



Rhode Island Long Term Care Coordinating Council

AGING IN COMMUNITY SUBCOMMITTEE



**2023 Progress Report
with Covid Lookback**

Aging in Community Subcommittee 2023 Progress Report

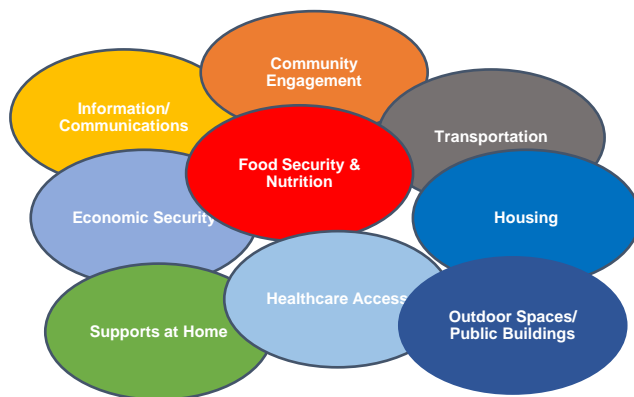


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BACKGROUND & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

9 Inter-related Aging in Community Domains



Recognizing the increasing growth of the state’s older population in 2014 the RI General Assembly passed RIGL 42-66.11 creating the Aging in Community Subcommittee of the Long Term Care Coordinating Council. Sponsored by House Majority Leader Christopher Blazejewski and former Senate Whip Maryellen Goodwin the Subcommittee was directed to: *“develop a plan to provide the needed infrastructure and program improvements in support services, housing and transportation that will enable the state’s growing elder population to safely remain living at home and in community settings. The aging in community plan shall include an inventory of available services, identification of service and program gaps and resource needs. In addition to members of the long-term care coordinating council, the subcommittee shall include those members of the state’s academic community with expertise in aging services and community-based long-term supports and services as the council deems appropriate.”*

Since organizing in October 2014, the Subcommittee developed a [Comprehensive Research Report](#) (June 2016) and issued a [Strategic Plan](#) (December 2016) using a framework based on nine inter-related areas or domains important for successful “Aging in Community.” The domains are a variation of eight domains for age-friendly environments advanced by the World Health Organization. In January 2020 the Subcommittee issued a [Progress Report](#) showing 78% of the Strategic Plan’s 74 recommended strategic actions were either implemented or works in progress. In 2017 to amplify efforts to create communities to support and empower older Rhode Islanders Age-Friendly RI (AFRI) was created under the leadership of Dr. Marianne Raimondo, Director of the Health Care Administration and Dean of the Business School at Rhode Island College. In recent years the Aging in Community Subcommittee partnered with AFRI under the leadership of Executive Director Jim Connell in working to assist older adults to live independently and connected to their communities as they age.

A Special Note about this Report

On January 31st, 2020, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar declared the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak a Public Health Emergency (PHE.) On March 9, 2020, RI Governor Gina Raimondo declared a state of emergency due to the dangers to health posed by the original strain of SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for COVID-19. **The Public Health Emergency declaration due to the Covid 19 pandemic profoundly impacted the state and many of the domains that support aging in community.**

In light of the unforeseen PHE that took place since the Aging in Community Subcommittee's January 2020 Progress Report and to give this report greater context, a chronology of Rhode Island Executive Orders issued in response to the COVID 19 PHE is provided in Appendix B. This timeline of Executive Orders taken by former Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo and current Governor Dan McKee to deal with the unprecedented Covid pandemic tells only a very small fraction of the superb responses and the coordinated, interagency activities undertaken by state agencies together with the healthcare sector, non-profit organizations, philanthropy, the business community and Rhode Island families to deal with the pandemic. For each of the Aging in Community domains, a **COVID LOOKBACK** section describes many of the responses made to address the impact of the pandemic and are a demonstration of our state's resiliency. Following the Covid Lookback sections, Progress Updates for each domain detail activities and actions taken in the last several years that relate directly or indirectly to the vision articulated in the Aging in Community Subcommittee's Strategic Plan.

To build a community that enables Rhode Islanders to live independently with the care, support and resources needed to foster health, well-being, social connectedness and a meaningful life as they age

Now, ten years later, it is time to reflect on what has been accomplished, to recognize the growth and diversity of our older population and to continue to advocate for the policy actions and resources needed to fulfill this mission.

The Progress made in advancing policies and programs needed to support the infrastructure for "Aging in Community" results from efforts made by members of the Subcommittee, those participating in Age-Friendly RI work and so many others who have been working since 2014 to effect change, enact policies and garner the resources necessary to allow older adults to remain healthy and safely living at home and in community settings. A list of Subcommittee members and many others who participated in this work is found in Appendix A. I also acknowledge and thank the following persons who contributed to major sections of this report's Covid Lookback: Meghan Grady - Food & Nutrition, Joelle Kantor and Mario Oliveri -Transportation and Darlene Rezza Rossi -Open Spaces and Public Buildings.

***Maureen Maigret, Chair
Aging in Community Subcommittee
January 2024***

DOMAIN: Communication & Information

Objectives

1. To make information about services and programs more accessible to older adults.
2. To assist older adults to become more engaged in their communities.

COVID LOOKBACK

- Governor’s Office and state agencies including the Office of Healthy Aging provided ongoing information to the public on the status of the pandemic. Special communications to aging network partners were initially provided several times a week and then moved to weekly to keep staff dealing with older adults aware of Covid prevention guidelines on isolation/masking, testing sites, vaccinations, and other critical information.
- A Social Isolation Work Group coordinated by Age Friendly RI met weekly via Zoom to keep service providers and advocates informed of Covid-related activity and efforts to combat the impact of social isolation and loneliness on older adults resulting from Covid restrictions.
- Project “HELLO” was initiated by the Office of Healthy Aging with two components: (1) telephone calls to older adults by several hundred volunteers to help keep older adults connected to community and aware of resources and (2) digiAge, a program initiated with federal funding and grants to bridge the digital divide for older adults by providing digital devices, connectivity, training and content. Hundreds of older adults have participated with this ongoing program.
- Age Friendly RI hosted weekly calendar of virtual programs to engage older adults “staying at home” due to the Covid-19 restrictions.
- [2020 RI Health Aging Data Report](#) released by the Tufts Health Plan Foundation. The report, prepared under the leadership of principle investigator Dr. Elizabeth Dugan from the University of Massachusetts, updates and expands on the 2016 report. The report identifies health-related strengths and needs in all 39 communities across the state. The report also includes maps showing: Covid-19 cases in RI, areas of high-risk co-morbidities in age 65+ persons and community burden of high co-morbidities in age 65+ and deaths due to Covid. The full interactive report includes 194 maps listing community rates for all 197 indicators and 18 interactive maps.
- AARP RI hosted various TeleTown Hall phone calls to keep older Rhode Islanders informed about Covid resources.
- AARP RI advocated for nursing home and assisted living facility Covid policy transparency and ability for patients/residents to communicate with loved ones.

