



Save the date

Next ACE Meeting – January 14

1:30 – 3:00 p.m.



Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources (GWAAR) News

Nice to Know

First quarter ACE meeting next week

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

The first quarter ACE (A Commitment to Excellence) meeting is coming up soon! Join us for updates including the latest from the Reframing Aging Initiative and an update about home-delivered meals.

View the agenda: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewfile/id/2008843>



Save the dates for 2026 ACE meetings

- 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.

Valentines for Wisconsin Veterans

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) is asking for help showing veterans how much we appreciate their service and sacrifice by sending Valentine's Day cards to veterans living in WDVA facilities.

Since beginning this program in 2023, they have received over 80,000 Valentine's Day cards for members and veterans in Chippewa Falls, King, and Union Grove, as well as to residents of the Veterans Housing and Recovery Program.



The valentines are hand-delivered by staff to the veterans, loved ones, and Gold Star families residing in WDVA facilities. Cards must be mailed no later than Jan. 31, to allow time to be distributed on Feb. 14. Due to allergies/dietary restrictions, do not include candy, food, or snacks.

Cards can be sent to:

Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs
Attn: Veteran Valentines
PO Box 7843 Madison, WI 53707-7843

View the press release: <https://dva.wi.gov/press/valentines-for-wisconsin-veterans-2/>

Reminder: More Leadership Opportunities in 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

Speaker's Task Force on Elder Services Update – Send your messages this week!

The Speaker's Task Force on Elder Services is planning to gather one additional time in early Jan. 2026 (the date has not yet been determined) to discuss proposal ideas, they have not formally decided if they will be gathering any additional presentations/testimony at the hearing. **If you have not already contacted task force members to share your priorities for inclusion in their package of legislation, please do so this week!**

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.

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 contact the Task Force members using this Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN) Action Alert** - <https://bit.ly/48T5s1c>. Note: The original action alert was not allowing non-constituents of the task force members to contact task force members, this has been corrected. All messages will be sent to the following eight Assembly Representatives serving on the task force:

Task Force membership:

[Representative Snyder \(Chair\)](#)

[Representative Doyle \(Vice-Chair\)](#)

[Representative Melotik](#)

[Representative Gundrum](#)

[Representative VanderMeer](#)

[Representative Novak](#)

[Representative McCarville](#)

[Representative Taylor](#)

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The Action Alert is designed to let you personalize your email message to task force members.

Please highlight for task force members how services and supports like **transportation, home-delivered meals, fall prevention programs, Aging & Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs), family caregiver support, and/or financial exploitation prevention and early intervention** help older Wisconsinites remain safely in their homes.

Action alert: <https://bit.ly/48T5s1c>

See all recent WAAN advocacy alerts (<https://gwaar.org/waan-advocacy-alerts>) and 2025 issue briefs (<https://gwaar.org/waan-issues-and-initiatives>) for more information and talking points.

2026 Elections

The new year is here and it's time to prepare for the four elections taking place in 2026.

- **February 17** - Spring Primary
- **April 7** - Spring Election
- **August 11** - Partisan Primary
- **November 3** - General Election

Learn more about Wisconsin's 2026 Election dates: <https://www.vote411.org/upcoming/72/events>

Commit to voting in this year's elections and make sure you are ready by checking to see if your voter registration is up to date (**visit Myvote.WI.Gov:** <https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/>)

To find out important deadlines for next month's Spring Primary and for the Spring election in early April go here: **Voter Deadlines:** <https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/Voter-Deadlines>

If you are planning to vote by mail, go to: **Request your absentee ballot:**

<https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/Vote-Absentee-By-Mail>

Federal Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Update

The continuing resolution (CR) passed last month included three appropriations bills that funded several key federal operations through the remainder of the federal fiscal year, ending September 30, 2026. This included full funding for SNAP (FoodShare in Wisconsin). The U.S. Senate is now working on a package of five additional appropriations bills—Defense; **Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education** (which includes funding for the Older Americans Act [OAA] and other aging services); Commerce, Justice, and Science; Interior; and Transportation—HUD—to fund most of the federal government for Fiscal Year 2026 (which ends on September 30, 2025).

