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Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources (GWAAR) News

Nice to Know

GWAAR Board of Directors updates

Thank you to 2025 outgoing board members **David Ostness**, **Beth Esser**, and **Robert Borremans** for their contributions and leadership on the GWAAR board of directors since 2019. We appreciate your dedication and support of GWAAR's mission to meet the changing needs of older people in Wisconsin.

Congratulations to the new members of the board's executive committee, including Chairperson **Rob Wilkinson** and Vice Chair, **Cookie (Cornelia) Lough**. Congratulations also to **David Hoberg** who will continue as Treasurer.

We would also like to welcome GWAAR's newest board member, **Sabrina Cyrus**. She has a health care background and experience with elder fraud and abuse prevention, health promotion, transportation, and volunteerism. Welcome Sabrina!

If you or someone you know would be interested in volunteering on the GWAAR board of directors, additional information and application instructions can be found on our website:

<https://gwaar.org/leadership-opportunities>



GWAAR ED updates

If you're registered as a learner for GWAAR ED there are a few updates you may want to check out.

New:

- Guardian Support Center – Welcome

Revised:

- Transportation – Welcome and Transportation 101
- Elder Abuse Program – Welcome and Elder Abuse Program 101

If you previously completed GWAAR ED training courses which have been updated, the replacement content is available as a reference without needing to retake the courses.

All of these modules are also included in the Aging Director curriculum in GWAAR ED for learners who registered in 2025 a new aging director and are currently enrolled in the Learning Journey "Aging Training Curriculum."

To register for GWAAR ED, fill out the form found on our website: <https://gwaar.org/gwaar-ed>: <https://gwaar.wufoo.com/forms/z95v3sv0qqhoha/>

After you complete registration, you will receive an email with a link to create your password. If you do not see this email within two business days please check your junk folder, or contact us.

Questions about enrolling in GWAAR ED, course progress, or course feedback can be directed to Lucia Mennen at gwaar.ed@gwaar.org.



Reframing Aging and Disability in Wisconsin 2026 webinars

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).



These 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>

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

General introductory sessions:

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

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

Advocacy

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

Nice to Know

Urge your Representative and Senators to Cosponsor S. 830/H.R. 2560: The Lifespan Respite Care Reauthorization Act of 2025

Keeping the Lifespan Respite Care Program strong depends on Congress reauthorizing it—and this is the moment to act. The Lifespan Respite Reauthorization Act (S. 830 / H.R. 2560) has strong bipartisan support and is endorsed by 39 national organizations.

S.830 - Lifespan Respite Care Reauthorization Act of 2025:

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/830/all-actions>

Here in Wisconsin, Senator Tammy Baldwin's (D-WI) has shown long-standing leadership on Lifespan Respite and has built bipartisan partnership with Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) to introduce S. 830. Thanks to advocacy efforts and Senator Collins' leadership—the bill has been hotlined in the Senate.

Senator Ron Johnson has been asked to join this bipartisan Wisconsin effort and add his support by becoming a cosponsor of S. 830.

We also need strong bipartisan support in the House. Please contact your U.S. Representative and ask them to cosponsor H.R. 2560. Bipartisan cosponsors are what move this bill to the finish line for caregivers.

Take action today

- 1) Contact U.S. Senator Ron Johnson and ask him to cosponsor S. 830. Find contact information for Senator Johnson here: <https://www.senate.gov/states/WI/intro.htm>
- 2) Contact your U.S. Representative to cosponsor H.R. 2560. Find contact information for your U.S. Representative here: <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>

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Every new cosponsor brings this bill closer to a vote. Passage protects Lifespan Respite through 2030—helping Wisconsin strengthen our statewide respite system, expand access for families, and stabilize the support caregivers urgently need. Caregivers can't wait. Let's make sure Congress delivers.

How to contact your Members of Congress

- **You may also call your federal legislators by using the hotline at: 202-225-3121** and ask for your Senator's or Representative's office.
- Request to speak with the health, disability, or appropriations staff, or leave a message.
- Share your story—real caregiver voices move votes.
- Share this information with others who care about respite.