2023 UPDATE

- Age Friendly RI hosts weekly Radio Hour through February 2022.
- In 2022 work on [No Wrong Door](#) and Person-Centered Options Counseling (PCOC) begins to provide information about care services and options and is ongoing.

- RI Elder Info Hosts Virtual Senior Service/Veterans’ “Fairs” and “Friday Friends” with guests from various sectors sharing resource information.
- Office of Healthy Aging offers new [GET SET UP](#) program providing free online sessions for older adults on many topic areas such as technology training, exercise programs, travel and healthy eating.
- Office of Healthy Aging conducts focus groups and surveys to inform 2024-2026 State Plan which is approved by Administration for Community Living.
See Appendix C for State Plan on Aging summary.
- Advocates push for state funding to strengthen the Aging and Disability Resource Center -the POINT - and General assembly adds \$250,000 to FY2024 budget for this purpose.
- Office of Healthy Aging publishes 2023 Pocket Guide to Services for Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities.
- Office of Healthy Aging continues Academy Trainings to inform aging network of important programs and policies.
- RI NEWS TODAY publishes weekly article on issues related to Aging authored by Herb Weiss which also appear in several local newsletters.
- Office of Healthy Aging and Age Friendly RI provide information on programming and educational opportunities related to aging and older adults on social media sites.
- AARP RI continues with robust communications plan (social media, tv and radio advertising, direct mail, email blasts, mailing of quarterly events brochure) to keep older adults informed and State Director provides monthly op/eds in several statewide newspapers on AARP Healthy Living series.
- AARP launches Speakers Bureau with volunteers conducting presentations (in-person and virtually) on a variety of topics (caregiving, brain health, fraud, etc.)
- The Village Common of RI publishes online Calendar of weekly activities and monthly newsletter that includes information on available programs and services.

DOMAIN: Community & Civic Engagement

Objectives

1. To provide a broad-range of opportunities for social and civic engagement for RI older adults
2. Identify ways to adequately fund senior centers to enable them to expand and offer new programs and services to meet needs of older adults.

COVID LOOKBACK

- Following the public health emergency (PHE) declaration senior centers closed for in-person services. During the closures senior center staff were instrumental in keeping older adults informed and able to stay safely at home by providing: telephone assurance and assistance and referrals for resources; “grab and go” meals for older adults who could drive to the center or assisted with meal deliveries to older adults. Telephone health insurance assistance was also provided by some centers during fall

Medicare Open Enrollment. Senior centers assisted with municipal vaccinations clinics for older adults. Virtual classes and programming were started by some senior centers, the Village Common of RI, Age Friendly RI and SAGE RI (now PRIDE in Aging RI.)

- Office of Healthy Aging used federal dollars to support implementation of the URI “Engaging Generations Cyber Seniors” pilot digiAGE program which, in collaboration with local senior centers, has provided hundreds of older adults with iPads, connectivity if needed and training on use of the devices using trained student mentors. RI Blue Cross, Neighborhood Health Plan RI, United Healthcare, Cox Communications and Mobile Beacon also awarded small grants to implement digiAGE projects.
- RI Medicaid partners with Office of Healthy Aging to award \$78,000 to nursing homes to support technology investments to help residents connect virtually with family and friends and access preventative care during Covid restrictions.
- Carelink produced the *Room with a View* pilot TV program to engage homebound older adults and those in nursing homes.

2023 UPDATE

- Senior Agenda Coalition of RI holds 2021 Annual Conference & Expo with seniors hearing about issues from legislative leaders, home care providers and workers.
- Community advocates provide information on aging issues and policy needs to RI Foundation for work on state 2030 Plan.
- Senior Agenda Coalition hosts 2022 Governor’s Candidate Forum to hear from six candidates for Governor about their positions on priority issues for older adults.
- URI Cyber Seniors digiAGE pilot continues with 165 older adults receiving iPads by October 2021 with half needing connectivity support. In 2022 the URI Cyber Seniors Phase 2 digiAGE project gets re-funded. Community partners now include nine local senior centers/programs and the city of Providence. By July 2023, 500 older adults have participated. Outcomes of this project show statistically significant improvements in quality of life, loneliness, and social connectedness.
- Senior Agenda Coalition of RI holds 14th Annual Conference & Expo in 2022 with seniors and advocates from across the state hearing about services from newly appointed Office of Healthy Aging Director and healthcare and community providers.
- In 2022 the Newport for All Ages Initiative completes its age-friendly Action Plan.
- 2023 Legislative Forum hosted by Senior Agenda Coalition informs legislative leaders about priority issues relating to aging population and aging services.
- The 2023 General Assembly approves the FY2024 State Budget that includes an additional \$200,000 for local senior programs for a total of \$1.2 million toward goal of \$10/person age 65+ in each community. Communities will receive minimum grants of \$5,000 with balance allocated based on older population per community.
- Senior Agenda Coalition of RI sponsors 15th Annual Conference & Expo with theme of “Politics of Aging” and panel presentations on Housing and Issues and Advocacy. Resource tables from 29 providers showcase services and programs for older adults.

- In 2023, University of Massachusetts Gerontology Institute commits to update the 2020 RI Healthy Aging Data report with funding provided by Point 32 Foundation.
- In 2023, The Village Common of RI which was created by transitioning from the Providence Village adds two new villages, a Caregiver Support group for Spanish language caregivers and a Circle of Pride to engage members of the LGBTQ community. 270 volunteers now provide supports to 450 members across six villages in Barrington, Burrillville, Edgewood/Cranston, Glocester, Providence and Westerly.
- AARP RI continues its successful virtual Healthy Living Series that includes Healthy Cooking, Tai Chi, Gardening, Dance/Movement and Laughter Yoga.
- AARP RI brings on the Town of Bristol as the 5th community to join the AARP Age-Friendly Network and maintains a state web page dedicated to Age-Friendly Network RI communities.
- Age-Friendly Rhode Island establishes the RI Senior Fellows program with Leadership RI. The first cohort graduated 25 older adults who will serve older adults in the community wherever they are needed. A class for 2024 is being scheduled.
- AARP RI keeps members and the public up to date on its advocacy activity via state emails, social media and Associate State Advocacy Director Matt Netto's dedicated state web page, Netto's Notes.

