**By Conference Call:** Ricki Dhamani (Ohio Living); Chris Green-Chair (Otterbein Senior Life); Arlene Jaroscak (OASN); Janet Julian (Brethren Retirement Community); Chris Kenney (Bricker and Eckler); Ryan Kramer (HW & Co.); Serra Marshall (Ohio Eastern Star Home); Rachele Rosa (Jennings); Bob Stillman (Ohio Living); Christy VandeWater (Plante Moran); David Zack (United Church Homes)

**Absent:** Janet Feldkamp (Benesch); Dave Mannion (Crandall Medical Center); Stacy Terrell (Kendal at Oberlin);

**Staff:** Kathryn Brod; Stephanie DeWees; Anne Shelley; Susan Wallace

1. **Welcome and Call to Order**The meeting was called to order at 10:00am. Nursing home reimbursement work group has been created to consider LeadingAge Ohio’s proposal for NF quality measures. Though the biennium budget discussion won’t begin in earnest with the new General Assembly until early next year, language on quality for the next biennium budget is under development in communication with our colleague associations.
2. **Federal Update**Future meetings of this subcommittee will include an update by colleagues from LeadingAge. Susan shared that the Biden transition team has reported that they are awaiting information from the General Services Administration in order to effective transition management of COVID-19 response. A spending bill must be enacted by December 1 ; without an spending package, the federal government is at risk of shut down. Alternately, Congress could choose to operate on Continuing Resolutions, funding government programs for short durations while they work towards a larger compromise. While LeadingAge is advocating for additional testing funding, Ohio is one of the few states with unspent CARES funds. Among other under-spending of CARES Act dollars, Ohio’s Provider Relief Funds were not fully applied for. No more application windows are available for aging services providers in Ohio, but LeadingAge Ohio has raised this concern to LeadingAge in hopes that a spending package or future relief package might allow states to maintain and continue to distribute any remaining CARES funding. The state indicates that they are still working through the administrative hurdles in their efforts to get funding out. A second round of funding was made available for ADS and senior centers. Questions from subcommittee members focused on repayment requirements, particularly related to how providers were managing internal accounting and what costs funds would be allocated to. Administrative officials have shared that they do not anticipate any provider reporting requirements to the state, though the state is under reporting requirements to the federal government.
3. **State Update** 
   1. **Disease Watch**: LeadingAge Ohio is partnering with IPRO and Probari to utilize Disease Watch/Real Time to mobilize early detection of disease (COVID, flu, other) so that facilities can respond quickly to address symptom development, and, in the case of COVID, to mitigate the disease spread days before testing results available. LeadingAge Ohio plans to present the concept to the state tomorrow, in hopes of securing CARES Act or other funding for the project.
   2. **PARRT:** LeadingAge Ohio is joining with the Ohio Medical Directors Association and colleague associations to support the state’s desire to scale the Post-Acute Rapid Response Testing program (PARRT) to deploy testing support to congregate care settings across the state. Built originally to address hospital surge issues and the challenges of obtaining testing for nursing home residents in Franklin County, the program’s effectiveness at bringing strategic testing solutions to multiple provider types (particularly assisted living, adult day, etc.) could be used throughout the state.
   3. **Lame Duck:** House bill 461, which would have allowed cameras to be placed in resident rooms, appears to be removed from the House Aging & Long-term Care hearing schedule this week. HB 770, which would have created an essential caregiver designation, has been assigned to House Committee for sponsor testimony and possible vote, signaling its importance to House leadership. We’ve provided input to the sponsors (Frazier and Richardson) so that they understand our concerns. The chief concern is that an essential caregiver could be assigned by EVERY resident, which would create significant administrative burden to already-stressed providers. At this point, it is unclear what amendments are being considered and whether the next draft will more-closely match essential caregiver models that LeadingAge Ohio has discussed with the administration.
4. **Biennium Budget Planning**
   1. **Nursing Facility reimbursement.** As previously noted,LeadingAge Ohio has assembled a nursing home reimbursement work group to provide quick feedback on nursing home reimbursement as we head into budget. Rebasing is scheduled in SFY 2021, and its impact yet unknown, depending on which numbers the Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) uses for its assumptions. In addition, the quality mechanism is set to sunset (a 5.2% reduction at beginning of next biennium), with the understanding that long-term care associations would come back to the table to make recommendations to ODM for its continuation. In light of what is going on with COVID, LeadingAge Ohio supports the quality incentive intact, erring on the side of stable funding. Changes will be required for the measures, since they are based on Nursing Home Compare which CMS has frozen for the duration of the public health emergency. On its next call, the work group will discuss quality indicators related to:
      1. Change of ownership provisions
      2. Occupancy level exclusions

Work group members will consider the quality measures both from the perspective of what is needed as well as what could be dropped.

* 1. **Assisted Living Waiver**. The increase achieved in the current biennium budget was not nearly sufficient to meet AL’s needs. However, the previous focus on the assisted living waiver would do little to offset the ongoing pandemic-related costs and low occupancy. Susan noted that she had conferred with the Ohio Assisted Living Association, which has yet to develop a budget proposal for assisted living, but agreed that some more-targeted pandemic support—whether focused on infection control, PPE or other costs-- would be meaningful. Committee members expressed support for I/C funding, but questioned whether the support should be a one-time payment or ongoing, and how it would be administered given most assisted living in Ohio is privately paid. Susan noted that LeadingAge Ohio is also considering a policy solution, e.g. one that would extend even beyond assisted living to HCBS. An example of such a proposal might be that the state develop an I/C resource center for non-nursing services (AL, HCBS, Adult Day, Senior Centers).

1. **Education and Support Needs**

Anne Shelly provided an overview of upcoming education. In early December Plante Moran will be offering education on the CARES ACT funding and accounting/reporting. LeadingAge Ohio has obtained CEs through BELTSS for Project ECHO Ohio participants. In addition, PDPM education is in the planning as well as two Administrator/DON regional forums.

When asked “what is keeping you up at night”, committee members expressed a variety of concerns, including:

* Fatigue is setting in as cases are racing through our staff; record COVID-19 positive numbers occurring in facilities.
* While I/C has enabled bulk of cases to remain with employees, contact tracing is causing staff capacity to dwindle.
* Occupancy has not recovered and has significantly declined for some. The resulting financial implications for bond/financial covenants are challenging.
* Testing results reporting remains far too slow: speed and access to information is critical if we are to partner well with local hospitals to manage the influx of patients.
* Getting answers on a timely basis remains challenged, as the help desks are overwhelmed.

1. **Adjournment**

Susan will be reaching out to determine interest in continuing on this committee in 2021. Meeting adjourned at 10:57am.

***2021 Meeting dates will be determined in the next few weeks.***