

# **New Jersey Age-Friendly Advisory Council: October 4, 2022**

Topic: Elder Index and Overview of NJ Division on Aging Services (DoAS)

[View Official Recording Here](#)

## **Janet Sharma's Notes**

### **Presentations:**

#### **Welcome from Kaylee McGuire, Deputy Commissioner of Dept of Human Services (DHS)**

- Oversees Division of Aging Services and Disability Services (DoAS).
- Was Governor Murphy's senior policy advisor on COVID, DHS and aging.
- Background in clinical and long-term care.

#### **Jan Mutchler, Ph.D., Gerontology Institute & Dept., UMass Boston**

Elder Index – Financial Security for an Age-Friendly New Jersey: [elderindex.org](http://elderindex.org)

- Biggest concerns about staying in your community as you grow older: Being socially engaged, aging in place, maintaining independence, living with purpose, preserving health and **financial security**.
- Financial Insecurity = imbalance between resources (income) and expenses.
- Elder Index measures the income older people need to meet daily living expenses while staying independent in their own homes; a “bare bones” budget.
- Cost of living in New Jersey is very high due to housing & property taxes
- Older women living alone, as well as Black and Hispanic people, are far more at risk of financial insecurity
- FYI: Massachusetts mandates that every municipality have a Council on Aging. “Front Door” for senior services across the state.

#### **Dennis McGowan: NJ Dept. of Human Services/ Div. of Aging Services**

- DHS is largest department by budget and staff
- [View Presentation Slides Here](#)

#### **Insightful Questions Posed to Mr. McGowan:**

Question #1: Are there intentional partnerships between departments/divisions to extend funding or services?

Answer: Yes, we work with the Dept. of Health for falls prevention, dental services; NJ Save application was developed with Medicare. (*Janet's observation: There may be opportunities for many more partnerships to extend services and funding.*)

Question #2: How does the introduction of the age-friendly communities element interface with existing DoAS programs? What difference does it make to the work that's already being done?

Answer: Publicity, publicity, publicity. The age-friendly initiatives help to get word out about all the programs that are available. Age-friendly community efforts also impact equity, because information is accessible to more people in more languages. Also help us find other seniors – “silent sufferers” on the financial edge who don't know about available services.