DOMAIN: Food Security & Nutrition

Objective:

To assure that older Rhode Islanders have access to foods that meet their nutritional needs and food preferences

COVID LOOKBACK

- Congregate in-person dining program suspended during state 'Stay at Home Order' and reopened in hybrid form in July 2021 with participants offered hot meals onsite or boxed meals with some delivered to residents.
 - 255,000 lunches including 27,000 meals delivered in spring surge.
 - Pre-pandemic 314,652 congregate meals were served in FFY 2019 and decreased to 244,447 post-pandemic in FFY 2023.
- Meals on Wheels received approximately \$850,000 in Covid response funds which will expire on 9/30/2024.
- Home delivered meals expanded from 1,040 meals each week day to 4,000.
- Roch's Market does statewide grocery delivery.
- Farm Fresh RI does free delivery statewide.
- SNAP recipients received maximum benefit rate.
- The Elisha project delivered care packages with a variety of items increasing outreach from 500 to 15,000 families.
- Family Service of RI delivered 'Be Safe' Kits to provide older adults with essential supplies.
- RI Food Policy Council conducted a SNAP Delivery Pilot for Providence residents with limited mobility to increase access to healthy, fresh food. They also created a statewide guide for Supplemental and Emergency Food Delivery Providers.

- URI prepared and delivered meals to various housing sites statewide.
- URI SNAP-Ed created a report entitled, *The Impact of COVID-19 on Food Access in Rhode Island: Elevating Stakeholder Voices*.
- URI SNAP-Ed provided additional resources to older adults including a nutrition to go newsletter, nutrition themed activities and produce prep sheets.
- RI Community Food Bank developed resources about COVID-19 and seniors that were shared through its network of food assistance providers to share with recipients.
- Several important COVID-19 relief programs enacted by Congress to assist low-income families during the pandemic terminated when the PHE ended.

2023 UPDATE

- Meals on Wheels of RI (MOW) expanded its home delivered meals offerings to include culturally responsive Latin, Asian and Kosher meals and medically tailored options (cardiac, diabetic, renal, chopped/ground/pureed) and its Café program to include a monthly Latin and bi-weekly Asian café. Culturally appropriate meals were recommended by an Age-Friendly RI work group on food and nutrition. Plans are underway for a monthly Veterans Café. MOW operates a mobile food pantry.
- Department of Human Services is partnering with community organizations to help older adults learn about availability, application process, eligibility requirements and benefits of SNAP.
- The [Elderly and Disabled Simplified Application Project](#) (ESAP) became available in January 2023 offering a simple application process and longer eligibility period -from 24 to 36 months - for SNAP applicants who are age 60 and older.
- URI SNAP-ED is offering a one-time and a series program at various sites serving older adults statewide.
- URI SNAP-ED created a quarterly newsletter called “*Nutrition to Go*” geared to the older adult population and available in English, Spanish and Portuguese.
- RI Food Policy Council serves as the state’s facilitator of the Hunger Elimination Task Force on behalf of the Rhode Island Department of Health.
- The RI Community Food Bank’s 2023 Hunger Survey found that among all those receiving food assistance, 14% are aged 65 or older and food pantries serve a high proportion of seniors (38%.) The Food Bank also has seen an increase in the Commodity Supplemental Food Program. Under a contract with the Office of Healthy Aging the Food Bank supplies 2,240 participating older adults with a monthly box of healthy staples distributed through local food pantries and senior centers.
- Rhode Island’s [Aging and Disability Resource Center \(ADRC\)](#) offers resources and assistance with applying to SNAP and other programs.
- Hope & Main offers [Nourish Our Neighbors](#) that provides meals prepared by local food businesses to the Warren Housing Authority and Bristol Senior Center.
- The Department of Environmental Management continues to offer the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program providing eligible seniors access to two healthy locally grown produce boxes.

DOMAIN: Supports to Remain at Home

Objectives:

1. Maintain a stable home and community care workforce to meet needs of seniors requiring assistance to remain home
2. Provide timely and affordable access to a range of home/community services based on client needs, goals and preferences
3. Provide support services for unpaid “family” caregivers

COVID LOOKBACK

- The Executive Office of Health and Human Services invested \$3.2 million in federal CARES Act funds to support workers across 23 agencies during Covid-19 and \$100,000 to provide payroll support of \$500 per direct care employee completing RI College Behavioral Health Certificate training program.
- Foundation laid for Independent Provider (IP) program to include family caregivers as caregivers for persons on Medicaid. The program does not include caregivers with financial responsibility for care recipient.
- Office of Healthy Aging awarded \$10,000 grants to ten community agencies to help bridge the digital divide and connect persons remotely to family caregivers. The Village Common of RI uses the grant to start its virtual Caregiver Support group.
- Participation in Office of Healthy Aging @ Home Cost Share program saw significant drops in service provision following Covid pandemic with 63% fewer units of home care and 51% fewer units of adult day services. Once adult day programs re-opened, as of April 2023 service had not gone back to pre-Covid levels.
- Family Caregiver Alliance of RI Conferences held virtually.

2023 UPDATES

- In 2020 Preventive Services became part of Community Medicaid and persons no longer need to go through Long Term Care Medicaid application. Preventive services provide for limited amounts of homemaker and personal care services.
- FY2021 budget included \$5.9 million in federal Relief funds for home and community-based services.
- FY2022 budget included \$1.1 million added funding as proposed in Governor’s budget to increase the Office of Healthy Aging @Home Cost Share program income eligibility from 200% of the Federal Poverty Level to 250% and to include persons ages 19-64 with Alzheimer’s Disease and related dementias.
- FY2022 Budget Act includes targeted homecare rate increases with pass through to direct care workers, a shared living 10% rate increase and an assisted living rate reimbursement methodology change.
- FY2022 Budget increased the monthly Maintenance Allowance for persons on Medicaid home and community care from the federal poverty level to 300% of the federal SSI income standard thereby providing these recipients with greater resources to pay for basic living expenses when living at home.
- State submits plan for use of American Rescue Plan Act funds for provision of Medicaid Enhanced Home and Community Services (HCBS) to include \$56.37

million to stabilize the direct care workforce to be used for hiring and retention bonuses and temporary rate increases and \$6.1million for HCBS workforce development.

- Office of Healthy Aging publishes RI State Plan for Family Caregivers: July 2021-Septembe 2023.
- FY2022 Budget allowed for Medicaid reimbursement for Community Health Worker Services.
- Livable Home grant program providing grants for making homes more accessible becomes permanent under law.
- FY2023 Budget Act includes provision for Office of Health Insurance Commission to undertake a comprehensive review of all social and human service programs having a contract with the state or licensed by the state for purposes of developing baseline of eligibility factors, baseline for understanding reimbursement rates, ensuring accurate and adequate reimbursement to facilitate availability of high quality services to individuals receiving home and community-based services and supports, and ensuring general assembly is provided with adequate financial projections on social and human services costs, service demands and workforce needs.
- FY2023 Budget included:
 - \$7.5million (all funds) to increase minimum reimbursement rates paid to home health agencies for CNAs and homemakers from \$13 and \$11/hour to \$15/hour
 - \$10 million (all funds) included in budget for long term care rebalancing support
 - \$12.5 million to increase Personal Choice Program rates from \$17.17 to \$24.17/hr.
- Advocates successfully opposed deferring \$38.6 million in “Perry-Sullivan” funding – the value of dollars from reduction is nursing home bed use from prior two years -- for strengthening home and community-based services.
- \$500,000 in state funds added to budget for total funding of \$1.0 million for the Livable Home Modification Grant program. The program provides 50 percent of the total retrofit costs, up to \$4,500, to support home modifications and accessibility enhancements to allow individuals to remain in community settings. The increase was intended to address a surge in applications
- CARELINK begins a new home-based program to help persons caring for someone with Alzheimer’s Disease or a Related Disorder through funding from the federal Administration on Aging. Specially trained skilled occupational and speech therapists provide home-based services at no cost to RI residents living with Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias using evidence-based therapies demonstrated to improve safety, independence and quality of life for persons living with mild to moderate dementia, including care partners.
- [MyOptionsRI](#) site goes live providing information about support options available and answers basic questions. The site includes a useful person-centered options counseling self-assessment tool that asks questions to help options counseling staff better understand what matters most to a person when making decisions about services.