Passage of this “minibus”—a legislative package that combines five of the remaining nine annual appropriations (spending) bills into a single bill—could help avoid another partial federal government shutdown when the current CR expires at the end of January. However, there is still no agreement on the four remaining spending bills.

Senators left for the holidays without completing the amendment process for the minibus, meaning **negotiations and votes are expected to resume in early January**. Final approval by the House and President Trump will still be required to secure full-year funding for these five appropriations bills beyond the short-term CR.

It is critical for the final appropriations bill to include funding increase recommendations for OAA programs and that nothing is cut.

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Take Action:

Please urge your members of Congress to retain the appropriations levels set out in the House's Labor/HHS bill, which increase funding for Title III B Supportive Services, and to support the Senate's recommendations for funding for Title V of the OAA, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (see USAging's Appropriations Chart - <https://bit.ly/3VmfZut> for funding details).

If you are prohibited from asking for increased funding, share with Senators Baldwin and Johnson and your U.S. Representative how OAA services are helping people in your community to remain living at home and how community members are impacted when those services cannot be delivered due to lack of funding and waitlists for services.

Find contact information for your U.S. Senators here - <https://www.senate.gov/states/WI/intro.htm> and for your U.S. House Representative here - <https://www.house.gov/representatives#state-wisconsin>. 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) (<https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008426>).

Reminder: Federal Funding Fallout2025: Updates and Q&A

Friday, January 9 / 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.

English Registration: <https://bit.ly/FedFunds1926>

Spanish Registration: <https://bit.ly/FedFundsSpa1926>

Welcome to 2026! Congress and the state Legislature are back and so are the weekly updates from the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD).



Congress has until January 30 to pass its budget bills or face the possibility of another government shutdown. The ACA subsidies expired, will they act to revive them after the fact? Meanwhile the state legislature faces shortfalls in special education, DVR, and more money is needed to made changes to FoodShare required by federal law. And changes at federal agencies and H.R. 1 implementation continue to impact states.

Elder Abuse Programs

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

Nice to Know

Elder Abuse Direct Services Application for Funding – deadline Jan. 9

2026 Elder Abuse Direct Services Survey Applications have been sent out to all lead elder abuse agencies and the deadline to submit the application is Friday January 9. In addition, **Domestic Abuse in Later Life Grant applications** have been emailed to all domestic abuse agencies statewide with the same deadline January 9, 2026 to submit the grant application. Please contact Donna Rosner at Donna.Rosner@gwaar.org, GWAAR Elder Abuse Program Specialist with any questions.

Family Caregiver Support

Bryn Ceman, Caregiver Programs Specialist

Need to Know

Save the date: Next Family Caregiver Support Community call

Tuesday, January 27 | 10:00 a.m.

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

Additional information will be shared closer to the meeting date.

Nice to Know

Nutrition & Aging: Caregivers Play a Critical Role

By 2050, the global population of adults age 60+ is expected to reach 2.1 billion, and with aging comes increased risk for malnutrition. In fact, up to 50% of older adults may be at risk. Malnutrition can contribute to more frequent falls, hospital readmissions, increased healthcare costs, and reduced quality of life.

Caregivers can help by watching for:

- ◆ Recent weight loss or loose clothing
- ◆ Changes in appetite
- ◆ Reduced fluid intake
- ◆ Difficulty shopping, cooking, or accessing food
- ◆ Confusion, weakness, or mental health changes
- ◆ Social isolation
- ◆ Financial strain affecting food access

Support older adults by encouraging:

- 🍽 Regular meals and healthy snacks
- 🥩 Protein-rich foods
- 💧 Hydration
- 👫 Social mealtimes
- 🛒 Help with grocery shopping or meal preparation

Caregivers truly make a difference in helping older adults stay healthy, nourished, and independent.

View the flyer: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008866>

Webinar Opportunity: Engaging Caregivers in the Community ☀️ 🤝

Wednesday, January 21 | 1:00 -2:30 p.m.

Join Dr. Angela Tobin and Dr. Ali Caliendo for an empowering webinar focused on building authentic, trusting relationships with kinship caregivers and strengthening engagement through meaningful, trauma-informed approaches.

