GWaar

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Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources (GWAAR) News

Nice to Know

In the news: Changes to Medicare Advantage plans in Wisconsin

Attorney Laura Monroe, Legal Services Manager, was recently interviewed by WPR's Wisconsin Today show for a segment discussing the changes to Medicare Advantage plans in Wisconsin.

She explained to listeners how coverage options can change and to be on the lookout for important coverage mail.

WISCONSIN TODAY
Morning News

WISCONSIN PUBLIC RADIO

*"Attorney Laura Monroe from the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources told WPR's "**Wisconsin Today**" that Marshfield Clinic's Medicare Advantage plans are among those pulling out of some Wisconsin counties, leaving Medicare patients in those areas with fewer options. "*

"She also noted that some federal subsidies expired for stand-alone prescription drug coverage under Medicare Part D, which could lead to higher premiums for some patients.

"Monroe emphasized the importance of reading the Annual Notice of Change document that is sent to beneficiaries each September to notify them of potential changes to their existing plans."

Read or listen to the content on WPR: https://bit.ly/4igXjHp

New Medicare videos now available via national resource

Stephanie Haas, Medicare Outreach Coordinator, had two of her videos featured by the State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) Technical Assistance Center, the national hub that provides training, technical assistance, and resources to the nation's 54 SHIPs.

SHIP
State Health Insurance Assistance Program
Navigating Medicare

View the national page: https://www.shiphelp.org/open-enrollment/

Check out these videos and feel free to share them with anyone who wants to learn more about applying for Medicare and signing up for Medicare Parts C/D plans. "

Using the Plan Finder on Medicare.gov: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Va7JtuxEyLc

Create your Medicare.gov Account: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-ZlBLwPT1w

Reminder: Accepting Applications for GWAAR's Board of Directors



GWAAR is looking for thoughtful, civic-minded, energetic individuals to serve on its 11-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 GWAAR's governance, including:

- Serve at least one 3-year term on the board.
- Attend approximately 6 board meetings a year in Stevens Point, with virtual attendance possible.
    - Board members can elect to receive a $125 stipend for virtual or in-person attendance and mileage reimbursement for in-person attendance at board meetings.

Learn more: **GWAAR Board of Directors Application:** https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2005629

Questions? Contact GWAAR Executive Director John Schnabl: john.schanbl@gwaar.org

Reminder: Accepting Applications for GWAAR Advisory Council

We are also looking for thoughtful, civic-minded, energetic individuals to join the GWAAR Advisory Council. Advisory Council Members are involved in a variety of activities that support aging programs including promotion of quality improvement of aging services and individual and organizational advocacy.

Advisory Council Members are expected to maintain community relationships to promote agency visibility and help achieve agency goals. If you or someone you know are looking for a challenging volunteer opportunity where your skills can make a difference in program planning, development, and implementation – please see the following and apply.

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

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

Advocacy

Emily Petersen, Advocacy and Public Policy Director

Need to Know

Develop Your Advocacy Skills!

The Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN) is hosting three Aging Advocacy 101 trainings this fall. Are you an older adult or family caregiver that wants to learn how to advocate? This is the perfect opportunity for you! These 90-minute, virtual trainings will teach the basics of advocacy, how to share your story, and explore ways to engage with legislators and policymakers. During the training, you will learn skills, practice them with others, and ask questions. Training dates are:

- Monday, November 16 from 9:00-10:30 a.m.
- Wednesday, December 2 from 5:00-6:30 p.m.
- Saturday, December 5 from 10:00-11:30 a.m. ***CAREGIVER FOCUSED***

You only need to register for one of the training dates. Learn more and find the registration form at: gwaar.org/aging-advocacy-101

Get Ready to Vote!

The November General Election is next Tuesday, November 3rd! Are you prepared to vote?

Make sure you are registered, know where your polling place is (or request an absentee ballot), and review what's on your ballot at https://myvote.wi.gov. If you've returned your absentee ballot, you can track its progress there, too. Some important dates to remember:

- October 29—deadline to request an absentee ballot.
- October 30—deadline to register in person at your municipal clerk's office.
- November 3—Election Day! You can register to vote in person at your polling place. Your absentee ballot must be received by 8:00 p.m. on this day.

Do you need a ride to your polling place? The Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition compiled a list of transportation provides around the state who may provide transportation for voting for people with disabilities and older adults: https://disabilityvote.org/2025/rides-to-the-polls/

For more voting resources, visit https://disabilityvote.org/

Training Opportunity: Reframe Aging

Wednesday, December 2, 3:00-4:00 p.m.

From the moment we are born, we are aging. During our lifespan, we will also experience disability, whether that be aging with a disability or aging into disability. The Wisconsin movement to reframe aging and disability affects all of us as we strive to tell a more accurate, whole, and healthy story of aging and disability.