- RI College Institute for Education in Healthcare begins 30-hour training program on behavioral healthcare for home healthcare workers with 2-year funding. Homecare agencies in which 30% of staff receive the training get added reimbursement and homecare nursing assistants taking the course receive an increase in hourly wage rate.
- Healthcare Workforce Summit brings together public and private sectors to address healthcare workforce crisis.
- RI Home Care Portal continues to show wait list for Home Care with 75% of clients referred waiting 2 months or longer.
- FY2024 budget includes 2.29% increase in homecare provider reimbursement.
- Healthcare Workforce Transformation research shows nearly 12,691 CNAs working in healthcare related industries in 2022 with annual median wage of \$31,000.
- Blue Cross Blue Shield RI initiates pilot program with Archangels to provide support to caregivers by assessing their stress level and providing resource information.
- The CAREBREAKS program funded through Office of Healthy Aging provides respite services to 295 caregivers in its fiscal year: July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023.
- Office of Health Insurance Commission releases required [Social and Human Services Rate Review Report](#) which recommends 58% increase in reimbursement for homecare provider rates for personal care and homemakers.
- 2023 legislature merges the Independent Provider and Personal Choice self-directed programs. IP participants will transition to the Personal Choice program and benefit from added flexibility in choosing pay rate for their Personal Care attendant.
- State plans transition to Conflict Free Case management for Home and Community Services to start in early 2024.
- 2023 Family Caregiver Alliance of RI Conference held in-person and virtually with theme: *The Value and Cost of Caregiving*.
- The Village Common of RI continues its weekly virtual Caregiver Support Program and begins a bi-weekly in-person caregiver support group for Spanish speakers.
- AARP Rhode Island used a 2023 AARP Office of Community Engagement grant to reach veterans in the target community of Newport County with health information, including burn-pit restitution and resources at aarp.org/veterans.

DOMAIN: Transportation

Objective:

Create a transportation system that is accessible and affordable and meets the needs of older adults.

COVID LOOKBACK

RIPTA

- Like many public transit agencies across the country, the Covid-19 public health emergency had a marked impact on RIPTA. In April 2020, fixed-route ridership had decreased about 70% from April 2019. The RIDE paratransit program also saw significant trip decreases with a low of 404,400 trips in April 2020. Despite the drop in demand, RIPTA leadership decided not to cut service to accommodate frontline

workers needing public transportation. Buses were disinfected nightly -- operated at about 2/3rds capacity - and operators wore face masks.

- The federal CARES Act provided \$91.2 million in emergency funding to RIPTA.
- Paratransit vehicles delivered 31,000 donated meals to community sites and made 6,724 trips in 2020 to help Meals on Wheels make deliveries to people who were unable to leave home. In 2021 RIde vehicles made 14,029 trips to deliver meals.
- Although RIPTA ridership for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022 remained 41% lower than pre-pandemic levels, the agency noticed gradual monthly improvements.
- The agency's budget still relies heavily on COVID relief funding, which will be exhausted within the next two years, requiring leadership to explore potential future revenue streams in order to maintain levels of service and pursue the vision of the Transit Forward 2040 RI Master Plan.

Non-Emergency Medicaid (NEMT) and Elderly Transportation (ETP)

- By April 2020, ridership for NEMT and ETP combined decreased by approximately 40% from the pre-pandemic period of January 1, 2020 but there were medical destination types that did not decrease. This was for treatment types that could not be suspended or missed at the clinical location due to the critical nature of the treatment and care provided such as dialysis, substance use disorders, and cancer treatments. Trips significantly reduced were: adult day care, meal sites that had been suspended, primary care, specialists, behavioral health, physical therapy, and dentistry.
- All vehicles were required to be disinfected daily and "wiped down" on specific spots on the vehicle, such as seats and door handles, after each trip. All drivers and riders were required to wear masks while in each other's company. Multi-load trips with more than one member boarding a vehicle were suspended.
- The two days' notice requirement to request a ride in advance was removed for trip requests to receive COVID vaccines.
- A thrust campaign was put into place to remind members of the general gas mileage reimbursement process in place where they may use a personal vehicle to transport a member and they will receive a cents-per-mile reimbursement.
- Transport to testing facilities was implemented including a Surplus Vaccination Program where at the end of a day if a vaccination location had surplus vaccines still available there would be a quick communication to the transportation broker to transport members who were on a waiting list to gain quick transport to get vaccinated to avoid vaccine materials becoming unusable after a short period of time.
- EOHHS and the transportation broker worked diligently to put into place an involved method to transport members to locations to perform Monoclonal Antibody treatments for COVID for members at high risk for progression to severe COVID-19 for whom alternative treatments were not clinically appropriate.
- Around October 2021 trip volume returned to the pre-pandemic level. Adult day care, primary care physicians, physical therapy, and dentistry trips were close to previous levels and still growing. Behavioral health and dentistry were slow to reach previous levels. Today, dentistry has reached previous levels but behavioral health and meal sites remain much less than before.

2023 UPDATE

- RIPTA launched WAVE, its smart fare collection system, allowing riders to pay for trips by virtually adding funds to plastic smart cards or mobile cards. WAVE incorporates fare capping, ensuring that riders who use the system never spend more than the price of a \$6 day pass or a \$70 monthly pass within those time frames. Participants in the free/reduced fare bus pass program for seniors and people with disabilities shift to photo ID WAVE cards when they are eligible for renewals.
- Ride Free Central Falls - In March of 2022 the Central Falls Pilot Program started with federal funds to allow people boarding buses in Central Falls to ride for free, testing the effectiveness of geofencing technology.
- Fare Free R-Line started in September 2022 on RIPTA's busiest and highest ridership route connecting Providence and Pawtucket. The year-long pilot provided an opportunity to study the benefits and potential drawbacks of free transit service in Rhode Island. It was funded by \$2.5 million from the state to make up for lost revenue and included free fares for RIde passengers taking trips within the complementary paratransit service area adjacent to the route during the pilot period.
- Community Van Program – In the fall of 2022, the Comprehensive Community Action Program (CCAP) and the municipalities of Cumberland, Foster, Pawtucket, and Westerly received 2022 Turtle Top Ford vans with wheelchair lifts through a grant secured by Senator Jack Reed and additional funding from the Federal Transit Administration.
- The Rhode Island Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan) was approved by the Human Services Transportation Coordinating Council in March of 2023 to be in effect for five years. All state projects selected for FTA Section 5310 funding (for Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities), must be included in the plan. Elements include a summary of existing transportation services, maps detailing gaps in service and areas of need, plan strategies, and a recommended action plan.
- RIPTA received funding from the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Innovative Coordinated Access and Mobility grant program to create a Rhode Island travel training network, which will bring partners together to offer customized transportation support to the state's older adults, individuals with disabilities, and low-income groups.
- RIPTA launched [community transportation pages](#) on its website, listing all publicly available options by municipality. Riders may access the information online or call RIPTA customer service.
- Following a procurement process the Executive Office of Health and Human Services selected MTM as vendor for Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation and Elderly Transportation Program.
- At the end of 2022, RIPTA started another pilot program to remove financial barriers for low-income persons who rely on public transportation. This program is intended to reach some low-income individuals who do not qualify for RIPTA's existing program which grants free bus passes to low-income individuals who are also either seniors or have a disability. The six-month program will distribute 600 bus passes to agencies that service low-income, including unhoused, individuals.

- Paratransit Corridor Study. At the direction of the general assembly and using \$75,000 in gas tax funds RIPTA commenced a study on the feasibility of expanding paratransit services -- currently only provided within three-quarters of a mile of a fixed-route -- service to 100% of the state which would particularly benefit eight towns currently unserved: Charlestown, Foster, Hopkinton, Little Compton, New Shoreham, Richmond, Tiverton, and Westerly. Estimates are 64,200 trips would be taken annually in the extended service areas increasing ridership by 31%.
- RIPTA provided planning support for vehicle sharing pilot program in Newport County with Age-Friendly RI as lead agency and grant funds from National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC). Looking Upwards provided a van, driver, and staff support to operate the pilot through the end of June. With new funding sources, two vans are serving Aquidneck Island. It is serving as a model for a hospital-based med transport program that is in the works.
- Several Medicare Advantage and Dual Eligible health plans add transportation to plan-approved destinations as a benefit.
- The Village Common of RI volunteers provides hundreds of transportation trips for medical appointments, personal errands and social events for its members.

DOMAIN: Housing

Objective:

A wide range of affordable housing options will be available to meet seniors needs and preferences and allow them to safely age in the community

COVID LOOKBACK

The FY2021 enacted budget included a number of programs addressing housing using federal Covid Relief Funds: \$5.1million + \$0.1million state funds for rental assistance during the pandemic; \$0.4million federal funds+\$0.1million state funds for landlord incentives to go directly to property owners to make units available for persons experiencing homelessness; \$7.3 million federal Covid funds for eviction diversion; \$0.2million to non-profits to assist persons with housing assistance applications, \$65million bonds to be voted on in March 2021 for funding affordable housing and community revitalization.

2023 UPDATE

- The FY2023 enacted budget included: \$100 million from State Fiscal Recovery (ARPA) funds to provide an enhanced level of gap financing for affordable housing development including \$10million for a pilot program to support low income and public housing vouchers and financing; \$50million from ARPA funds for down payment assistance for 1st time homebuyers; and \$10million in ARPA funds to increase facility capacity for individuals experiencing homelessness through grants to provider organizations
- Saint Elizabeth Community received \$1,441,000 from the *Money Follows the Person* state funds to expand the Services and Services at Home -- SASH -- program. In addition to St. Elizabeth apartments in Providence the program has started with Pawtucket and West Warwick Housing and Neighborworks.

- **2021 *Housing Works RI*** receives grants from RI Blue Cross and Tufts Health Plan Foundation to develop a report on housing needs of older adults to include projected need and best practices in housing initiatives.
- The 2022 legislature increased the income threshold for property tax credit or “circuit breaker” program eligibility from \$30,000 to \$35,000 and increased the credit to \$600 beginning with tax year 2023. Both would grow by inflation beginning in tax year 2024. The property tax credit program provides relief through a system of tax credits and refunds to elderly and/or disabled Rhode Island residents who own or rent their homes. To be eligible, the homeowner or renter must not exceed the household income threshold and be at least 65 years old, or disabled and receive a social security disability benefit.
- The Long Term Care Coordinating Council Housing Subcommittee issues report, “Meeting the Housing Needs of Rhode Island’s Older Adults and Individuals with Chronic Disabilities and Illnesses in March 2023. Key Recommendations are found in Appendix D.
- 2023 legislature passes several bills dealing with housing crisis including creation of low-income tax credit, capped at \$30million annually, to assist in developing affordable housing, elimination of rental application fees, streamlining the permit process, increasing the amount of costs for repairs that a tenant may deduct from rent from \$125 to \$500 in the aggregate per year, and creating a pilot for developing transit-related housing development.
- FY2024 state budget provides \$444.9million in total funds for use on housing programs. [Details Here](#)
- AARP Rhode Island maintains a dedicated state web page, The Rhode Island’s ABCs of ADUs, as a housing options resource.
- The FY2023 budget included a total of \$1million for Livable Home Modification grant program with a one-time increase to deal with a backlog of requests. The FY2024 budget increases by \$250,000 in general revenues for total funding of \$766,699. The program provides 50% of the total retrofit costs, up to \$4,500, to support home modifications and accessibility enhancements to allow individuals to remain in community settings.
- HOUSING WORKS RI 2023 report shows 29% of RI households ages 51-69 are renters and 31% of those age 70+. Significantly, households aged 70+ had a median income of \$24,615. Based on the 2022 average 2-bedroom apartment rent of \$1,996, these households would not have sufficient income to rent such an apartment in any community in the state.
- State announces Community Development Grant awards targeted toward housing needs of older adults and persons with disabilities in the following communities: Bristol, Coventry, Middletown, Portsmouth, West Warwick and Westerly.

DOMAIN: Economic Security

Objective

To assure that older Rhode Islanders are economically secure with sufficient income to meet basic expenses relating to housing, food

COVID LOOKBACK

- Unemployment Security – Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) required most employers to provide employees with two weeks (up to 80 hours) of paid sick leave if they were quarantined or experiencing COVID-19.
- If person's place of business closed or their employer told them to stay home and they were not being paid, they could be eligible to receive regular unemployment insurance benefits.
- Persons in gig economy, contract workers, small business owners and self-employed out of work due to Covid could be eligible for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance.
- Economic Impact Payments (Federal Stimulus payments) went to many persons including those on Social Security retiree and disability and SSI and including those who do not have to file.
- SNAP beneficiaries received maximum benefit amounts.