Contact information can also be found on the GWAAR website here:

Wisconsin Members of the 119th Congress: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008426>

Weekly Federal Funding Fallout 2025 Updates and Q&A webinar

Friday, December 19 | 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.

English registration: <https://bit.ly/FedFunds1219>

Spanish registration: <https://bit.ly/FedFundSpa1219>

This is Congress's last work week of 2025. Will they act on ACA subsidies, an alternative health care idea, or make progress on a final 2026 federal budget before they leave for break? This webinar will review changes at federal agencies and H.R. 1 implementation impact on states, and an update on Wisconsin legislative items.

Dec. 19 is the last weekly BPDD webinar until January.



Elder Abuse Programs

[Donna Rosner](#), Elder Abuse Program Specialist

Nice to Know

Elder Abuse Direct Services Application for Funding

This is to let those Lead Elder Abuse Agency contacts know that the 2026 Elder Abuse Direct Services Application for Funding has been emailed to APS Supervisors. For 2026, there is a new format with the application completed via alchemy survey. Also attached to the survey application is updated guidance regarding WI Elder Abuse Direct Service Funds.

If you did not receive the application (and expected to) please contact GWAAR Elder Abuse Program Specialist Donna.Rosner@gwaar.org. The deadline to submit applications is Friday, January 9, 2026 (4:30 p.m.).

Happy Holidays, looking forward to our continued partnership in 2026!

Emergency Preparedness

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

Nice to Know

Reminder: Holiday safety tips from ReadyWisconsin

This time of the year is a time for celebrations, but also a time for an increased risk of falls and fires. Visit the Wisconsin Emergency Management website for holiday preparedness tips you can share.

“Holiday decorations should bring joy and not danger into people’s homes,” said Wisconsin Emergency Management Administrator Greg Engle. “By taking a few extra moments to prevent hazards in your homes, you can create a joyful and safe environment.”

View the holiday safety tips:

<https://wem.wi.gov/make-safety-your-holiday-tradition/>



Family Caregiver Support

[Bryn Ceman](#), Caregiver Programs Specialist

Nice to Know

New Senate Hearing: Aging in Place & The Power of Community

The U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging recently held a hearing, “Aging in Place: The Impact of Community During the Holidays” (Dec. 3, 2025), highlighting how community supports, family caregivers, and local services help older adults remain safely at home, especially during a season when isolation and caregiver stress can increase.

 **Watch the recording and read testimonies:** <https://bit.ly/49dnHi2>



Upcoming Opportunity: Powerful Tools for Caregivers – Virtual Program (January–February 2026)

Thursdays, January 15 – February 19, 2026 | 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Held on Teams / Respite options may be available upon request

Milwaukee County DHHS Aging & Disabilities Services is offering a free virtual Powerful Tools for Caregivers program this winter, with both English and Spanish options available. This six-week workshop is designed to help family and informal caregivers build skills, reduce stress, and improve overall well-being while caring for an adult loved one.

This evidence-based series provides caregivers with practical tools to:

- Reduce personal stress
- Improve communication and decision-making
- Strengthen confidence in the caregiving role
- Better manage time, goals, and problem-solving
- Access helpful local resources
- Registration is required.

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MILWAUKEE COUNTY DHHS AGING & DISABILITIES SERVICES

Powerful Tools for Caregivers

"Workshop for family and informal caregivers of adults"

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is a six session program to help caregivers take better care of themselves while caring for a friend or relative. Whether you provide care for a spouse, partner, parent, or neighbor, whether down the block or miles away, yours is an important role. This course is for family caregivers like you!

The sessions give caregivers tools to help:

- Reduce stress
- Improve self-confidence
- Manage time, set goals, and solve problems
- Better communicate your feelings
- Make tough decisions
- Locate helpful resources

Powerful Tools Virtual Program

Spanish and English Option Available

Each Thursday from January 15th through February 19th, 2026



5:30 pm — 7:00 pm

Class will be hosted on Microsoft Teams platform.

Respite options may be available upon request

Registration required. For more information or to register:
(414) 289-6565 or caregiversupport@milwaukeecountywi.gov

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is owned and managed by Iowa State University of Science and Technology

1230 West Cherry Street | Milwaukee, WI 53205 | (414) 289-6574 | county@milwaukee.gov/aging

☎ Call (414) 289-6565 or email caregiversupport@milwaukeecountywi.gov to sign up.

