



Volume 7, No. 46 November 25, 2025
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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

Nice to Know

GWAAR closed for Thanksgiving holiday

We will be off for the Thanksgiving holiday and will be back on Monday, December 1.

We hope everybody has a safe and enjoyable Thanksgiving!

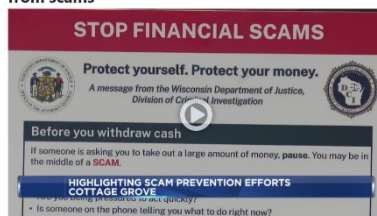


GWAAR in the news

A press conference held on November 18 was focused on financial exploitation, and Ingrid Kunding, Fraud & Abuse Programs Manager, was asked to speak on behalf of GWAAR. She discussed the impact of financial exploitation on older adults and highlighted the Elder Abuse Hotline that GWAAR operates in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Justice.



Wisconsin organizations work to protect people from scams



By Ashley Weil
Published Nov. 19, 2023 at 9:29 PM CST

“MADISON, Wis. (WMTV) - During International Fraud Awareness Week, the Wisconsin Department of Justice is highlighting ways to prevent scams that can cause significant harm, from financial losses to emotional damage.

Community organizations, partnering with the DOJ, are working to protect people from becoming victims of fraud, warning that people should always be cautious when taking out cash or sending money to others.”



Watch or read the story:

[Wisconsin organizations work to protect people from scams](#)

-continued-

Read the press release: <https://bit.ly/47SfVK4>

View the printable flyer: <https://bit.ly/4ibx6d2>

Visit the hotline site: <https://reportelderabusewi.org/>

See additional pictures from the event: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008814>

GWAAR's Janet Zander one of featured guests on Aging Well Firefighter podcast

In this closing conversation of the *Connection Is Medicine* series, Roy Smalley sits down with Janet Zander and Meghan Christian, members of the Wisconsin Coalition for Social Connection, to explore how communities, systems, and everyday interactions shape our collective health.



Listen to the episode:

<https://www.agingwellfirefighter.com/p/connection-is-medicine-part-3-66f>

Save the date! GWAAR Board of Directors annual meeting

Friday, December 12 | 10:00 a.m.

The next GWAAR Board of Directors annual meeting will be held on Friday, December 12 at 10:00 a.m.

The agenda and the virtual meeting link will be posted closer to the date. For any questions or for the meeting link, please contact

Rosanna.mazzara@gwaar.org



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

View or share the post on LinkedIn:

<https://bit.ly/4acAjqF>



Advocacy

Janet Zander, Advocacy and Public Policy Coordinator

Nice to Know

Voting Bills Update (excerpts from the Disability Vote Coalition)

The Assembly was on the floor last week to take action on a number of voting-related bills, as well as many other topics. GWAAR is closely following two voting related bills that were **not** on last week's Assembly agenda.

- [AB 599](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2025/proposals/ab599) which would shift Wisconsin away from having an indefinitely confined voter status to create a permanent absentee ballot option. This legislation would **eliminate the photo ID exemption** for people who cannot obtain a photo ID. This bill passed in the Assembly's Campaigns and Elections Committee in mid-November. **GWAAR opposes this legislation** and was glad to see it was not on the Assembly floor last week.
[AB 599: https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2025/proposals/ab599](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2025/proposals/ab599)
- [AB 560](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2025/proposals/ab560) which would prohibit the use of absentee ballot drop boxes. A public hearing was held on this legislation in early November. **GWAAR opposes this legislation.**
[AB 560: https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2025/proposals/ab560](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2025/proposals/ab560)

The legislature does not have another floor period until mid-January. We'll continue to monitor any voting-related legislation and will keep you up to date.