2023 UPDATE

- Medicare Savings Program expansion legislation filed in 2021, 2022, 2023 to increase income eligibility and remove the asset test. *Bills heard but held for further study.*
- Medicaid eligibility legislation filed in 2021, 2022, 2023 to increase Medicaid income for persons age 65+ and older adults with disabilities to 138% of the federal poverty level to provide equity with other Medicaid populations. *Bills heard and held for further study.*
- Legislation passed in 2021 to expand Temporary Caregiver Insurance from (4) weeks to (6) weeks.
- Property Tax Relief (Circuit Breaker) expansion legislation filed in 2021 to increase maximum credit to \$750 and income up to \$40,000. *Heard and held for further study.*
- Property Tax Relief (Circuit Breaker) expansion legislation filed in 2022 to increase maximum credit to \$850 and income up to \$50,000. *Bill heard and held for further study, however, FY2023 Budget bill included article to increase the property tax relief up to \$600 and income up to \$35,000 with annual inflation index.*
- 2022 Legislation filed to expand Temporary Caregiver Insurance from (6) weeks to (12) weeks, expand the category of who a worker can take time to care for to include grandchildren, siblings and care recipients, and increase the dependency allowance from \$10 to \$20. *Heard and held for further study.*
- 2023 Legislation introduced to provide an annual inflation index to the State Supplemental Insurance payment and to increase the Personal Needs Allowance for persons living in nursing homes to total \$75/month. The bill did not pass but the Personal Needs Allowance increase was put in the FY2024 budget.
- 2023 Legislation filed in Senate and House to expand Temporary Caregiver Insurance from (6) weeks to (12) weeks, expand the category of who a worker can take time to

care for to include grandchildren, siblings and care recipients, and increase the dependency allowance from \$10 to \$20. *Senate bill passed and sent to House. House bill heard and held for further study.*

- 2023 Elder Index developed by University of Massachusetts shows a RI couple in Good Health would need \$38,436 to meet basic living expenses (housing, transportation, food, healthcare, miscellaneous) and a single person in poor health who rents would need \$31,860.

DOMAIN: Healthcare Access

Objective

To assure that older have access to affordable, accessible, quality health care including behavioral health and oral health care that recognizes their unique needs

COVID LOOKBACK

- On March 9, 2020 Governor Gina Raimondo declared the state public health emergency (PHE) due to the dangers to health and life posed by COVID-19. Persons age 65 and over were at significant risk from the Covid pandemic. In 2020, 92% of the 1,053 deaths from Covid in RI were persons 65+ (RIDOH website) and a disproportionate number were persons in long-term care facilities (48%.) As of August 2023, 1,210 nursing home residents had died of Covid since January 2020. Thirty percent of deaths in RI were from Covid. ([AARP](#))
- The federal government prohibits states from terminating Medicaid enrollees during the (PHE) and provided states with a 6.2% Medicaid rate enhancement. Federal legislation decoupled the requirement for continued Medicaid eligibility as of March 31, 2023 and phased down the enhanced Medicaid rate through December 31, 2023. With the ending of the PHE, Rhode Island began Medicaid renewals on a phased in basis in April 2023.
- For part of FY2021, the state operated on the prior year's budget authority and did not adopt the FY2021 budget until late in December of 2020 for the Governor to sign. The FY2021 state budget included the following Covid Relief Funds to address the PHE: \$37.5M (all sources) for Vaccine Campaigns, \$264M for testing, \$63.2M for contact tracing; \$53.1M for hospital surge operations; \$21.9M for quarantine and isolation expenses including temporary housing for those unable to isolate at home and those experiencing homelessness; \$.2M for Health Equity Zones to support mitigation efforts and \$125M to provide financial assistance to hospitals to maintain responsive hospital system.
- Rhode Island took aggressive action to ensure testing, treatment and vaccinations were available to all with no out-of-pocket costs. Vaccination opportunities were provided on a phased-in basis initially offered for specific populations (persons in congregate settings, older persons, and those with certain chronic conditions) and at a number of sites including two mass sites (the Providence Dunkin' Donuts Center and one at Citizens Bank headquarters in Cranston which were operated with assistance of the RI National Guard. Multiple community clinics and pharmacies also offered vaccinations. In February 2022, RI was ranked as the leading state in the nation for

percent of its population that was fully vaccinated against Covid at 80% and ranked 3rd for boosters. As of June 29, 2023, 95% of persons age 60 and over had completed primary Covid vaccine series and at least 82% had received one booster or additional dose (RIDOH Covid-19 Data Hub.)

- Policy changes made at state and federal level allowed for telehealth, both audio and video) reimbursement under Medicare and Medicaid allowable for primary care, behavioral health care and case management. The federal Health and Human Service agency reported RI had one of the highest uses of telehealth services in 2020. Behavioral health visits using telehealth were as common as in-person visits at the end of 2020. In 2021, the RI legislature passed a law to expand access to telemedicine coverage.

2023 UPDATE

- FY2023 budget included \$77.5 million from State Fiscal Recovery funds to support health care facilities including \$45 million for hospitals, \$30 million for nursing facilities and \$2.5 million to be distributed to the community health centers through the Rhode Island Health Center Association.
- FY2023 budget includes \$1,875,000 for 9-8-8 Mental Health Crisis Hotline.
- FY2023 budget included \$30M (State Fiscal Recovery funds to develop Certified Community Behavioral Health Centers.)
- Workforce support funding in FY2023 budget included \$6 million to support a healthcare workforce development initiative to address staffing shortages through recruitment efforts and talent development for existing staff.
- The FY2023 budget added \$0.8 million to expand the Wavemaker Fellowship program eligibility to mental healthcare professionals.
- The FY2023 budget added \$8.1M (all funds) to provide increased Medicaid reimbursements for oral healthcare for older adults.
- FY2024 budget includes \$1,600,000 for 9-8-8 Mental Health Crisis Hotline.
- FY2024 budget includes \$22.4M total funds to finance the new Certified Behavioral Health Clinic model rate.
- URI Geriatric Education Center offers ongoing [Geriatric Education Series](#) for professionals and caregivers on a variety of topics including dementia, mobility, mental and behavioral health.
- CARELINK expands evidence-based falls prevention programs in community including 15 senior centers and creates a new evidence-informed behavioral health prevention program providing support group model to older adults.
- RI Elder Mental Health and Addiction Coalition (RIEMHAC) provides support for the RI Hoarding Task Force (RIHD Task Force funded with Money Follows the Person (MFP) funds from the Executive Office of Health and Human Services) by providing website resource updates, community engagement and workforce development in collaboration with Office of Healthy Aging and Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities and Hospital's workforce development initiatives.