Working with the National Center to Reframe Aging (NCRA), we are bringing proven communication strategies to Wisconsin. These tools support our goal of eliminating ageism and ableism and creating a healthier Wisconsin where we all can thrive as we age and experience disability!

Register now for this free, virtual introductory training that will introduce evidence-based communication strategies to reframe aging: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_tGp41ecNQLKMOqjwJh_p_g#/registration

Nice to Know

Save the date: 2027 Aging Advocacy Day

Tuesday, May 11, 2027

Join WAAN to celebrate the 10th Annual Aging Advocacy Day on Tuesday, May 11, 2027! Statewide advocates will gather in Madison on May 11 to learn key advocacy tools, network with others in their district, and meet with their legislators/legislative staff on aging policy priorities. We will meet at the Best Western Premier Park Hotel in the morning for meeting preparations and lunch before walking over to the State Capitol in the afternoon for our meetings.

More details, including registration, coming later this year! Head to gwaar.org/aging-advocacy-day-2027 to learn more.

Your Medicaid Experience Needed!

Four Medicaid-related boards, committees, and councils are looking for new members. These groups meet regularly to talk about Medicaid policies and services and include people from across the state who can share how Medicaid programs and services are working, what gaps exist, and how they can be fixed. Your advocacy to improve the Medicaid system is needed and valued.

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) is seeking applicants focused on Medicaid generally, people focused on the IRIS program, and people focused on the long-term care program. Applications are due November 6. **Learn more and apply at Medicaid: Boards, Committees, and Councils | Wisconsin Department of Health Services:** https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/medicaid/bcc.htm

Family Caregiver Support

Bryn Ceman, Caregiver Programs Specialist

Need to Know

Wisconsin Caregiver Coordinators – Wisconsin Caregiver Coordinator Statewide Meeting

Wednesday, November 11 | 10:00–11:00 a.m.

Your Work Is Making a Difference! Join us as we look back at Wisconsin's 2025 Family Caregiver Support Program results and celebrate the impact of your work across the state!

The agenda can be found here: https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2009200

- 2025 Caregiver Program Highlights – Statewide PeerPlace data, caregiver needs, services provided, and customer satisfaction results.
- In Their Own Words – Hear what Wisconsin family caregivers are saying about the support they've received, including some wonderful recognition of local staff!
- Looking Ahead to 2027 – Updates from the Efficiency and Forms Workgroup and upcoming program improvements.

We hope you'll join us for an informative and encouraging hour celebrating the difference you make for Wisconsin families!

Reminder: November is National Family Caregivers Month: Outreach Resources Available

November is a wonderful opportunity to recognize family caregivers and remind them about the support available in their communities. For the past several years, the Wisconsin Family and Caregiver Support Alliance (WFACSA) has developed National Family Caregivers Month marketing toolkits.

This year, the Alliance will not be creating a new toolkit, particularly since several national organizations already offer excellent, ready-to-use materials. Instead, counties and Tribes are encouraged to use and customize the resources that best fit their communities.

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Available resources include:

- **GWAAR Family Caregiver Marketing Toolkit**: https://gwaar.org/family-caregiver-marketing-toolkit
  Includes previous WFACSA National Family Caregivers Month toolkits, newsletter articles, sample proclamations, flyers, brochures, and other materials to reuse or adapt.
- **Caregiver Action Network**: https://www.caregiveraction.org/nfc-month/
  Offers National Family Caregivers Month campaign resources and messaging for 2026.
- **WisconsinCaregiver.org**: https://wisconsincaregiver.org/
  Wisconsin-specific information about caregiver support programs, respite, education, support groups, and other resources.
- **Wisconsin's Family Caregiver Support Programs Facebook Page**: https://www.facebook.com/WisconsinCaregiver/
  Shares caregiver education, events, and outreach materials throughout the year. You're welcome to share relevant posts with your community.
- **Wisconsin Family Caregiver Outreach Flyer**: https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2009187
  A ready-to-share flyer featuring WisconsinCaregiver.org and QR codes connecting caregivers to statewide resources and the Facebook page. Great for newsletters, resource fairs, community events, and waiting rooms.

There's no expectation that everyone uses the same message or campaign. Choose whichever materials work best for your newsletter, social media, or other local outreach.

View the flyer: https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2009197

Looking for a short article for your November newsletter? Feel free to use this one:

November Is National Family Caregivers Month

Every day, family members, friends, and neighbors help loved ones remain safe, healthy, and connected. Whether providing transportation, managing medications, preparing meals, or offering emotional support, family caregivers make an incredible difference. November is a time to recognize their contributions and remind them that they don't have to do it all alone. Wisconsin offers caregiver support programs, respite care, education, and other helpful resources. Visit WisconsinCaregiver.org to explore available services and connect with your local Family Caregiver Support Program.

Reminder: Updated Resource: Practical Ideas for Using NFCSP & AFCSP Funds

Looking for new ways to support family caregivers and make the most of your program funding?

