

Approved: Jan 1, 2000
Date

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Garry Boston at 1:30 p.m. on January 25, 2000.

All members were present except: Representative Gerald Geringer, Excused
Representative David Haley, Excused
Representative Jerry Henry, Excused
Representative Brenda Landwehr, Excused
Representative Dale Swenson, Excused
Representative Jonathan Wells, Excused

Committee staff present: June Evans, Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Jane Metzger, Executive Director, Meals on Wheels, Inc.
Jan Allen, Administrator, Topeka Convalescent Center

Connie Hubbell, Secretary; Mike Hammond, Special Assistant; Michelle Sweeney, Legislative Liaison; and Maria Russo, Director of the Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging escorted the committee on a tour of the East Topeka Senior Center at 1114 S. E. 10th Street and the Topeka Convalescent Center at 515 S. W. Horne.

The East Topeka Council on Aging, Inc., was organized in March 1981 and the East Topeka Senior Center is the Council's primary program. The Center provides nutritious meals, socialization, health assessments and medication reviews and information and referral services for individuals 60 and over.

Current participants are between age 60 and 99, with the average age being 76. Over 90% live at or below poverty (See Attachment 1).

Jane Metzger, Executive Director, Meals on Wheels, Inc., testified there are 14 meal sites that operate in Shawnee and Jefferson Counties. During 1999 meals were served to 1,246 unduplicated customers a total of 99,793 meals. Of those served 398 are at or below poverty level and 349 are near poverty level.

Funding for Friendship Meals program in 2000 include \$184,164 in federal funds under the Older American's Act Title IIIC(1), \$3,000 from the United Way, \$60,376 from Shawnee County Aging Mill Levy and \$16,836 from Kansas State General Funds. The general fund money is being cut in half by recent FY 2000 budget cuts suggested by the Governor. State funding for Meals on Wheels is very important and it represents a small portion of funding. 4.78% of our annual budget is provided through state In Home Nutrition funding for home delivered meals. 4.53% of the annual budget is provided through state Older American's Act match funding (See Attachment 2).

Jan Allen, Administrator, Topeka Convalescent Center, escorted the committee on a tour of the facility then briefed the committee on the administration of the facility.

The tour ended at 3:10 p.m. and the next meeting will be January 27.

EAST TOPEKA COUNCIL on AGING, INC.

...a brief introduction

The East Topeka Council on Aging, Inc. was organized as a 501 (c) (3) in March 1981. The Council's primary program, the East Topeka Senior Center, has since provided services to individuals age 60 and over.

Historically the Center has been a place Seniors can visit during daytime hours to socialize with peers, eat a nutritious meal, receive Health Assessments and Medication Reviews, and information and referral services. All services are provided to Seniors and their spouses free of charge.

East Topeka Senior Center, as a core service, provides transportation from individuals' homes to the Center and to medical appointments, and back to their homes. Another essential service provided by the Center is the Telephone Reassurance program in which Center staff call older citizens to make certain these individuals are well and not in need of any emergency assistance.

Perhaps the most important function of the Senior Center is that it provides a central location where older citizens can access a number of services. In collaboration with other agencies, persons age sixty and over are able to receive the following area programs:

- ✿ ***Meals on Wheels Congregate Meal Site***
- ✿ ***Shawnee County Health Agency Foot Care Clinic***
- ✿ ***Washburn University School of Nursing Medication Review and Health Checks***
- ✿ ***Let's Help Heartland Share Community Food Program and Commodities***
- ✿ ***El Centro Tax Assistance***
- ✿ ***Various City and County Agencies Information and Referral***

Current participants of East Topeka Senior Center programs are age 60 to 99, with the average age being 76. Over 90 % live at or below poverty. For many patrons, the meals and other food items offered at the Center provide their only opportunity for nutritious meals.

The City of Topeka, Shawnee County and the Federal Older Americans Act fund ETSC. In addition, its Transportation Program equipment and maintenance is subsidized by the State Department of Transportation.

