



Volume 5, No. 33 September 26, 2023
Office (608) 243-5670 Fax (866) 813-0974
info@gwaar.org www.gwaar.org



Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources (GWAAR) News

Nice to Know

Reminder: Accepting Applications: GWAAR Advisory Council

The Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, Inc. (GWAAR), is looking for thoughtful, civic-minded, energetic individuals to fill vacancies on its Advisory Council. Advisory Council Members are involved in a variety of activities that support aging programs including promotion of quality improvement of aging services and individual and organizational advocacy. Advisory Council Members are expected to maintain community relationships to promote agency visibility and help achieve agency goals. If you are looking for a challenging volunteer opportunity where your skills can make a difference in program planning, development, and implementation – please see the following and apply.

View the application: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2005628>

If you have any questions about volunteering on the Advisory Council, please contact Nick Musson at nick.musson@gwaar.org.

Reminder: Upcoming WellSky (SAMS) Webinars:

EOY Reporting Q&A – 2 remaining sessions (Sept. 28, or Oct. 12)

Register on the GWAAR Data Management SharePoint site: <https://bit.ly/468PfAV>

Reminder: Save the Date! Next Virtual ACE Meeting in October!

Wednesday, October 11 | 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

A Teams meeting invite was emailed out on September 14. An agenda will be sent as we get closer to the meeting date. Contact Rosanna Mazzara for invitation details.

(Rosanna.Mazzara@gwaar.org)



October 11 meeting link: <https://bit.ly/46IW5Dr>

Advocacy

[Janet Zander](#), Advocacy and Public Policy Coordinator

Nice to Know

Action Alert: Older Americans Act 2024 Federal Funding

Take Action: Contact U.S. Senators Ron Johnson and Tammy Baldwin and your U.S. Representative and tell them what federal funding cuts would mean for your Older Americans Act (OAA) programs and the people you serve. Encourage your board members, advisory council members, volunteers, program participants, and other community partners to do the same! Find contact information for your federal legislators here - Wisconsin Members of the 118th Congress - (<https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2007697>). If you are unsure who your U.S. Representative is go here (<https://www.house.gov/representatives>) and enter your home address ZIP code in the box on the upper right-hand side of the page.

None of the 12 appropriations bills for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2024 that need to be passed by Congress by Oct. 1 to avert a continuing resolution (CR) have been passed by both the House and the Senate.

Congress now has less than one week to avert a shutdown before the government runs out of money (Sept. 30 and the last day of the current FFY). The Senate is not in session Monday of this week, but is scheduled to meet Tuesday night to begin taking votes on the Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization bill. The Senate is expected to try to use this reauthorization bill to also pass a continuing resolution (CR) to keep the government running while Congress continues to negotiate final spending bills for fiscal year (FY) 2024 which begins Oct. 1. This CR is expected to be clean stopgap funding legislation (no other proposals that could threaten its passage) in hopes that the House will agree to vote on it by the end of the week.

Last week, the House majority introduced a CR to keep the federal government running until Oct. 31. The House CR also included an across the board cut of 8% for non-defense discretionary programs (which includes OAA funding). According to a White House press release, an 8% funding cut would lead to 60,000 seniors not being able to receive nutrition services.

Internal disagreements between House Republican leadership and a handful of its members leave the majority without the votes needed to pass even a short-term spending bill in that chamber. Given the content of some of the House CR proposals recently introduced, our national association (USAgings) is concerned that even if a CR is passed and a shutdown is averted, the CR may bring its own pain.

Advocates need to urge Congress to pass a clean short-term funding agreement (CR) that protects and increases funding for Older Americans Act (OAA) programs. A government shutdown of any length can cause unnecessary hardship and uncertainty.

Healthy Aging Grants

Earlier this month, Rep. Rozar (R-Marshfield) and Sen. Feyen (R – Fond du Lac) introduced legislation to fund Healthy Aging Grants (AB 418/SB 407). This legislation directs the Department of Health Services (DHS) to allocate a \$378,000 grant in each fiscal year of the 2023-25 fiscal biennium to a private, nonprofit entity that conducts certain activities related to healthy aging, including coordinating the implementation of evidence-based health promotion programs to support healthy aging; serving as a statewide clearinghouse on evidence-based falls injury, disease prevention, self-management, and health promotion programs; providing training and technical assistance to the staff of county departments, administering agencies, and other providers of services to aging populations; and collecting and disseminating information on falls injury, disease prevention, and health promotion in healthy aging populations.

Falls are the number one cause of injuries in older adults and are a key driver of emergency department (ED) visits, hospitalizations, and nursing home admissions. One in four older adults has a fall each year and, sadly, Wisconsin has the highest rate of deadly falls in the nation. Yet, there is no state investment in falls prevention. An estimated \$1 billion is spent annually on falls-related health costs in Wisconsin which includes both Medicaid and out-of-pocket expenses. Falls represent an increasing percentage of 911 calls taxing local EMS and emergency department (ED) capacity. Several Wisconsin fire departments have reported the percentage of fall-related calls to be 30-40%.

