

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Seniors Listening Session

May 20, 2013 – Noon – The Center

In attendance:

Barb Morrison & Kelly Butts – Southwest 8 Senior Services
Tom Jensen – The Center
Joel Dierks & Erin Hudson – West Central Community Action
Lorrie Reddish – Jennie Edmundson Hospital
Bridget Caniglia & Caryn Hohnholt – Visiting Nurse Assoc.- Pottawattamie County
Diane Carlon – Bethany Lutheran Home
Jill Orton – Meals on Wheels
Carol Geider – Municipal Housing Authority

IWF Staff attendance:

Jerry Mathiasen
Deb Debbaut

- * The elderly population is growing – all service providers need to work together to seek funding.
- * Mental health is an issue – seniors do not want to admit or embarrassed by the stigma. Isolation leads to issues with seniors.
- * Shortage of physicians that deal with the senior population, appointment time can be up to 8 weeks out. Many physicians do not take Medicare because the reimbursement is not as high as they want.
- * Many senior houses are not safe – repairs, and up-keep have not been done – because of health of economic reasons.
- * Home tasks that they need assistance with:
 1. Snow removal / yard work
 2. Home repairs
 3. Housework / Financial Assistance/Preparing meals and access to transportation.
- * Volunteer Center is gone and there isn't a way to coordinate services. No background checks, no recruitment of volunteers. Meals on Wheels has problems getting volunteers with the price of gas.

- * Health system – many do not know how to navigate the system and have not connections. They then feel isolated.
- * They need someone to walk them through health and insurance issues.
- * Many don't have or know how to use computers.
- * Chronic health problems are an issue with seniors.

- * Utilities – need continues as the income levels have leveled off – seniors not keeping up economically.

- * Transportation is a HUGE issue
- * Sustainability is always an issue with transportation. Takes longer to get transportation to doctors' offices than the actual office call. Especially for those in the county.

- * It would be good to have one phone number for seniors to call to seek assistance.

- * Everything is up in the air with the new government health plan going to be rolled out.

- * Fall programs prove to be beneficial to seniors.

- * Walking trails would receive more use by seniors if there were more benches along paths and trails. Benches need to have arms on them to assist seniors in getting back up.

- * There is a virtual senior center in NY that does webcast – dancing, exercise classes. Very successful.

- * Many multi- generational families living off the senior's income.

General Thoughts:

- Would like to see more kids volunteer with seniors
- Think outside the box – massage therapy, balance issues
- Transportation
- Senior knowledge
- Transportation to doctors
- One number to call for services in the County
- Community support to assist seniors
- More “we collaboration” – more “we work together”
- Seniors think their issues are as important