H & H Services
1-25-2001
Atch #1

**Testimony to the House Health and Human Services Committee
January 25, 2000
Jane Metzger, Executive Director
Meals on Wheels, Inc.**

Thank you for taking time from your busy day to visit the East Topeka Senior Center. The Senior Center is one of 14 meal sites (Friendship Meals) that Meals on Wheels operates in Shawnee and Jefferson Counties. During 1999, Friendship Meals served 1,246 unduplicated customers a total of 99,793 meals. Of those served 398 are at or below poverty level and 349 are near poverty level. 44% of our congregate meal customers are 75 or older. I'm sorry that our customers are not here to greet you. How about taking a virtual tour with me? Our site director, Doreen, has prepared a special activity for you today, Wheel of Fortune. She made the wheel with her own funds. While she is taking reservations and preparing for the activity which will take place right after lunch, her volunteers, including Mother Bowen who is 99 years old, are in the kitchen putting last minute touches on the meal service. Today's meal is Hawaiian Chicken, brown rice, pickled beets, broccoli, roll and peach crisp. The room is buzzing with 30 customers. The East Topeka Senior Center or the Friendship Meal transportation programs have picked up most at their homes. Some drive themselves to the site. More than half live alone and two will turn 100 this year. The ethnic background is diversified.

Allow me to share with you why the congregate meal program is so important to senior programming in the state of Kansas. The Urban Institute conducted a nationwide survey in 1993. They estimated after the survey that as many as 4.9 million elderly people – about 16% of the population aged 60 and older – are either hungry or malnourished to some degree. Nationally some nine million people 65 or older live alone, putting them at increased risk for poor nutrition, and their numbers are expected to grow to 11 million within a decade. Conditions once considered the unavoidable ravages of aging – from cataracts to mental lethargy to slow-healing wounds – may really stem from poor diets, deficits of vitamins and other nutrients. Geriatric specialists coined the term “anorexia of aging”. It isn't like anorexia nervosa, in which people develop an aversion to food or an obsession with weight. The poor appetite and debilitating weight loss of the elderly have

HeH Sves
1-25-2000
Atch# 2

a range of causes: depression, dementia, denture problems and eating alone. Poverty is often a factor, but one national survey found that more than one in five older Americans, regardless of income, routinely skips at least one meal a day. For all of society, there is a heavy financial cost. Older people at nutritional risk make more visits to physicians, to hospitals and to emergency rooms. Studies have shown that, when compared to well-nourished hospital patients, malnourished patients have two to 20 times more complications, have hospital stays that are as much as 100% longer and compile costs \$2,000 to \$10,000 higher. Malnourished older patients are also readmitted to hospitals more frequently than their well-nourished counterparts. Social contact has a direct effect on health and well-being. The more socially isolated individuals are less healthy, psychologically and physically, and more likely to die. The converse is equally true. The more socially integrated individuals are, the more likely they are to be healthy and enjoy longer lives.

It is apparent that the congregate meal program is perhaps the most recognized social service intervention to address social isolation in nutritionally at-risk people. This is not a welfare program. It is a piece in the continuum of care of our seniors. As individuals are unable to attend the meal sites they often enter the home delivered program.

Our sources of funding for the Friendship Meals program in 2000 include \$184,164 in Federal Funds under the Older American's Act Title IIIC(1), \$3,000 from the United Way, \$60,376 from Shawnee County Aging Mill Levy and \$16,836 from Kansas State General Funds. The general fund money is being cut in half by recent FY 2000 budget cuts suggested by the Governor. Several years ago the Legislature funded the Older American's Act match at a higher than required level. The FY 2000 Older American's Act match request statewide was \$904,559 and the Governor's recent recommendation for was to drop the match to \$454,559. What that means for Friendship Meals here is an \$8,367 reduction in previously appropriated funds. The meal programs across the state are also facing a retroactive cut in USDA reimbursement. The new rate will be \$0.5404. This represents a reduction of \$0.0135 from last year's rate of \$0.5539. For Friendship Meals here that represents a \$1,326. When combined with a cut in the home delivered

program of \$8,689 in state general funds and \$1,067 cut in USDA, Meals on Wheels is facing a total cut of \$19,449 in FY2000. All this when we are trying to re-engineer the congregate meal program to make it more attractive and when we have a waiting list of 90+ for home delivered meals.

It is important that you understand that state funding for Meals on Wheels is very important and that it represents a small portion of our funding. 4.78% of our annual budget is provided through state In Home Nutrition funding for home delivered meals. 4.53% of our annual budget is provided through state Older American's Act match funding. Again, thank you for taking time from your day to visit the senior center and meal site.