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NUTRITION AND AGING: MAXIMIZING THE CAREGIVER'S ROLE

Caregivers can promote good nutrition by addressing common nutrition concerns. This will help older adults meet their nutrition needs.

NUTRITION CONCERN	WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?	ENCOURAGE OLDER ADULTS TO...
 CALORIES	<p>CALORIES come from carbohydrates, protein, and fat and fuel our bodies with the energy they need to function.</p> <p>Choosing to eat a wide variety of foods can help older adults meet their calorie needs and get key nutrients, including different vitamins and minerals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eat at least 3 meals a day• Eat snacks throughout the day for extra calories• Add herbs and spices to foods to enhance interest in eating• Increase food variety by preparing meals and snacks with nutrient-rich foods (eg, fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, fish, and lean meats)
 PROTEIN	<p>PROTEIN helps our bodies maintain mass and strength, which is crucial for older adults, especially during periods of stress or illness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase protein in the diet by eating meats, eggs, low-fat dairy foods (milk, yogurt, and cheese), seeds, and nuts• Consider adding a high-protein and nutrition supplement to meals and snacks
 FLUIDS	<p>FLUIDS, such as water or electrolyte solutions, help to regulate body temperature, maintain fluid balance in cells, and absorb nutrients.</p> <p>Older adults are at an increased risk for dehydration due to physical changes. When caregivers are aware of this, it can negatively affect their mental status, cause dizziness, and increase risk of falls.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drink fluids in the morning, before each meal, and an hour before bed• Keep a water bottle ready to drink throughout the day, even if they don't feel thirsty• Discuss with their physician any medications they take that may affect their hydration status, and determine the need for an electrolyte solution to quickly replenish fluids and electrolytes

HELPFUL IDEAS FOR CAREGIVERS

ASSIST WITH MEAL PLANNING & PREPARATION

- Prepare meals together and store for later
- Shop for groceries together

MAKE MEALS A SOCIAL EVENT

- Enjoy a meal at a favorite restaurant
- Encourage participating in social meals with other members of the community
- Visit during mealtimes

CONSIDER FOOD COSTS

- Find money-saving shopping approaches, such as visiting multiple grocery stores ahead of time to look for coupons
- Find resources within the community to help reduce food costs

Visit ahni.org or scan this QR code for a digital copy of this resource



1. World Health Organization. Aging & Health. Published October 1, 2020. <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/07-09-2020-aging-and-health>. 2. Meigs, AB. *Am J Nutr*. 2010;81(3):34-41. 3. Kauer MJ, et al. *J Am Geriatr Soc*. 2015;58(9):1734-1738. 4. World Health Organization. Malnutrition. Published May 1, 2012. Accessed November 7, 2020. <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/07-09-2020-aging-and-health>. 5. National Institutes of Health. *NIH News: Nutrition and Health: The National Institutes of Health's Role in Promoting Healthy Eating and Non-nutritive Liquids*. Steps in the United States. *Frontiers in Nutrition*. 2016;4:16. U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. *Healthcare Research and Quality*. Published August 30, 2018. Accessed November 7, 2020. <https://www.ahrq.gov/research/impacts/HCQIP/nutrition/aging>. 6. Norman K, et al. *Clin Nutr*. 2008;27(15-16). 7. Sander J, et al. *OPEN Forum Infect Dis*. 2014;1(4):e449-57. 8. Borkow G, et al. *Ageing Res Rev*. 2013;12(1):56-60.

 www.ahni.org
800.222.4667
2020/08/06/November 2020. LITHO IN USA

 Abbott

GRANDFAMILIES & KINSHIP SUPPORT NETWORK
 A National Technical Assistance Center

This session will explore strategies to **create welcoming spaces, reduce barriers to access, honor lived experience, and ensure caregivers' voices shape programs and services.**

This training is ideal for professionals working with kinship families, community organizations, aging and disability programs, and anyone committed to enhancing caregiver support.