Launched in 2023, the Falls Free Wisconsin Center, along with community partners statewide, will provide:

- Virtual falls-risk assessments and interactive tools to reduce risk.
- State and local public awareness campaigns to help consumers find and access prevention resources.
- Support for local prevention programs and initiatives.
- Coordination of Wisconsin's statewide falls prevention coalition.
- Support and resources for emergency service and health professionals.
- Sustainability and expansion of Stepping On — an evidence-based program shown to reduce falls by 31%. To date, over 21,000 people in Wisconsin have participated in the Stepping On program.



Nearly 95% of older adults have at least one chronic condition such as heart disease, diabetes, or arthritis; 80% have two or more. Ninety percent (90%) of the nation's health care expenditures are for chronic conditions. The direct costs to the Medicaid system are estimated at \$1.15 billion annually in Wisconsin. The **Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA)** offers physical activity and chronic disease self-management programs — taken by over 20,000 people in Wisconsin — that focus on behavior change and are evidence-based to reduce health care utilization, improve outcomes, and reduce the risk of moderate or severe functional limitations.



State investment in Healthy Aging Grants will:

- Ensure the long-term sustainability of the Falls Free Wisconsin Center and expand access to Stepping On and other programs to reach more people, reduce falls and save dollars, and
- Sustain the infrastructure needed to support local program providers and ensure that programs are accessible to people throughout the state. Together, we can reduce falls, better manage chronic conditions, increase physical activity, and preserve independence — all while reducing the burden and costs to health care and public safety.

We hope to see this legislation move quickly through the legislature this fall. Stay tuned for updates.

View the proposals:

AB 418: <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2023/proposals/ab418>

SB 407: <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2023/proposals/sb407>

CMS Seeking Comments on Proposed Rule to Establish Minimum Staffing Requirements for Nursing Homes

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is seeking comments on a [proposed rule](#) that would establish minimum staffing requirements for nursing homes. Research consistently shows a link between resident safety, care quality, and stable staffing in nursing homes; understaffing contributes to inadequate and unsafe care.



To be assured consideration, comments must be received at one of the addresses provided below, by **November 6, 2023**.

In commenting, refer to **file code CMS-3442-P**. Comments must be submitted in one of the following three ways (please choose only one of the ways listed):

1. *Electronically*. You may submit electronic comments on this regulation to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the "Submit a comment" instructions.

2. *By regular mail*. You may mail written comments to the following address ONLY: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, Attention: CMS-3442-P, P.O. Box 8016, Baltimore, MD 21244-8016.

Please allow sufficient time for mailed comments to be received before the close of the comment period.

3. *By express or overnight mail*. You may send written comments to the following address ONLY: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services, Attention: CMS-3442-P, Mail Stop C4-26-05, 7500 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21244-1850.

A comprehensive fact sheet about the proposed nursing home rule can be found on the White House website | Briefing Room | Statements and Releases: <https://bit.ly/3ETKWha>

Additional reading:

- [Few Nursing Homes Meet Proposed Staffing Requirements - Analysis: https://bit.ly/3rksFqr](https://bit.ly/3rksFqr)
- [Nursing Home Staffing Standards are Finally Becoming a Reality: https://bit.ly/3PyYpzU](https://bit.ly/3PyYpzU)
- [Why Nursing Homes Need a Minimum Staffing: https://bit.ly/3EQxc6P](https://bit.ly/3EQxc6P)

Family Caregiver Support

[Bryn Ceman](#), Older Americans Act Consultant - Family Caregiver Support Specialist

Nice to Know

Respite Care Webinar

Wednesday, October 4 | 1:00 p.m.

Join the Respite Care Association of Wisconsin (RCAW) as Kevin Coughlin, DHS, Policy Initiative Advisor, shares the latest updates on the Certified Direct Care Professional (CDCP) certification and WisCaregiver Connections powered by Handshake.



Webinar registration and information: <https://rcaw.gnosishosting.net/Events/Calendar?fordate=2023-10-04>

Caring for the Carers: A Webinar on NAC's Findings and Recommendations for Advancing the Mental Well-Being of Family Caregivers

Thursday, October 12 | 1:00 p.m.

There are over 53 million family caregivers in the US, many of them experiencing mental health challenges. Despite this, their mental health needs are not often recognized or given attention. In order to provide these caregivers better support and advance their mental well-being, the National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC) did some research and held a convening with mental health experts in order to bring you a Spotlight Series Brief summarizing these findings and their recommendations. This work was made possible with generous sponsorship by Travers Therapeutics.



Webinar registration:

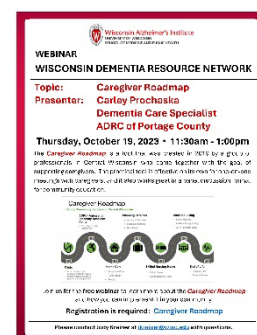
https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_kBn5R3oiQYWsiMsYnWTFsg#/registration

Caregiver Roadmap Webinar

Thursday, October 19 | 11:30 a.m.

Wisconsin Alzheimer's Institute through the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health is offering a free webinar for family caregivers and others who work with family caregivers.

Caregiver Roadmap presented by Carley Prockaska, Dementia Care Specialist, ADRC of Portage County.



Webinar registration: <https://bit.ly/46hyJia>

More information: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2007891>

Caring Better and Braver Conference

Saturday, October 28 | 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Caring Better & Braver, A conference for family caregivers at Black River Beach Neighborhood Center, LaCrosse, WI 54601. **All family caregivers are welcome.**

More information: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2007890>



Wisconsin Senior Medicare Patrol

[Ingrid A. Kunderling](#), Senior Medicare Patrol Program Director

Nice to Know

Resources available for Medicare beneficiaries

The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) has resources available to help Medicare beneficiaries and their advocates make decisions about Medicare health and prescription drug coverage.

Working with Insurance Agents about a Medicare Plan: Ask the Right Questions is a worksheet to use when working with an insurance agent. This tool draws attention to key questions that are



fundamental to picking a plan that meets the beneficiary's needs and can be used as a reference when deciding later about which insurance to choose.

<https://www.smpwi.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Working-with-an-Agent.pdf>

Comparing Medicare Coverage Options can be used to assist with the decision-making process. It is a tool to help beneficiaries compare different plans and it provides some questions to ask of any coverage you are considering. This is only one tool to assist in the process.

<https://www.smpwi.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Comparing-Medicare-Coverage-Options.pdf>

To Navigate the Medicare Maze, Know Your Resources! This page provides a list of reliable resources available to provide beneficiaries with assistance and guidance- on Medicare questions along with offering unbiased information about health insurance plans/benefits and counseling.

<https://www.smpwi.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Resource-Sheet.pdf>

These resources can be found on our website, <https://www.smpwi.org/medicare> (scroll to the bottom of the page) or to request printed copies, contact Ingrid Kunding, ingrid.kunding@gwaar.org

Visit the site: <https://www.smpwi.org/medicare/>

Abuse in Later Life Grant

Nice to Know

Abuse In Later Life Training And Kickoff Event Information for Walworth, Polk, Dunn, and La Crosse Counties

This interactive training event, led by the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life, is open to front line professionals, supervisors, and agency decision makers from any organization or agency that may have contact with older victims of abuse.

Walworth, Polk, Dunn, and La Crosse Counties received a federal grant through the U.S. Department of Justice's Office on Violence Against Women to focus on Abuse in Later Life. The program supports a comprehensive approach to addressing abuse in later life, including domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, neglect, abandonment, economic abuse, or willful harm committed against victims who are 50 years of age or older.

The three-year grant program will have a strong focus on the following in Walworth, Polk, Dunn, and La Crosse Counties:

- Providing training and cross training to professionals across the county
- Establishing or enhancing a multi-disciplinary coordinated community response team
- Providing and/or enhancing victim services for victims of abuse in later life

For this event the National Clearing House on Abuse in Later Life is sending 2 national trainers who will facilitate this training. Please feel free to share this invite widely with others who may be interested in attending!



Polk County:

October 12 / 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Polk County Government Center

100 Polk County Plaza

Balsam Lake, Wisconsin

To register: <https://wisdoj.eventsair.com/abuse-later-in-life-training-101223>

For more information contact: Erika Deal at 608-444-1578 or erika.deal@gwaar.org

LaCrosse County:

October 18 / 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

La Crosse County Administration building

212 6th Street N, Room 430

La Crosse, Wisconsin

To register: <https://wisdoj.eventsair.com/abuse-later-in-life-training-101823>

For more information contact: Erika Deal at 608-444-1578 or erika.deal@gwaar.org

Dunn County:

October 19 / 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Dunn County Human Services Building

3001 US Highway 12, Room 54

Menomonie, Wisconsin

To register: <https://wisdoj.eventsair.com/abuse-later-in-life-training-101923>

For more information contact: Erika Deal at 608-444-1578 or erika.deal@gwaar.org

Walworth County:

October 25 / 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Walworth County Human Services

1910 County Road NN

Elkhorn, Wisconsin

To register: <https://wisdoj.eventsair.com/abuse-later-in-life-training-102523>

For more information contact: Doreen Goetsch at 608-219-5013 or doreen.goetsch@gwwar.org