to Utah’s ADRC by the Administration on Community Living (ACL). For FY13, approximately \$10,000 would be allocated to Five County AOG to support enhanced services in planning for long term support and services for the residents of Beaver, Garfield, Iron, Kane and Washington counties. The constituents in your counties who are becoming increasingly frail as they age would benefit from this service.

Utah’s ADRC was launched in 2009, when the Utah Commission on Aging entered into a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Administration on Aging. To launch the ADRC, the Steering Committee identified the key elements in ADRCs and the key elements of Options Counseling, so that individuals with a current or future need for long-term services and supports can explore options, develop a plan, and receive referrals and support from trained experts at the local level.

Participating in the Utah ADRC would mean Five County AOG can receive the programmatic assistance to become a one-stop location for options counseling in Five County. ADRC Options Counselors can help individuals with diverse needs. Potential clients include:

- Older Persons
- People with disabilities of all ages
- Family members and caregivers
- Individuals who would benefit from Options for long-term care/support
- Professionals in the fields of healthcare, education, social services and advocacy

Additional funding opportunities are available to ADRC sites. For example, the Utah ADRC is piloting a project with the VA Office of Rural Health, “Connecting Rural Veterans to Aging and Disability Centers for Options Counseling.” In the next year, funds will be allotted to provide agency staff intensive training on Veteran Benefits, as well as for staff time working with veteran clients. We at the Commission on Aging feel that veterans in southwestern Utah deserve to receive the same personalized and qualified benefits counseling that veterans in the rest of the state receive.

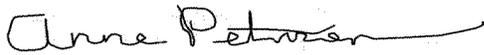
The Utah Commission on Aging is working with existing entities to assure that individuals can find the services that they need. Utah is the sixth fastest aging state in the nation. The need for quality information and referrals are the reasons the Aging and

**AGENDA ITEM # IV. (Continued)**

Disability Resource Connection was established. This is why the Commission on Aging urges governments and the private sector to avoid crisis and maximize opportunity in planning for our citizens as they age.

We are pleased to have St. George Mayor Daniel McArthur representing the Utah League of Cities and Towns on the Commission on Aging. I have spoken to Mayor McArthur, and he is fully in support of the Five County Associations of Governments becoming a formal member of the Utah ADRC network. Carrie Schonlaw will be providing additional information regarding the ADRC opportunity at your meeting August 14. I am including a recent opinion piece by a community physician in which the author mentions how seniors find resources at a single entry point through ADRCs. I would encourage your adopting this great program and incorporating it into your community.

Sincerely,



Anne Palmer Peterson, Ed.D.  
Executive Director, Utah Commission on Aging