👉 **Learn more and register here:** <https://www.gksnetwork.org/events/engaging-caregivers-in-the-community/>

Fiscal Resources and Data Management

Carrie Kroetz, Data Management and Technology Coordinator

Need to Know

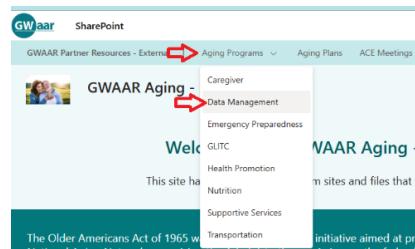
****Reminders****

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](#)

ACE Meeting → [Fiscal Resources](#) [Advocacy](#)



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

We have currently pulled all data from PeerPlace for the NAPIS Federal Report, please note if any changes are made prior to October 2025 this information will not be adjusted in the federal report. Additionally, expenses reported from October 2024 through September 2025 on direct services have been applied. We are in the process of incorporating the variance explanations. If you have yet to submit, please do so ASAP as all are used to report on differences.

After the new year, GWAAR Fiscal and Data will be hosting a webinar to provide information regarding the GWAAR NAPIS process and to ask Aging Units for feedback regarding what more we could do during the year to help facilitate this annual project.

****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 under Budget.

Health Promotion

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

Need to Know

Quarterly Health Promotion Webinar

Tuesday, February 10 | 9:00 - 10:30 a.m.

(Optional 10:30 - 11:00 a.m. Networking and Sharing)

Virtual – TEAMS: <https://bit.ly/4siQkSw>

Plan to attend the first Quarterly Health Promotion Webinar of 2026. The agenda includes a 2025 Program Summary of Health Promotion Programs across the State, important updates from GWAAR and the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging as well as highlighting evidence-based Diabetes education programs.



There will be an optional time at the end of the webinar for counties to informally discuss successes, challenges, etc. This portion of the webinar will not be recorded.

Nice to Know

Reminder: Free webinar: Inside Hoarding: What It Is, What It Isn't, and How to Help

Wednesday, February 11, 2026 | 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

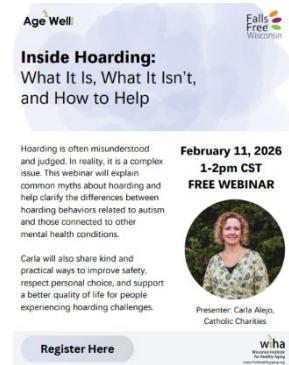
Presenter: Carla Alejo, Catholic Charities

Hoarding is often misunderstood and judged. In reality, it is a complex issue. This webinar will explain common myths about hoarding and help clarify the differences between hoarding behaviors related to autism and those connected to other mental health conditions.

Carla will also share kind and practical ways to improve safety, respect personal choice, and support a better quality of life for people experiencing hoarding challenges.

Registration: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/FLb00FLrQvetb-B0jADTw>

Where to find it on the WIHA website: <https://wihealthyaging.org/2025/12/08/webinar-february-11-2026/>



Nutrition

[Kristi Cooley, Nutrition Program Specialist](#)

[Jean Lynch, Program Specialist Manager](#)

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

Nice to Know

Oliver Update: Important Tray & Film Pricing News for 2026

Oliver announced a tray and film price increase averaging 3.7%, effective February 1, 2026, due to continued increases in labor, materials, packaging, and transportation costs. The company shared that investments made in 2025 improved production capacity, product availability, customer support, and on-time delivery performance, and that the adjustment is needed to maintain reliable products and service moving forward.

Oliver's Account Managers are available to answer questions and help programs find the best product mix for their meal service needs. If you have any questions please contact Marisol Olvera molvera@oliverquality.com

Share Your Wins

The Trustwell Recipe Database wouldn't be where it is today without the generous grant funding. Funders love hearing stories of impact, and we want to share yours!

We previously reached out and heard from a few of you - thank you! If you haven't had a chance yet, we'd love to include your feedback too. We've reopened the card where you can "sign" with your stories so we can celebrate our wins together and share with our funder.

Card Link: www.groupgreeting.com/sign/ba909ecf737711b

Deadline: January 13

Please forward to any staff that have used the database, we want everyone's input!

Wisconsin Senior Medicare Patrol

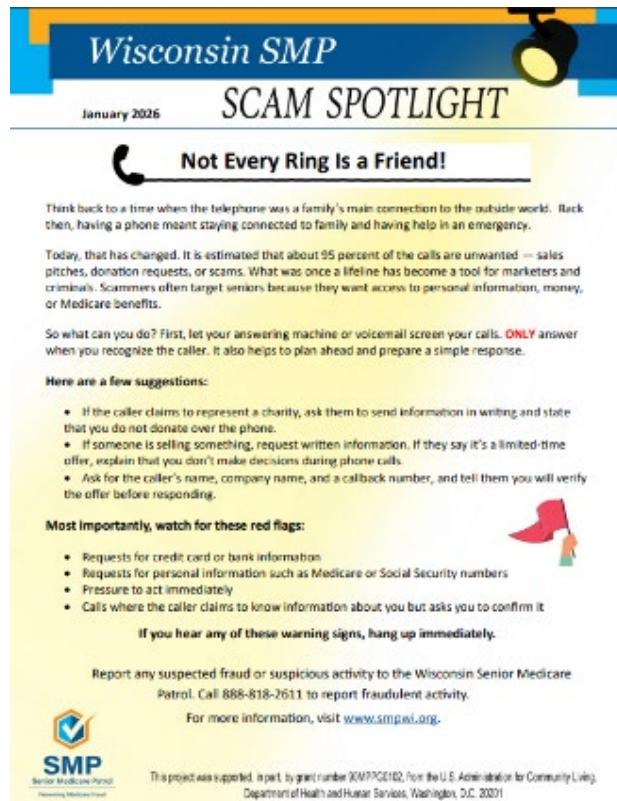
Ingrid A. Kundinger, Senior Medicare Patrol Program Director

Nice to Know

Ring in the new year with January's Scam Spotlight

Happy New Year! With the new year comes old scams, specifically when it comes to the telephone. This month's Scam Spotlight is focused on the scams that happen via telephone, reminding people that, as the title says, "Not every ring is a friend!"

<https://www.smpwi.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/01-January-2026.pdf>



The image is a scanned document titled "Wisconsin SMP SCAM SPOTLIGHT" for January 2026. The title is at the top in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Below the title, a large graphic of a telephone receiver is on the left, and the text "Not Every Ring Is a Friend!" is in a bold, sans-serif font. The main content area has a white background with black text. It starts with a paragraph about how phones used to be a lifeline for staying connected. It then discusses how things have changed, mentioning that about 95% of calls are unwanted sales pitches, donation requests, or scams. It notes that scammers often target seniors. The text then provides tips for avoiding scams, such as letting your answering machine or voicemail screen calls and being aware of red flags like pressure to act immediately. At the bottom, there is a logo for "SMP Senior Medicare Patrol" and a note about grant funding from the U.S. Administration for Community Living.

Wisconsin SMP
SCAM SPOTLIGHT

January 2026

Not Every Ring Is a Friend!

Think back to a time when the telephone was a family's main connection to the outside world. Back then, having a phone meant staying connected to family and having help in an emergency.

Today, that has changed. It is estimated that about 95 percent of the calls are unwanted — sales pitches, donation requests, or scams. What was once a lifeline has become a tool for marketers and criminals. Scammers often target seniors because they want access to personal information, money, or Medicare benefits.

So what can you do? First, let your answering machine or voicemail screen your calls. **ONLY** answer when you recognize the caller. It also helps to plan ahead and prepare a simple response.

Here are a few suggestions:

- If the caller claims to represent a charity, ask them to send information in writing and state that you do not donate over the phone.
- If someone is selling something, request written information. If they say it's a limited-time offer, explain that you don't make decisions during phone calls.
- Ask for the caller's name, company name, and a callback number, and tell them you will verify the offer before responding.

Most importantly, watch for these red flags:

- Requests for credit card or bank information
- Requests for personal information such as Medicare or Social Security numbers
- Pressure to act immediately
- Calls where the caller claims to know information about you but asks you to confirm it

If you hear any of these warning signs, hang up immediately.

Report any suspected fraud or suspicious activity to the Wisconsin Senior Medicare Patrol. Call 888-818-2611 to report fraudulent activity.

For more information, visit www.smpwi.org.

SMP
Senior Medicare Patrol
Honoring Medicare Past

This project was supported, in part, by grant number 90MP2CE02, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201