This is a valuable opportunity for caregivers across our community to gain support, connection, and practical strategies for their day-to-day lives.

View the flyer: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008834>

Reminder: Please update your contact info in DHS SharePoint.

To keep receiving important DHS updates, resources, and caregiver support announcements, please review and update your agency's Caregiver Coordinator contact information in the DHS SharePoint directory. Accurate info helps ensure the right staff get the right messages.

Access DHS SharePoint here: [Aging and Disability Resource Center - Caregiver Programs](https://share.health.wisconsin.gov/ltc/teams/ADRC/SitePages/Caregiver%20Programs.aspx)
<https://share.health.wisconsin.gov/ltc/teams/ADRC/SitePages/Caregiver%20Programs.aspx>

Reminder: National Family Caregivers Month Marketing Toolkit survey

Thank you for taking a moment to complete this brief 2-question survey. We're gathering feedback from Caregiver Coordinators, Aging Unit Directors/Managers, and ADRC Directors/Managers on the usefulness of the National Family Caregivers Month Marketing Toolkit. Your responses will help us understand how widely the toolkit was used and how we can continue improving statewide support and resources for future caregiver initiatives.

This will take less than one minute—thank you for your time and insight! 💛

<https://forms.office.com/r/6bR4VjUZkw>

**Please complete
the survey**



Fiscal Resources and Data Management

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

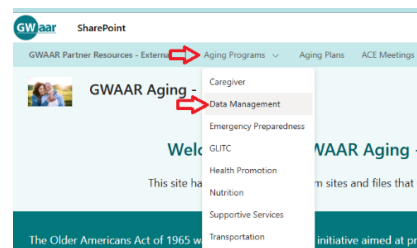
Need to Know

****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](#)

<https://gwaar.sharepoint.com/sites/PartnerResources> | [Fiscal Resources](#)



****End of Federal Year Reporting****

As we are wrapping up the End of Year Reporting for the NAPIS report, GWAAR asks that data users do not enter new, modify existing or delete existing data in PeerPlace prior to October 1st, 2025 – unless instructed otherwise by GWAAR Data staff. This information has been vetted and is almost ready for submission.

If you have questions, please reach out to Carrie Kroetz at Carrie.Kroetz@gwaar.org

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****FFY Variance Report****

We held the Variance Report Refresher webinar on Friday, December 12, 2025, and the recording is posted in the Fiscal library. Agencies should receive their form shortly, and it is due Friday, December 19, 2025. If you have any questions, please contact Fiscal@gwaar.org and/or Carrie.Kroetz@gwaar.org

****Remaining Transfers****

During a recent discussion with BADR (Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources), we have been told that they will be releasing the remaining transfer allocations to GWAAR. This process can take a couple of weeks to work through the State's contract process. Once received and signed by GWAAR, amended contracts will be sent out and the updated allocations will be included in the Final Claim form. GWAAR Fiscal Staff will follow up with Aging Units regarding End-of-Calendar-Year reporting.

****2026 Draft Budget****

Due to upcoming changes taking effect in 2026 we have yet to post the 2026 Draft Budget. Once we have solidified the changes, we will update the form and inform Aging Directors and Fiscal staff of the posting. GWAAR Fiscal will also hold a webinar to inform Aging Unit staff of these changes and a review of instructions to complete the budget, waiver, and transfer requests. In the meantime, we have received the estimated allocations and have posted them in the Fiscal Resources library.

Health Promotion

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

Need to Know

Reminder: New! Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less 2 is now eligible for OAA Title III-D funding

Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less 2 (ESMMWL 2) is now on Wisconsin's list of evidence-based health promotion programs eligible for OAA Title III-D funding. ESMMWL 2 builds on strategies covered during Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less (ESMMWL). Participants who successfully completed ESMMWL are eligible to participate in this 12-week program.



Program components include:

- Live online classes facilitated by a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN)
- Convenient lunchtime and evening classes
- Accessible on computers, laptops, tablets and smartphones
- Peer support during class and on private Facebook Community Page
- Opportunities to share successes and discuss challenges

Weekly sessions include topics such as: Navigating the Diet Maze, Sugar Control, Finding Your Fitness Connection, Cooking Smart, Mindful Eating, Choosing Healthy Fat, Sleep and Managing Holidays and Preventing Relapse

Contact Angie Sullivan, OAA Program Specialist Health Promotion and Supportive Services at angela.sullivan@gwaar.org.

More information on Eat Smart Move More Weigh Less - <https://esmmweighless.com/>

More information on Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less 2 - <https://esmmweighless.com/weigh-less-2/>

Nice to Know

Reminder: Online Health Promotion Programming Opportunity for Title IIID Funding:

UW Madison Extension Virtual StrongBodies Series: Offered via zoom

Class meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9:00 a.m. weekly for 11-12 weeks

AU/ADRCs can reserve spots for county residents (\$50/participant)

Reserve spots here: <https://bit.ly/3XLKknr>

After Extension receives your request for spots, you will be mailed invoice for payment, flyer for upcoming virtual series for promotion (editable for you to add your local contact info) and link to online registration for the virtual class so you can register local residents.

Participant demographic information will be sent to you for your Peer Place reporting after the registration deadline for each series.

Find out more about StrongBodies here: <https://health.extension.wisc.edu/strongbodies/>

2026 Series:

- Winter Series: January 6 - March 26 (deadline, Fri, Jan 30)
- Spring Series: April 7 - June 25 (deadline, Fri, May 1)
- Summer Series: July 7 - Sept 24 (deadline: Fri, July 31)
- Fall Series: Oct 6 - Dec 17 (deadline, Fri, Oct 30)

*2025 OAA Title III-D funds can be used to purchase "spots" into the Winter 2026 series. For any OAA Title III-D funding questions, please contact Angie Sullivan angela.sullivan@gwaar.org

Nutrition

[Kristi Cooley](#), Nutrition Program Specialist

[Jean Lynch](#), Program Specialist Manager

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

Nice to Know

Save the Date! GWAAR Nutrition Team Service Area Virtual Call

Thursday, February 5 | 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

Please mark your calendar for the GWAAR Nutrition Team Service Area Virtual Call.

A detailed agenda will be shared closer to the meeting, but we encourage you to plan to attend for important updates and discussion. The meeting will also be recorded for those unable to join live.

The GWAAR Nutrition Team, Jean, Kristi, and Pam

[Microsoft Teams live meeting link:](#)

<https://bit.ly/3L5nuEv>

Meeting ID: 253 444 690 524 1 | Passcode: 55eV6SX6

Dial in by phone [+1 608-338-1382](tel:+1608-338-1382), [726289041#](tel:+1608-338-726289041)



February NOURISH Step Monthly Handouts are now available

A Sweet Reminder This February: Check In on Prediabetes Risk

You'll find practical tips on healthy eating, staying active, and the surprising role hydration plays in keeping blood sugar stable.

We also include a quick, tasty recipe you can try at home, along with simple balance and strength tests to help you monitor your mobility and overall wellness. Finally, you'll find additional resources to support your ongoing journey—so you can continue taking a Nourish Step toward better health.

A very special thank you to UW Health Dietetic Interns Molly Ross and Trinity Manzke for creating the 2026 NOURISH Step newsletters!

NOURISH Step information and handouts:

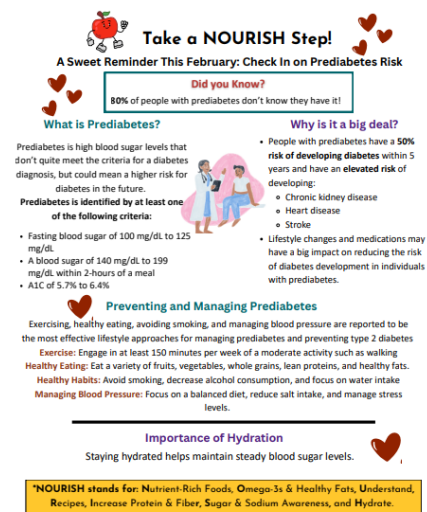
<https://gwaar.org/nourishstep>

02-2026 - Check In on Prediabetes Risk - NOURISH Step (Landscape)

<https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008837>

02-2026 - Check In on Prediabetes Risk - NOURISH Step (Portrait)

<https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008836>



Baking Tips to Keep Families Safe

Holiday baking is a wonderful way to bring families together and a perfect opportunity to remind people about steps that help prevent food poisoning.

Keep families safe by letting them know that raw ingredients like flour and eggs can make people sick, especially young children. A quick and easy way to spread the word is by sharing a holiday baking tips video, fun baking infographics, or Mythbusters.

Flour safety tips: <https://fightbac.org/flour-safety/>

Food poisoning symptoms: <https://fightbac.org/could-i-have-food-poisoning/>

Holiday baking tips video: <https://fightbac.org/flour-safety/#baking-tips-video>



Reminder: Adaptive Equipment Wish List

Adaptive kitchen tools can make cooking safer, easier, and more enjoyable for people of all abilities. From easy-grip utensils to devices that stabilize bowls, jars, or cutting surfaces, a little support can make a big difference in maintaining independence at home. This handout shares examples of helpful products and tips, and your local Independent Living Center can offer additional guidance and personalized recommendations (<https://compassil.org/>).

View the handout: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008832>

View the handout on GWAAR's SharePoint site (registered users)

 [Kitchen Utensil Wish List updated 11-5-25.pdf](#)



Wisconsin Senior Medicare Patrol

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

Nice to Know

Holiday greetings from Wisconsin Senior Medicare Patrol



Reminder: Winter edition of the Senior Medicare Patrol's newsletter, The Scoop available

This issue features information about older Americans and Medicare call scams, cold weather safety, how to find reliable health information online, benefits of volunteering for older adults, Justice Served: Two Florida men charged for \$34.8 million fraud scheme targeting Medicare beneficiaries, and so much more!

You are welcome (and encouraged) to share this newsletter with anyone you think might find the information useful – whether it be consumers, Medicare beneficiaries, neighbors, family and friends, those who work with older adults, etc.

Winter Newsletter, The Scoop:

https://www.smpwi.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/SMP-Scoop-Winter-2025-Edition_Final.pdf



Reminder: December Scam Spotlight focuses on Holiday scams

Don't miss the December issue of the Scam Spotlight which shares many of the common methods used by scammers during the holiday shopping season.

December Scam Spotlight:

<https://www.smpwi.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/12-December-Holiday-Scams.pdf>



The Wisconsin Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) presents the December 2025 SCAM SPOTLIGHT focusing on Holiday Scams. The graphic features a blue and orange header with a spotlight icon, and a decorative border with snowflakes.

The holiday season is upon us! With it comes time with loved ones and plenty of shopping! While doing your holiday shopping this year, be on the lookout for these scams:

"Free" gift cards and HUGE sales

Be wary of anything listed as "free" or any offers that sounds "too good to be true". Only use reputable sellers.

Fake websites and messages

Double check all websites you shop on and ensure they are legitimate. Don't trust messages and emails claiming to have updates about a package you didn't purchase. **Delete the messages. Don't click on any links.**

Scam calls claiming to be loved ones

Artificial intelligence is being used by scammers to copy the voices of our loved ones to get access to our money or personal information. **HANG UP!** Confirm with your loved ones before sharing.

Fake Shipping Notifications

Watch out for messages claiming to be USPS, Amazon, FedEx, or other shipping companies about packages that are undelivered or need additional verification. This email can have attachments or links to sites that will download viruses on your device to steal your identity and your passwords. Do not be fooled by this holiday phishing scam.

Social Media Gift Exchange

Purchasing one gift and receiving 36 sounds like a great deal, but this seasonal scam is a pyramid scheme, which is illegal. Keep it safe and only buy gifts for people you know (not ones you have only met online.)

Stay safe this holiday season! Report scams to the Better Business Bureau at www.bbb.org

 If you or a loved one has been a victim of Medicare fraud, call the Wisconsin Senior Medicare Patrol 888-818-2611.

This project was supported, in part, by grant number 90MPPG0102, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201