**Advocacy Newsletter Article Ideas for June – Aug. 2022**

1. **State Legislative Update**

The Wisconsin State Legislature adjourned in March 2022. For the remainder of the year, legislators will focus on committee work and elections campaigns. All 99 state Assembly Representatives and half of the state’s 33 Senators (those in odd numbered districts) are up for re-election this fall. Thirty of these state legislators (nearly 25% of the full legislature) have announced they will retire, won’t seek re-election, or are running for another office.

With state legislators now available to spend more time in their districts, this is a perfect time to get to know your state Senator and Assembly Representative better. Attend one of their in-district meetings or town halls or invite them to have coffee with you. If you haven’t already, sign up to receive your legislators’ newsletters.

If your legislator(s) is not running for re-election or is facing opposition in the upcoming election, find out about the candidates who are running for the position and talk with them to learn if they are supportive of issues/concerns important to you. These conversations will help you make an informed decision come election time (Primary Election: Tues., Aug. 9, 2022, and General Election: Tues, Nov. 8, 2022). By late June, voters can learn what/who will be on their ballot for the Aug. primary by inserting their address at this link: [**https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/Whats-On-My-Ballot**](https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/Whats-On-My-Ballot). Candidate contact information will soon be available at: [**https://www.vote411.org/wisconsin**](https://www.vote411.org/wisconsin). To find out which current state legislators represent you and learn their contact information, go to: [**https://legis.wisconsin.gov/**](https://legis.wisconsin.gov/)and type your home/voting address in the white box underneath “WHO ARE MY LEGISLATORS?”

1. **New Advocacy Resource Available for Family Caregivers**

Families, not institutions or other paid providers, provide most of the care for people with chronic illness and/or disabilities. These families are the primary providers of long-term care, care that often goes beyond what they can do when they may also be raising their own families, have jobs, and/or live far away. Caring for someone with Alzheimer’s or Parkinson’s disease, stroke, traumatic brain injury, or other long-term conditions can be challenging, especially if it is difficult to locate needed information, services, and/or respite.

Families have first-hand experience with community agencies, providing round-the-clock care, and the financial hardships often associated with caring for a loved one. This personal experience puts these families in a unique position to act as advocates; helping elected officials charged with development of public policy and funding priorities to understand the needs of family caregivers. This new resource document available from the Greater WI Agency on Aging Resources, Inc. offers families tips and resources to help them get involved in local, state, or federal advocacy efforts - [**Advocacy Resources for Family Caregivers**](https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2007389)**.**

1. **Survival Coalition Family Caregiver Survey**

The **Survival Coalition** **of Wisconsin Disability Organizations** is circulating a survey to learn more about how the direct care workforce shortage has impacted family caregivers. If you are a family caregiver, if you work with family caregivers or if you have any way of sharing this survey with others, your help would be greatly appreciated. Thank you!

* *Are you a family caregiver who provides care to a loved one?*
* *Have you been unable to find direct care workers to hire? Are you picking up the pieces and filling in the gaps yourself?*
* *Are you employed full or part time, or not working to make sure your loved one had the care they need?*
* *Have you worried what would happen if you suddenly became unable to do your caregiving duties because of physical injury or illness?*

***You are not alone.***

Your stories are needed to show policy makers the reality of many people’s day to day lives. **Please take the Survival Coalition** [**Family Caregiver Survey**](https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.surveymonkey.com%2Fr%2F22SurvivalCaregiverCrisis&data=05%7C01%7Cjanet.zander%40gwaar.org%7C0a7df3859f004b3ccb9a08da42fea4cd%7C8e087664409d4c4ca6b47aa01020d6ea%7C0%7C0%7C637895958713153054%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Bcvy%2BxInsIqq%2BMMlja7rvhjMMzmTTSzwjLv5qeBc5PY%3D&reserved=0) before **June 17, 2022**.  Survey results will be used to educate policy makers, shared with media outlets and advocates.Take survey here: [**https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/22SurvivalCaregiverCrisis**](https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.surveymonkey.com%2Fr%2F22SurvivalCaregiverCrisis&data=05%7C01%7Cjanet.zander%40gwaar.org%7C0a7df3859f004b3ccb9a08da42fea4cd%7C8e087664409d4c4ca6b47aa01020d6ea%7C0%7C0%7C637895958713153054%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Bcvy%2BxInsIqq%2BMMlja7rvhjMMzmTTSzwjLv5qeBc5PY%3D&reserved=0)

1. **Wisconsin Family and Caregiver Support Alliance Survey Report**

The Wisconsin Family and Caregiver Support Alliance (WFACSA) and UW-Madison Division of Extension conducted a **Wisconsin Working Caregiver Survey** from June – October of 2021. They have recently released their [**Final Survey Report**](https://wisconsincaregiver.org/_data/cms_files/FINAL%20Survey%20Full%20Report%205-12-22.pdf?u=1Ycx57). The survey asked employers and working caregivers how Wisconsin businesses and families are being affected by family caregiving responsibilities. A total of 564 individuals responded to the survey, of which 447 (79.4%) had a family caregiving role. See also the two-page [**Summary**](https://wisconsincaregiver.org/_data/media/38/2-page-summary.pdf) **of the survey report.**

1. **Federal - Older Americans Act (OAA) Funding FY 2023**

The Older Americans Act (OAA) helps to fund critical aging services like county and tribal nutrition programs (including home-delivered meals), elder benefits counseling, family caregiver supports, and health promotion programs. The final federal fiscal year (FY) funding for 2022 proved to be very disappointing to aging advocates. With an ever-growing aging population, increasing demand for access to services and programs, and amidst continued pandemic stressors, funding levels for FY 2022 are inadequate to meet the needs of older adults and family caregivers.

Members of Congress have already started the process of determining FY 2023 funding levels. Aging advocates at the national level have been busy meeting with federal legislators outlining the critical importance of investing in OAA and other programs that help older adults live with independence at home, **but we must do our part as well. Members of Congress need to hear directly from their constituents.**

For FY 2023, **national aging advocates are requesting a doubling of the funding for four prioritized subtitles of the Act:** Title III B (Supportive Services), Title III D (evidence-based health and wellness), Title III E (National Family Caregiver Support Program), and Title VI (Native American Aging Programs). Our federal legislators need to know lack of adequate funding for these important programs risks the health, well-being, and independence of their older constituents!

**Take Action: Contact your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin and Ron Johnson** (see [**Wisconsin Members of the 117th Congress**](https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2004017) for contact information) **to advocate for funding for OAA programs and services and/or to let them know how important this funding is to meeting the needs of older adults and family caregivers in your community.** To find out who your U.S. Representative is, enter your zip code in the white box next to the “Look Up” section in the top righthand corner of this page: [**https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative**](https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative).