



Volume 7, No. 39 October 7, 2025 Office: 608-243-5670 Fax: 866-813-0974 info@gwaar.org www.gwaar.org

Leadership Opportunity



Applications welcome!

Openings available on our Board of Directors

gwaar.org/join-the-gwaar-board





Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources (GWAAR) News

Need to Know

Reminder: 4th Quarter ACE meeting tomorrow

Wednesday, October 8, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. (virtual – Teams)

Join us next week for the 4th Quarter ACE meeting. Featured topics include an advocacy update on volunteer drivers, an introduction of our new Elder Abuse Program Specialist, year-end fiscal reporting, and more. Invitations were sent September 8. Contact Rosanna Mazzara for invitation details at Rosanna. Mazzara@gwaar.org.

Meeting link: https://bit.ly/4mFSEiw

Agenda: https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewfile/id/2008721

GW aar Save the date **Next ACE Meeting** Wednesday, October 8 ACE

Save the dates for 2026 ACE meetings

Wednesday, January 14, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 8, 1:30 - 3:00 p.m.

Wednesday, July 8, In-person at Stevens Point, 10:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Wednesday, October 14, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.

Reminder: Now hiring Veteran Self-Directed Program (VSDP) Care Consultant

Ideal candidate will be located in Central, South-Central, or West-Central WI.

View the full job description: https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008591

To apply, send cover letter and resume to Lisa Drouin, VA Programs Manager: <u>Lisa.Drouin@GWAAR.org</u>

Reminder: Leadership Opportunities Starting January 2026!

Use Your Leadership Skills to Support Older People in Wisconsin

GWAAR is looking for thoughtful, civic-minded, energetic individuals to serve on its 10-member board. Board Members play a critical role in guiding and overseeing the agency's actions and initiatives.

Candidates must live outside Dane and Milwaukee Counties and be able to devote time and energy to the GWAAR's governance. Learn more: https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2005629

Questions? Contact GWAAR Executive Director John Schnabl, john.schnabl@gwaar.org

Nice to Know

Reminder: Ageism Awareness Day resources available from American Society on Aging

October 9 is Ageism Awareness Day! Ageism pits age groups against each other and makes us feel that there is no value to aging and older adults. We are living longer lives in a multigenerational society. Ageism prevents us from working together on shared challenges. It's time to update and expand our understanding of aging.

The American Society on Aging has compiled a collection of resources and toolkits you can use to help advocate for Ageism Awareness Day.

Explore Resources & Toolkits: https://asaging.org/ageism-awareness/



Reminder: Reframing Aging and Disability in Wisconsin

Through the leadership of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network, we are taking steps to advance effective communication strategies about aging. Part of our activities include presentations from the National Center to Reframe Aging (NCRA).





The following free webinars will introduce the key concepts of reframing and provide proven communications strategies that will reduce the negative health and policy impacts of ageism and ableism.

View the flyer: https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008710

General introductory sessions:

Tuesday, October 28 | 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Registration: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN iNw7Tvm0Qky11NbDJI6v7Q

Wednesday, February 11, 2026 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.

Registration: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_TFO4fZzFSIO81sEKhjRaeQ

Introductory session tailored for health care professionals:

Thursday, January 15, 2026 | 12:00 – 1:00 p.m.

Registration: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN FzVArKUXSISUw0LZUn0HHw

Impact of Ageism on Physical and Mental Health free webinar

Thursday, November 6 | 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Dr. Regina Koepp explores the profound impact of ageism on the physical and mental health of older adults, debunking harmful myths that aging limits growth or healing and emphasizing the importance of belonging as a key to resilience, longevity, and emotional well-being.

Attendees will learn how ageism intersects with other forms of discrimination, exacerbating health disparities among marginalized older adults. Through evidence-based insights and practical tools, the session offers pathways to foster inclusive environments that support healing, dignity, and transformation—at every age.

Registration: https://bit.ly/4q0Wi9E



Reminder: Innovation Grant Application Now Available

It's time to apply! The Wisconsin Department of Revenue, State and Local Finance Division announced that the Innovation Grant application (Form SL-405) is now available. Wisconsin counties, municipalities, and tribes are encouraged to apply for this substantial grant.



Innovation Grant Application period – now through March 31, 2026

Applying for the grant: E-file the Innovation Grant application (Form SL-405) within MyDORGov Award funds: There is a total of \$300 million in funds available statewide – a county, municipality, or tribe may receive up to \$10 million each year.

View the website: https://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/SLF/COTVC-News/2025-09-17.aspx

Questions? Contact lgs@wisconsin.gov

Abuse in Later Life Grant

Need to Know

Reminder: Direct Services Elder Abuse Training

Thursday, October 23 | 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Lunch is on your own

Walworth County Health & Human Services Building 1910 County Road NN, Elkhorn

Registration: https://bit.ly/3IUVdiM

View the flyer:

https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008663

Friday, October 31 New Date and location

Friday, November 14 | 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. | Lunch is on your own

Board Room, Onalaska Omni Center, 255 Riders Club Road, Onalaska, WI 54650

Registration: https://bit.ly/3IY1WbL

View the flyer: https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008693



Janet Zander, Advocacy and Public Policy Coordinator

Nice to Know

Advocacy updates:

State (pages 4-6)

- AB 410/SB 410 grants for falls prevention awareness and initiatives (Healthy Aging Grants) –
- Volunteer Driver Program/Volunteer Driver Stories Needed
- Housing Bill Package
- Election Bills Announced
- Speaker's Task Force on Elder Services

Federal (page 7)

FY 2026 Budget: Continuing Resolution or Government Shutdown

AB 410/SB 410 - grants for falls prevention awareness and initiatives (Healthy Aging Grants)

Healthy Aging Grants fund **evidence-based community programs** like *Stepping On*, which are proven to reduce falls by 31%. These programs equip older adults with practical tools to reduce fall risk, manage chronic conditions, and maintain physical activity—significantly reducing the need for emergency medical responses and hospitalizations.

Healthy Aging Grants provide training, infrastructure, and program access that community partners need to address the root causes of **preventable falls**. These grants will:

- Reduce preventable injuries that currently overburden our families and systems,
- Support collaborative local efforts with public health and aging services, public safety, and healthcare organizations, and
- Promote dignity, independence, and health for older adults across Wisconsin.

The number of falls emergency medical services (EMS) responds to are increasing by nearly 10,000 a year statewide and made up over 20% of all 911-related ambulance runs last year.

We need your help to get more state legislators signed on in support <u>AB 410</u> and <u>SB 410</u> and to encourage members of the state legislature's Senate <u>Health Committee</u> and Assembly <u>Health, Aging and Long-Term</u> Care Committee to schedule a hearing on the legislation.

Take Action: Please consider taking the following action:

AB 410/SB 410 has bipartisan support in the state legislature. There are currently 24 state legislators (9 Senators and 15 Assembly Representatives signed on in support of this legislation. To see if your state Senator and Assembly Representative are signed on as sponsors/cosponsors on the bill, go to: AB 410. If yes, please send them a message thanking them for their support of falls prevention funding. If not, contact them and ask them to support this legislation to help reduce preventable falls in Wisconsin. Let them know how



important falls prevention initiatives are to you, your family, and/or those you serve. Find your representatives at https://maps.legis.wisconsin.gov/. For more information regarding Healthy Aging Grants, see the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network's (WAAN) Falls Prevention Issue Brief. https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008534

Volunteer Driver Program/Volunteer Driver Stories Needed

GWAAR and the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN) are working with legislators to create legislation to protect volunteer drivers from denial of insurance coverage or higher insurance premiums, solely because they are volunteer drivers. We need your help distributing a survey to collect stories. Stories regarding the volunteer driver program or from volunteer drivers will help inform our work and will give deeper meaning to the impact policies have on the everyday lives of Wisconsinites.

Please help us collect stories from volunteer program administrators, volunteer drivers, volunteer driver program passengers, individuals with unmet transportation needs, and caregivers of people who use volunteer driver programs or need transportation services. These stories can help on many levels:

- Providing policymakers with real-life examples of challenges or benefits
- Showing where gaps exist in our current policies
- Demonstrating emerging issues
- Conveying the impact of a specific policy/policies

Specific information collected will remain private, if individuals wish. If survey respondents are willing to share their story or let us share your story, they can complete the contact information section to provide us with a way to connect with them.

Anyone with questions or who would like to speak to someone about their story can contact either:

- Janet Zander, Advocacy & Public Policy Coordinator at 608-228-7253 or janet.zander@gwaar.org
- Nick Musson, Transportation & Aging Plan Specialist at 608-228-8092 or nick.musson@gwaar.org

For more information regarding the volunteer driver insurance issue, see WAAN's <u>State Issue Brief</u>: https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008441

Thank you for completing this survey and/or sharing our story collection survey link: https://forms.office.com/r/ECJWtVa1TX https://forms.office.com/r/ECJWtVa1TX

Housing Bill Package

In late Sept., Assembly Republicans announced a new housing package. The package currently includes seven bills but could include as many as 10 when finalized. On Sept. 30, the Assembly Committee on Housing and Real Estate held a public hearing on 11 housing-related bills. We are specifically monitoring the following two bills:

• Assembly Bill 182 (AB 182)/Senate Bill 178 (SB 178) - Relating to: changes to the low-income housing tax credit. The bill requires that the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA), if possible, ensures that at least 35 percent of the tax credits it allocates each year under the program are for qualified low-income housing projects in rural areas in Wisconsin and removes the requirement that a qualified low-income housing project be financed with tax-exempt bonds. The Senate bill passed out of the committee with unanimous support and is available for scheduling for a vote by the full Senate. The Assembly Committee on Housing and Real Estate held a public hearing on AB 182 on 9/30 and unanimously passed (14-0) the amended bill out of committee on 10/02/25. The bill does not include increased funding for low-income housing tax credits which is needed to address rising costs. GWAAR supports this legislation.

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• Assembly Bill 449 (<u>AB 449</u>)/Senate Bill 473 (<u>SB 473</u>) - Relating to: local regulation of accessory dwelling units. This bill requires political subdivisions with zoning ordinances to allow as a permitted use at least one accessory dwelling unit (ADU) on each parcel that is zoned for residential use or mixed use on which an existing single-family dwelling is located. The Assembly Committee on Housing and Real Estate held a public hearing on AB 449 on 9/30 and passed (13-1) the amended bill out of committee on 10/02/25. AB 449 is scheduled for a vote of the full Assembly on 10/07/25. GWAAR is monitoring this legislation.

Election Bills Announced

On 9/24, legislators held a press conference to announce elections bill proposals. A dozen bills were initially circulated for co-sponsorship, with more bills expected in the future. While there is disagreement between Republicans proposals and Democrats proposals, both parties are showing bipartisan support for open discussion of the bills. Among the bills are proposals we are monitoring related to absentee ballots, election official training, voting rights, polling place accessibility, and voter registration. The bills are out for co-sponsorship through Oct. 1. Stay tuned for more information as the bills are introduced and referred to committees.

Speaker's Task Force on Elder Services

In September, four new Speaker's Task Forces were announced, including the Speaker's Task Force on Elder Services. Representative Pat Snyder (Assembly Dist. #85) was appointed as the chair of this new task force. The remaining task force membership has now been announced:

Snyder (Chair)

Doyle (Vice Chair)

Melotik

Gundrum

VanderMeer

Novak

McCarville

Taylor

The task force will work to identify ways to improve the quality of life for older Wisconsinites. The task force will focus specifically on services that help older people maintain independence in their own homes, encourage social interaction and community engagement to combat isolation and loneliness, prioritize physical wellbeing and financial independence, and prevent physical and financial elder abuse.

Rep. Snyder said the plan is to hold several public hearings around the state in Oct. and Nov., with a goal of having bill drafts in Jan. 2026. Additional information regarding the dates and locations of public hearings will be shared as soon as it is available. It will be important for the task force to hear from older adults and aging network professionals around the state regarding the challenges older people face as they plan to stay living in their homes. If your Assembly Representative is serving on the task force, please reach out and congratulate them for their appointment to the task force and let them know you/your agency are available to serve as a resource to them.

See the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network's <u>2025-2027 State Budget Comparison</u> to see the aging network's unaddressed budget needs (most of which align well with the charge of the new Elder Services Task Force).

2025-2027 State Budget Comparison: https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008640

Advocacy update: Federal

FY 2026 Budget: Continuing Resolution or Government Shutdown

The federal government shut down at 12:01 a.m. on the morning of Oct. 1, 2025 due to the lack of votes needed (60 in the Senate) to pass a short-term spending bill (or continuing resolution – CR) to fund the government through Nov. 21, 2025. Republicans in the Senate were 5 votes short of the votes needed to pass their bill to keep the government funded for another seven weeks. The Democrats proposal sought an extension of enhanced Affordable Care Act (ACA) subsidies (set to expire at the end of Dec. 2025) and new restrictions on the administration's practice of withholding federal funds. Both of the spending bills were rejected, leading to a partial shutdown of the U.S. government.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) expects the shutdown to impact 750,000 federal workers who will be furloughed (without pay) while others (who are deemed essential), including active-duty troops, air traffic control, and federal law enforcement, are required to work without pay. Congress has traditionally approved retroactive payment for these employees once the government reopens, but this does not prevent the immediate financial difficulties they face.

Approximately 60% of federal funding is mandatory spending and unaffected by a shutdown. Programs like Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid (which have mandatory funding) continue because they are authorized by permanent law rather than annual appropriations. However, customer service wait times may increase and some administrative functions could be delayed.

Funding for Older Americans Act programs and other social service programs, as well as other programs and agencies funded by discretionary funding; such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), national parks and museums, public health initiatives, and federal housing assistance programs, is paused or suspended (until a new funding bill is passed) because they rely on annual funding approved by Congress. The impact varies significantly by federal agency, as each government department has its own contingency plan.

It is unclear how long this shutdown will last. The Senate voted several times since 9/30 to try and pass the CR, but to date have not had the votes needed to do so. The extent of service disruption depends on the length of the shutdown, and which agencies are unfunded. The last shutdown, occurring in President Trump's first term, was a record 35 days from December 2018 to January 2019. Additional information will be shared as it becomes available.

Webinar: Updates and Q&A - Federal Funding Fallout2025

Friday, October 10 | 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.

English registration: https://bit.ly/FedFunds1010

Spanish registration: https://bit.ly/FedFundsSpan1010

This week Congress will either decide to keep the government open or shut it down. National advocates are concerned about a federal bill that could mean a lot more Medicaid dollars going into institutions, and whether Congress will extend the ACA subsidies is still unknown, and more changes by the administration that could impact people with disabilities. Join BPDD on Friday for the latest updates on what is happening at the federal level.

Data Management

<u>Carrie Kroetz</u>, Data Management and Technology Coordinator

Nice to Know

Upcoming Webinars - PeerPlace

NFCSP Services Open Discussion Q&A

October 14 | 11:00 a.m. | Registration: https://bit.ly/4mMFCQd

This webinar will consist of open discussion (unmuted) Q&A conversations on topic specific questions.

In-Home Services Q&A – in-Chat (including Adult Day Care and Case Management)

October 14, 3:00 p.m. | Registration: https://bit.ly/4gWxyLu

This webinar will consist of in-Chat (muted) Q&A conversations on topic specific questions.

Health Promotion, Recreation/Socialization/Visiting and Other Services Q&A (including Public Information, Transportation, Support Groups...) – in Chat

October 15th, 3:00 p.m. | Registration: https://bit.ly/3WtB72g

This webinar will consist of in-Chat (muted) Q&A conversations on topic specific questions.

Nutrition Services Open Discussion Q&A

October 15, 1:00 p.m. | Registration: https://bit.ly/3VUqPbq

This webinar will consist of open discussion (unmuted) Q&A conversations on topic specific questions.

In-Home Services Open Discussion Q&A (including Adult Day Care and Case Management)

October 20, 9:00 a.m. | Registration: https://bit.ly/46YMsMO

This webinar will consist of open discussion (unmuted) Q&A conversations on topic specific questions.

NFCSP Services in-Chat Q&A

October 20th, 1:00 p.m. | Registration: https://bit.ly/3KFBwfp

This webinar will consist of in-Chat (muted) Q&A conversations on topic specific questions.

Health Promotion, Recreation/Socialization/Visiting and Other Services Open Discussion Q&A (including Public Information, Transportation, Support Groups...)

October 23, 9:00 a.m./ Registration: https://bit.ly/4h5KMpw

This webinar will consist of open discussion (unmuted) Q&A conversations on topic specific questions.

Nutrition Services in-Chat Q&A

October 23, 1:00 p.m. | Registration: https://bit.ly/4hafX2P

This webinar will consist of in-Chat (muted) Q&A conversations on topic specific questions.

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Reminders

• If you are unable to attend, all webinars will be recorded and posted on the GWAAR Partners Resources site under Aging Programs/Data Management library for registered users.

https://gwaar.sharepoint.com/sites/PartnerResources | Aging Programs | Data Management |
The first of many End-of-Year review reports have been posted to the GWAAR SharePoint site under Aging Programs/Data Management library. Please review this and address any issues indicated for your Aging Unit (also, please review the 09-04-25 GWAAR PeerPlace EOY Series - General Errors to Review recording). If you have questions, please let Carrie Kroetz, know.



We held a webinar regarding using AFCSP as Match for NFCSP. The recording and PowerPoint were posted in the Fiscal Resources and Data Management libraries on the GWAAR Partner Resources site.

Deadline Dates to know

- PeerPlace services entered and errors corrected October 31
- September Claim November 5
- 2026 Budget (yet to be posted) November 7
- FFY Variance Report December 12

Family Caregiver Support

Bryn Ceman, Older Americans Act - Caregiver Programs Specialist

Need to Know

Reminder: Thank You, Caregiver Coordinators & Partners!

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who traveled to attend and present at our Statewide Caregiver Coordinator Meeting on September 23. * Your insights and commitment made this gathering a success!

>> Special thanks to Kayla Steinke for hosting sa, managing the hybrid setup __, and assisting with notes __your efforts made a huge difference!

 ${\color{red} {\mathbb A}}$ Thanks also to Leslie Thede for supporting chat discussions \bigcirc and feedback during the event.

All links, presentations, notes, and supporting documents can be found here:

https://gwaar.org/wisconsin-caregiver-support-community-monthly-calls

Together, we continue to strengthen Wisconsin's caregiver support network. 💪 💙

Nice to Know

Caregiver Event & Resource Fair

Friday, October 10 | 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. | Northwood Tech Conference Center, Rice Lake.

Caregivers—this day is for YOU! Foin ADRC of Barron & Rusk Counties, Northwood Technical College, and the Barron County Caregiver Coalition at the Care Your Way: Tools for the Journey Caregiver Event & Resource Fair.

- Mini-sessions on scams & fraud, falls prevention, chair yoga, nutrition, planning pitfalls, and more!
- Onsite wellness, memory & hearing screenings, equipment checks, and caregiver tech help.
- Come and go as you please—leave feeling supported and empowered!
- Fraction Register today: https://bit.ly/3IZ2NsQ | Call 715-788-7133

Caregiving Documentary Screening & Panel Discussion

Wednesday, October 15 | 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. (Light refreshments at 4:30 p.m.)

Signe Skott Cooper Hall, Room 1121 – Auditorium, 701 Highland Ave, Madison, WI

FREE Parking at Lot 60 after 4:30 p.m.

You're Invited! Foin the UW Madison Center for Interprofessional Practice and Education, the Center for Aging Research and Education (CARE) Occupational Therapy Program, and the Dane County ADRC for a special Caregiving Documentary Screening & Panel Discussion

→ Come together for an evening of insight, connection, and conversation as we explore:

- What caregiving is and what it looks like in Wisconsin
- Stories from the documentary Caregiving
- A panel discussion with experts and community voices

Pan't make it in person? Watch the full documentary on PBS Wisconsin Sunday, October 22 at 10 p.m.

FREE registration: https://bit.ly/KESCaregivingSUP



Fiscal

Carrie Kroetz, Data Management and Technology Coordinator

Need to Know

Upcoming

- GWAAR Fiscal has received the allocations for the 2024 Carryover funds, the C1 Mini Grants and the additional C2 funds. We will be issuing the amended contracts shortly.
- All transfer requests have been submitted to BADR and we are awaiting information if GWAAR is
 within allowable limits or if adjustments must be made. In order so agencies avoid overspending as
 they wait for the transfers, the funds requested will be backed out from our allocations on the
 September claim form. Once we have the approved transfers, funds will then be added to the
 claim form which may not happen until after September. As this rolls out GWAAR Fiscal will host
 a webinar to discuss recommendations for drawing down the re-allocated funds.

Deadline Dates to know

- PeerPlace services entered, and errors corrected October 31
- September Claim November 5
- 2026 Budget (yet to be posted) November 7
- FFY Variance Report December 12

Angie Sullivan, Older Americans Act - Health Promotion Program Specialist

Need to Know

Reminder: Social Connection Awareness Week November 9-15

Kick off webinar: Monday, November 10 | 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. via Zoom

Wisconsin's Social Connection Awareness Week is coming up November 9-15, 2025. This year's theme is: From Neighbors to Networks - Connection Happens Here.

Join us as we kick off Social Connection Awareness Weeks in an inspiring webinar on Monday, November 10th, featuring speaker Richard Kyte! Don't miss this chance to start the week with fresh ideas and meaningful conversation.

More details are on the way for additional events and activities to engage in during Social Connection Awareness Week - stay tuned.

More information:

https://connectwi.org/2025/09/25/free-webinar-november-10/

Webinar registration: https://bit.ly/46MG6QE

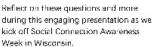
View the flyer:

https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008728



What is your third place?

At a time when our nation is facing an epidemic of loneliness, when communities are suffering from loss of trust, low levels of engagement, despair, and political polarization, what if the answer to many of our problems lies in a simple idea? What if we just need to pay attention to the places where we find ourselves?





Scan the QR Code to Register:





Now Available!! Awareness Week Promotional Resources

November will be here before we know it! Promotional resources are now available for you to start planning for how to use them during Social Connection Awareness Week. Social media graphics and suggested text, a newsletter article, press release, and letter to the editor can be found on our website and customized for local use. will be sharing ready-to-use social media posts to help spread messages of belonging and community. To prepare for next month, they have provided graphics that can be used throughout October (and beyond!).

View the resources: https://connectwi.org/for-professionals/awareness-resources/#d

Nutrition

Pam VanKampen, Older Americans Act - Nutrition Program & Senior Center Specialist

Nice to Know

Where's Chef Justin Johnson?

Check out the videos created by Sustainable Kitchens highlighting the incredible Cooking Kitchens in the GWAAR Service Area that he worked with over the years as part of the projects funded by GWAAR.

Thank you for the amazing cooking staff, Nutrition directors, and Justin for sharing his expertise, recipes, and passion for back-to-scratch cooking!

https://www.facebook.com/SustainableKitchens15

Spotlight on: Bad River Tribe Elder Services

https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1Yb2Lur9VV/



Wisconsin Senior Medicare Patrol

Ingrid A. Kundinger, Senior Medicare Patrol Program Director

Nice to Know

October Scam Spotlight now available

This month's topic is Medicare's Open Enrollment Period, which runs from October 15th - December 7th.

The spotlight focuses on common scams that happen during Open Enrollment and also provides important questions for enrollees to consider when deciding which plan is right for them.

Read the October Scam Spotlight: https://bit.ly/4odD1QK