- RI Department of Health receives 5-year federal BOLD grant to assist with work of Alzheimer’s and Related Diseases Program and implementing state Alzheimer’s and Related Diseases Strategic Plan.
- RI Department of Health creates Rhode Island Brain Health Guide that includes information on caregiver resources.
- As of December, 2023, 30,400 persons were disenrolled from Medicaid and 53,800 persons were renewed as required by the ending of the PHE. ([KFF](#))
- RI legislature passes law that provides all Medicare recipients over age sixty-five applying for a Medicare supplement plan guaranteed issue rights regardless of applicant health or receipt of health care.
- General Assembly passes law to limit the copayment or coinsurance requirement on specialty drugs to \$150 for a thirty (30) day supply.

*Information on Federal Fiscal Relief Funds @ <https://pandemicrecovery.ri.gov/>

DOMAIN: Outdoor Spaces + Public Buildings

Objective

To create age-friendly communities that feature outdoor spaces and buildings, which include safe and accessible streets for pedestrians, safe and accessible public buildings, a clean environment, access to green spaces for physical exercise and recreation

COVID LOOKBACK

On March 29th Gov. Raimondo issued a temporary “Stay at Home” Order with certain exceptions such as for medical care and procuring essentials and also limiting gatherings to no more than five persons. On May 9th, the gradual re-opening of public parks started within guidelines for social distancing.

2023 UPDATE

- Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Recreation Acquisition and Development Grants. In 2022 the Department of Environmental Management awarded a total of \$7,298,796 (including \$1,504,759 local match) for various projects to 20 communities. Many of the projects addressed accessibility features. In 2023 a total of \$5,314,475 (including \$1,250,390 local match) awarded to 13 communities from 2021 Beach, Clean Water and Green Bond. Projects included accessibility features and pickleball courts. [Link here for detailed information](#)

- **AARP Challenge Grant Awards**

2019 Pawtucket Leon Mathieu Senior Center AARP Challenge grant combined with City Community Development Block Grant funds provides for installation of outdoor Garden area, Age Friendly exercise equipment and game table.

2020. Central Falls awarded funds to create five much-needed shade structures will be installed at the popular Veterans Memorial Park to help eventually support additional programming for older adults. **2021. Progresso Latino.** A Community Pavilion will be constructed, and accessible picnic tables installed to create a space for the community to safely

connect with one another and allow those with accessibility needs to participate in activities. **Providence Community Library** Activating the lawn of the Knight Memorial Library by creating an accessible, staffed, resource-rich park complete with tech, games, and books, will provide a warm welcome to neighbors living in the diverse West End of Providence. **Southside Community Land Trust.** Youth residents will build accessible garden beds and assist older adults with growing/harvest healthy food choices at three senior centers in low-income neighborhoods. **2022. Providence Streets Coalition & Thriving Places Collaborative-To turn** a parking lane into a temporary urban trail to assess safety, build community support and affect the permanent redesign of Hope Street. **Southside Community Land Trust** – For young people to grow herbs and vegetables that will be given to older adults. They will also help create a second cookbook that preserves the older adults’ recipes and stories. **Downtown Woonsocket Collaborative** – To transform the area outside the Aging Well older-adult center into a safe, inviting space for outdoor exercise as well as a gathering place. **2023. Providence Streets Coalition (PVD Streets)** – The “Walk, Talk & Chalk” project will bring people over 50 and civic leaders together to sketch out – literally – the plan for improving safety, mobility, and access for people of all ages and abilities in Providence. Using AARP’s Walk Audit Toolkit, PVD Streets will organize six walk audit assessments in Providence this year. Each event will focus on bringing residents over 50 out for a walk/roll with city planners, elected leaders, and neighborhood organizers.

Mount Hope Community Center (MHCC) -The Mount Hope Community Center to host weekly seniors’ group that have expressed a desire for access to computers to help them stay connected with family and friends, access online resources, and learn new skills. To meet this need. Grant funds will be used to purchase laptops and create a more modern computer lab for its seniors.

Bike Newport – A Cycling Without Age project will target two principal populations: Disabled veterans of all ages and senior veterans. Bike Newport will collaborate with the Rhode Island Chapter of Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and the Rhode Island Veterans Home Community Living Center in Bristol, RI, to connect with participants and schedule ride outings utilizing an electric-assist trishaw called “The Chat”. This project will counteract isolation and provide outdoor adventure and camaraderie for people 50-plus and disabled veterans through piloted rides, with trained volunteer pilots.

West End Community Center

This project will distribute 200 straw bales to participating community members, demonstrating how simple safe and cost effective it can be to grow their own vegetables using this revolutionary urban agricultural method. Last summer the organization built a straw bale garden consisting of 10 bales next to its parking lot where community interest resulted in people coming together in caring for the garden and sharing in its harvest.

● The RI Health Department, Grow Smart RI and the Providence Streets Coalition Collaboration

In 2023 a collaboration among award \$93,000 in mini grants to 17 projects across RI including a Providence Walking School Bus program, Open Streets event in Portsmouth, design work for crosswalks connecting new train station area to Tidewater landing are in Pawtucket and bicycle safety programs in Bristol, Warren and Middletown and to RAMP to distribute wheelchair-accessible picnic tables built by Steel Yard to RI Veterans’ Home, cities of Pawtucket and East Providence and town of Smithfield.

- AARP Rhode Island-sponsored summer free weekly Woonasquatucket River

paddles, promoted by a Facebook video campaign featuring AARP RI State President on the water.

- The Village Common of RI conducts weekly or bi-weekly walks open to all at various sites in its villages.
- AARP Rhode Island continues to serve as the title sponsor of Bike Newport's Full Moon Rides. Every month close to 70 participants gather and ride their bicycles free of charge 15 miles around Newport.
- The Pawtucket Division of Senior Services/ Leon Mathieu Senior Center receives a grant award from the Harriet Ballou Foundation to support the Leon Mathieu Senior Center's Mural and Socialization project to create a vibrant public event space for socializing in an underutilized parcel of land adjacent to the facility.

APPENDIX A

Sub Committee Members, Contributors and Collaborator

Since the Subcommittee was organized by former Lieutenant Governor Elizabeth Roberts in the fall of 2014 many persons have served on the Subcommittee, participated in its meetings and discussions, contributed to or collaborated in some way to the Subcommittee's important work over the past ten years. I acknowledge and thank them for their interest and input and apologize if someone has been inadvertently omitted.