Speaker's Task Force on Elder Services – Upcoming Dates

Last week, the State [Assembly Speaker's Task Force on Elder Services](#) held their second and third informational hearings. Members of the Task Force heard about:

- A community center located within a YMCA that offered health promotion classes, access to exercise machines, social activities and more,
- A three-year pilot community paramedicine program to improve access to primary care by addressing barriers to care. So far, the program has demonstrated a significant reduction in ambulance calls and emergency room visits,
- Evidence-based falls prevention initiatives and other health promotion classes,
- ADRC and aging unit programs/services and funding needs,
- Scams and financial exploitation,
- A joint county/city program to address homelessness,
- Adult Protective Services growing caseloads and funding needs,
- Advance Care Planning clinics,
- Challenges related to quick enrollment of hospitalized patients into Family Care, and
- Strategies to support long-term care and residential services.

The task force is planning to hold one more informational hearing in Madison sometime in early Jan. 2026 (the date has not yet been determined).

As a reminder, the Task Force is looking to identify ways to improve the quality of life for older Wisconsinites and is focused on programs, services, and policies 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 elder financial exploitation.

-continued-

To ensure task force members hear from all those wishing to share information related to successful programs and services to help older Wisconsinites remain living at home or the challenges faced by older people planning to age in place, **please watch for an action alert to help connect aging network professionals, older people, and family caregivers with members of the Task Force.** In the meantime, you are encouraged to contact members of the Task Force directly.

[Assembly Speaker's Task Force on Elder Services:](#)

<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2025/committees/assembly/3035>

You will find contact information for each of the members at the links below.

- [Representative Snyder \(Chair\)](#)
- [Representative Doyle \(Vice-Chair\)](#)
- [Representative Melotik](#)
- [Representative Gundrum](#)
- [Representative VanderMeer](#)
- [Representative Novak](#)
- [Representative McCarville](#)
- [Representative Taylor](#)

FoodShare Update

Back in October, over 100 local, regional, and statewide organizations sent a letter to the Wisconsin State Legislature asking them to fully and immediately support the Wisconsin Department of Health Services' (DHS) funding request of \$69 million which is needed to implement FoodShare program changes required by the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA). The fund is needed in this biennium (2025-2027) and were not included in the state budget signed into law this past July.

The letter to the legislature requested the funding be included as part of AB 387/SB 390, the "budget correction" bill introduced this session. Unfortunately, the State Legislature did not provide the funding needed to implement the required changes to the FoodShare program. Without the additional funding, needed staff cannot be hired and trained and the state is put at an greater risk of increasing its error rate, which will result in financial penalties for the state.

It is critical for this funding to be provided soon; over 43,000 people are at risk of losing basic food necessities if they don't get the help they need to meet work requirements.

If the FoodShare program is important to you and/or those you care about, please contact your State Senator and Assembly Representative to share your thoughts on the importance of the program to older adults, people living with disabilities and/or caregivers. To find contact information for your state legislators enter your home address in the text box here: [Find Your Legislator](#).

[Find Your Legislator:](https://maps.legis.wisconsin.gov/) <https://maps.legis.wisconsin.gov/>

Weekly Federal Funding Fallout2025 Updates and Q&A webinar returns Dec. 5

Friday, December 5 | 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.

English registration: <https://bit.ly/FedFunds125>

Spanish registration: <https://bit.ly/FedFundSpa125>



Data Management

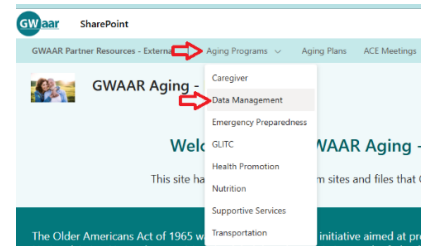
[Carrie Kroetz](#), Data Management and Technology Coordinator

Nice to Know

Reminders

All webinars are recorded and posted on the GWAAR Partners Resources site and accessed by registered users.

<https://gwaar.sharepoint.com/sites/PartnerResources> | Aging Programs | [Data Management](#)



Deadline Dates to know

- 2026 Budget (yet to be posted) – due TBD
- FFY Variance Report (yet to be posted) – December 12

Family Caregiver Support

[Bryn Ceman](#), Caregiver Programs Specialist

Nice to Know

Reminder: National Family Caregivers Month Partner Toolkit Now Available!

This November, let's celebrate National Family Caregivers Month (NFCM) by spreading awareness, appreciation, and action for the millions of family caregivers who make a difference every day.

The National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC) has released its 2025 Partner Toolkit — a comprehensive resource designed to help organizations, advocates, and community partners join the national conversation. 🌍 ✨ Inside the toolkit, you'll find:



- 🗣️ Key messages and social media posts to raise awareness
- 📄 Downloadable graphics and logos
- 📰 Sample press releases and proclamations
- 💡 Ideas for events, outreach, and storytelling

Access the toolkit here:

👉 https://www.caregiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/NFCM_2025_Partner-Toolkit.pdf

Family Caregiving video series available

✨ I'm excited to share another short video from our new series, spotlighting family caregiving, the cornerstone of our aging services ecosystem. Each video explores what caregivers need throughout the lifespan, how to recognize those needs, and where to find trusted support across Wisconsin. Visit [WisconsinCaregiver.org](https://wisconsinCaregiver.org) to learn more. Whether you're a caregiver, part of the aging or disability services network, an advocate, or work with children, youth, and families, this message is for you. ❤️



Care Has No Age: Supporting Caregivers Across the Lifespan:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ON1raJh530Y>

📢 Webinar for Caregiver Coordinators & Family Caregivers!

Serving the Deaf & Hard of Hearing Community

Thursday, December 4 | 12:00 p.m.


Join the DHS Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to learn practical strategies for supporting individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind, including communication tips, assistive technology, and dementia-related resources.

🎤 Presenters:

Jennifer Anderson & Stacie Heckendorf, DHS ODHH

💛 A helpful session for Caregiver Coordinators and the caregivers you support.

👉 Register here: <https://bit.ly/48qde1s>



Wisconsin Alzheimer's Institute
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Wisconsin Dementia Resource Network


Webinar Topic: **Successful Approaches to Serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community**

When: **Thursday, December 4, 2025 • Noon - 1:00pm**


The Department of Health Services (DHS) Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) has been working with multiple state and community partners to raise awareness related to the risk of dementia for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind.

During the webinar, participants will learn about the 5-year partnership between ODHH and the Wisconsin statewide Building Our Largest Dementia (BOLD) Infrastructure for Alzheimer's Disease grant. Participants will also learn about communication tips, assistive technology, and resources to minimize the impact of untreated hearing loss and dementia on our aging population.


Presenters



Jennifer Anderson
Deaf Specialist,
DHS Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing




Stacie Heckendorf
Behavioral Health Initiative Program Coordinator,
DHS Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing



Behavioral Health Initiative

Join us for the free Zoom webinar,
[Registration Link](#)



ODHH
Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Please contact Jody Krainer at jkrainer@wisc.edu with questions.

Advancing Education, Research, Clinical Care, and Community

Fiscal

[Carrie Kroetz](#), Data Management and Technology Coordinator

Need to Know

Deadline Dates to know

2026 Budget (yet to be posted) – due TBD

FFY Variance Report (yet to be posted) – December 12

Health Promotion

[Angie Sullivan](#), Health Promotion Program Specialist

Need to Know

Reminder: Quarterly Health Promotion Webinar replay now available!

In case you missed it, the November 4th Quarterly Health Promotion Webinar recording is now available.

If you are interested in offering a new virtual option for Strength Training and Brain Health, the administrators of Vivo (a new OAA Title III-D eligible program in WI) give an overview of the research behind their program along with outcome data.

In addition, St. Croix County ADRC gave an example of an innovative social connection event in their community. Brown County provided examples of how they have "reframed" their marketing materials for health promotion programs. GWAAR and WIHA also shared important updates.

View the replay: <https://youtu.be/IPB-q4Habeo>



Reminder: Health Promotion 101 (OAA Title III-D Refresher)

Monday, December 15 | 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Need a Refresher on Health Promotion (OAA Title III-D)?

Join us for an upcoming webinar that provides an overview of the Older Americans Act Title III-D: Health Promotion and Disease Prevention provisions and priorities.

We'll cover key topics including:

- Locating approved evidence-based health promotion programs
- Data collection and reporting requirements
- Voluntary contributions
- Available resources and support

This session is open to Health Promotion Coordinators, Aging Unit Supervisors, ADRC Directors, and fiscal or data reporting staff.

Register today to strengthen your understanding and ensure your program is aligned with Title III-D goals!

Registration: <https://bit.ly/4nNzQhS>



Nutrition

[Kristi Cooley](#), Nutrition Program Specialist

[Jean Lynch](#), Program Specialist Manager

[Pam VanKampen](#), Nutrition Program & Senior Center Specialist

Nice to Know

Waushara County shared the results from their fun Battle of the Beef event and the winner is... Salisbury Steak!



It was a close match, with 31 votes for Salisbury Steak and 27 votes for Liver & Onions. Attendance was higher than a typical Friday, making the event a great success.

Staff also added extra fun with potato trivia and shared beef nutrition information, creating a lively and educational experience for participants.

This is another great example of a creative, engaging idea that other programs can replicate or adapt locally. Thank you to Val and the Waushara County Nutrition Program for sharing the results!



Looking for something new to add to your menu?

We're exploring a few new recipes and would love your input! Would you like to see these added to the Recipe database?



[Sweet Potato and Kale Hash with Avocado](https://loveonetoday.com/recipe/sweet-potato-and-kale-hash-with-avocado/)

<https://loveonetoday.com/recipe/sweet-potato-and-kale-hash-with-avocado/>

or

[Enchilada Skillet with Spinach and Avocado](https://loveonetoday.com/recipe/enchilada-skillet-with-spinach-and-avocado/)

<https://loveonetoday.com/recipe/enchilada-skillet-with-spinach-and-avocado/>

Try one out for a "sample day" and share your feedback with Kristi Cooley at Kristi.cooley@gwaar.org, your comments could be featured in an upcoming issue of the newsletter!

Remember we have new recipes as well as menu classics in the Recipe Database that you can use on your menus. Log-in details and tutorial available for the Recipe Database are found here: <https://bit.ly/47P3Vrq>

Ways to Celebrate Staff This Holiday Season

The holidays are the perfect time to lift your team up, show appreciation, and create moments that bring everyone closer. A few thoughtful touches can go a long way, where you all give so much of every day. Here are easy, meaningful ways communities can celebrate staff this season. This list is from the Senior Dining Association, but they may provide some tips for you to share or use during the month of December with your Nutrition teams.



[View the 12 Tips: https://bit.ly/3M56fDm](https://bit.ly/3M56fDm)

Wisconsin Senior Medicare Patrol

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

Nice to Know

Stop Financial Scams flyer from the Wisconsin Department of Justice

In case you missed it earlier in this issue

This flyer was part of the press release and press conference from November 18.

View the flyer online:

<https://www.wisdoj.gov/Pages/PublicSafety/stop-financial-scams.aspx>

Read about the event and other resources:

<https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008814>

STOP FINANCIAL SCAMS

Protect yourself. Protect your money.
A message from the Wisconsin Department of Justice,
Division of Criminal Investigation

Before you withdraw cash

If someone is asking you to take out a large amount of money, **pause**. You may be in the middle of a **SCAM**.

Ask yourself:

- Are you being pressured to act quickly?
- Is someone on the phone telling you what to do right now?
- Were you told to lie to the bank staff, or to family, about why you need the cash?
- Were you told not to talk to anyone about this or keep it a secret?
- Are you afraid, confused, or unsure?

If you can answer "yes" to any of these questions - **STOP**.
Don't hand over your money.

What might be happening

Scammers often pretend to be:

- Law enforcement or government (IRS, Social Security, "court," "warrants")
- Tech support
- Bank staff
- A family member or romantic partner "in trouble"

Scammers can sound convincing, but they are not who they claim to be.

Cash, gift cards, cryptocurrency, wire transfers, are all **red flags**.

Remember

A real government official will never ask you to withdraw money.

What to do next

You are not alone. Help is available right now.

Call for help:

- Wisconsin Elder Abuse Hotline (608) 566-0107
- Medicaid Fraud & Elder Abuse Unit (800) 488-3760
- DATCP Consumer Protection Hotline (800) 422-7128

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, CALL 911.