With Appreciation,

Maureen Maigret

Chair, Aging in Community Subcommittee

Cristina Amedeo	Meg Grady	Matt Netto
Nicole Arias	Caroline Gangji	Jim Nyberg
Linda A'Vant-Deishinni	Cathy Gorman	Nicholas Oliver
Bernie Boudreau	Linda Katz	Paula Parker
Susan Bouchard	Paulette Hamilton	Victoria Parker
Deb Burton	Joelle Kantor	Susan Pomfret
Barbara Capalbo	Judy Jones	Marianne Raimondo
Marie Carpenter	Rose Jones	Robert Robillard
Brenda Clement	Kathleen Langford	Heidi Ross
James Connell	Skye Leedah	Darlene Rezza Rossi
Kathleen Connell	Lori Light	Corinne Russo
Meghan Connelly	Erin McAndrew	Susan Saccoccio-
Francine Connolly	Paula McFarland	Olson
Senator Carol Cool Rumsey	Kathy McKeon	Janet Spinelli
John DiTamasso	Karen Mensel	Karen Statser
Joyce Dolbec	Connie Melbourne	Michelle Szylin
John Dooley	JoEllen Mistarz	Catherin Taylor
Craig Dwyer	Shemika Moore	Kali Thomas
Rachel Fillinson (deceased)	MaryLou Moran	Meg Underwood
Bill Flynn	Jessica Mowry	Marjorie Waters
Chris Gadbois	Manny Murray	

APPENDIX B EXECUTIVE ORDERS – COVID TIMELINE

2020

- March 9, 2020, Governor Raimondo declares a state of emergency due to the dangers to health posed by the original strain of SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for COVID-19. All schools are closed and a series of Executive Orders follow in quick succession: Travelers from outside the country were mandated to self-quarantine for 14 days; prohibitions on public bodies meeting by telephone or electronic means were suspended along with restrictions on telemedicine.
- March 29th Order mandates a statewide temporary *Stay at Home* order requiring nonessential businesses and operations to curtail, for residents to stay home except for medical treatment or to obtain necessities and to ban gatherings of more than five persons.
- April Orders require daily reports on Covid testing and hospital capacity and supplies and requirements for wearing of face masks in customer facing businesses unless six feet distance was maintained.
- May Order expands face mask requirements to all persons with exceptions for children under age two, those developmentally unable to comply and for health reasons. On May 9th the Stay-at-Home order was rescinded to allow for elective medical procedures and the gradual reopening of state parks although vulnerable populations which includes persons 65+ were advised to stay home except for essential trips. Another May Order provided for creation and maintenance of two surge hospitals (one at Convention Center operated by RI Hospital and one in Cranston operated by Kent Hospital) and provided for immunity for responding hospitals and healthcare workers deeming them as “disaster response workers.”
At the end of May, a Phase II re-opening expanded social gatherings to 15 persons, allowed personal services to reopen, limited indoor dining, gym and fitness centers with restrictions, child care services to open on a limited basis and houses of worship to open with 25% capacity.
- June 29th Order allowed for further (Phase III) re-opening for in-door social gatherings, outdoor venues capped at 66% capacity, faith-based assemblies, office workers up to 66% on-site and retail businesses (one customer per 100 sq. ft.)
- September 2nd Order required all persons clinically diagnosed with Covid or by self-testing and those in close contact with such persons to self-quarantine for 14 days.

2021

- January Order allowed for in-person learning at Institutions of Higher learning with initial surveillance testing or students presenting neg Covid test within 72 hrs. of campus arrival
- February Order delegated to Lieutenant Governor Dan McKee authority to prepare and present to General Assembly an annual consolidated operating and capital improvement budget for FY2022 by March 11 in light of Governor Raimondo being nominated as Commerce Secretary

- March Gov. McKee Order called for engagement of municipalities in vaccination program expansion
- April Order allowed that vaccinated persons not be required to wear face mask if 14 days since vaccination have elapsed when in outdoor setting and maintaining 3 feet distance from others
- July 6 Order terminated face mask requirement
- August 19 Orders declared a new state of emergency due to Delta variant and increased level of contagion, cases in long term care, hospitalizations and required local education authorities to establish universal indoor mask requirements

2022

- January Orders lessened requirement for RN staff coverage in nursing facilities to 16 hours/day with LPN available in absence of RN and suspended minimum staffing requirements in RIGL 23-17.5 and allowed graduate nurses to work under temporary license not exceeding 90 days and working under supervision of licensed RN
- February Order suspended statutory time limit for RIDOH emergency regulation requirement for immunization against Covid 19 for all workers in licensed health care facilities vaccination and continued suspension of minimum staffing requirements for nursing facilities and penalties
- May 25 – RI Department of Health regulations require Covid immunizations of healthcare or assisted living workers or wearing N95 masks when the prevalence state rate is greater than or equal to 50 cases per 100,000 people/week.

2023

- May 11 – RI Public Health Emergency Order ends on May 11 to coincide with national public health emergency ending

APPENDIX C

Summary

FY 2024-2026 Older Americans Act State Plan on Aging

1. Provide older adults, older adults with disabilities and their caregivers *access to the information* they need to make informed decisions about the supports they need to thrive.
2. Support older adults to *stay active and healthy physically and mentally*.
3. Enable older adults and older adults with disabilities to *remain in their own homes* with maximum independence and quality of life.
4. *Strengthen a caregiving infrastructure* that recognizes, builds, and supports both paid and unpaid caregivers
5. Ensure the rights, safety, independence, and dignity of older adults and *prevent their abuse, neglect, and exploitation*.
6. Build on lessons learned from COVID-19 about *social isolation risk* and the importance of *varied engagement strategies*.
7. *Ensure equity* – All Rhode Islanders should be able to participate fully in society and benefit from available programs and services.
8. Ensure OHA's programs and investments are in line with people's needs and *hold ourselves accountable* to achieving established goals.

APPENDIX D

Housing Subcommittee, Long Term Care Coordinating Council Recommendations

1. CREATE STATEWIDE HOUSING INFORMATION CENTER FOCUSED ON NEEDS OF OLDER ADULTS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
2. MAKE HOUSING FOR OLDER ADULTS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES THE STATE'S TOP HOUSING PRIORITY
3. PROMOTE PUBLIC HOUSING PARTNERSHIPS TO BUILD 500 UNITS OF SUPPORTIVE HOUSING
4. ADOPT AN OLMSTEAD
5. BUILD 600 UNITS OF PERMANENT SUBSIDIZED HOUSING
6. MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING PROGRAMS TO RELIEVE COST BURDENS FOR OWNERS AND RENTERS
7. EXPAND INCENTIVES FOR ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS
8. PROVIDE TRANSITIONS AND OPTIONS FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES, FOR LIVING BEYOND FAMILY CAREGIVERS
9. ADOPT CREATIVE NEW APPROACHES TO SHARED LIVING
10. ACCOMMODATE PARENTS AND GUARDIANS WITH DISABILITIES, WHO ARE CARING FOR MINOR CHILDREN
11. ESTABLISH STATEWIDE HOUSING DATA AGENCY
12. ENGAGE STATE-SPONSORED PLANNING TO DEVELOP ACCESSIBLE MIXED INCOME TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENTS
13. CREATE STATEWIDE HOUSING INFORMATION CENTER FOCUSED ON NEEDS OF OLDER ADULTS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.