GWAAR has updated its *Practical Ideas for Using NFCSP & AFCSP Funds* guide to help county and Tribal Caregiver Coordinators explore creative, meaningful, and allowable uses of caregiver funds.

From caregiver education and conferences to respite, assistive technology, wellness activities, outreach, and supplemental services, this resource offers practical ideas to help meet caregivers' needs while keeping program compliance in mind.

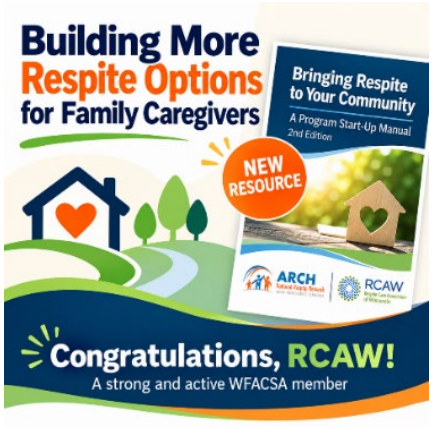
With 2027 AFCSP budget planning underway, now is a great time to explore new opportunities and make the most of available funding!

View the Updated Caregiver Spending Ideas Guide: https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2002999 .

Questions or ideas you'd like to discuss? Contact Bryn Ceman at bryn.ceman@gwaar.org.

Nice to Know

Reminder: Wisconsin Partnership Helps Create National Respite Resource



👏 Congratulations to the Respite Care Association of Wisconsin (RCAW) on partnering with the ARCH National Respite Network and Resource Center to develop Bringing Respite to Your Community: A Program Start-Up Manual, 2nd Edition.

This FREE resource provides practical guidance for organizations interested in starting or expanding respite services, including program planning, funding, staffing, policies, operations, and evaluation.

Available in English and Spanish, the updated manual also addresses innovative respite models, self-directed respite, and respite workforce challenges.

💚 A great example of Wisconsin expertise making a national impact! Congratulations, RCAW!

🔗 ***Access the free resource through ARCH:*** https://bit.ly/4hYQVWE

Reminder: Wisconsin is leading the way in caregiver support!

UW–Madison has launched the Badger Caregiving Clinic, the nation's first clinic of its kind, offering free education, individualized support, and resources for unpaid family and friend caregivers. ❤️‍🩹

We're grateful to Dr. Beth Fields, an active WFACSA member, for her leadership in advancing this innovative approach to recognizing and supporting family caregivers.

🔗 ***Learn more about the Badger Caregiving Clinic:*** https://bit.ly/47asOOu

Fiscal Resources and Data Management

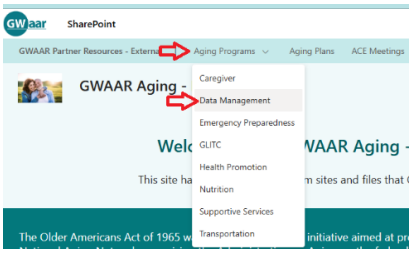
Carrie Kroetz, Data Management and Technology Coordinator

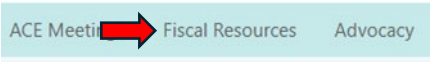
Need to Know

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





Fiscal Updates

- The September Claim form has been posted, along with the August Copy/Paste document. This is the final claim to accurately report fiscal expenses as they pertain to expenses reported in 2026 to complete the Federal Fiscal Year NAPIS report. The September claim is due November 5th, 2026.
- The Variance Report has been posted. It is recommended to use information through August to gain a preview over the next month of possible variances which could assist you to gain insight when using September data. The Variance Report will be due November 20th, 2026.

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- The 2027 Preliminary Budget has been posted. All contracted providers are required to complete both the preliminary and final budget (when posted in the Spring). The due date for submission of the preliminary budget is November 5th, 2026.

PeerPlace Review and Cleanup

GWAAR has posted the final IIIB, D and C round of data entry errors. These errors must be addressed by the October 31st deadline. We will also continue to work through and share IIIE data entry errors and provide the information to users.

"Let's Talk Data" End-of-Year Webinar Series

Thursday, October 29 | 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

We will be hosting our final webinar on Thursday, October 29 from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. to help answer questions for end of year reporting. Aging staff is always welcome to schedule time with Carrie Kroetz using her Booking App link. As a reminder, all client/service data for October 2025 through September 2026 must be accurately entered by October 31, 2026.

Health Promotion

Evan Ewing, Health Promotion Program Specialist

Nice to Know

Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA): Stand Up for Your Health

WIHA is now offering an asynchronous Stand Up for Your Health facilitator training. With this self-paced format, trainees can complete the training at a time and pace that works best for their schedule. The Stand Up for Your Health program only requires 1 facilitator, making it a great option if you have limited volunteers and staff to implement programming.

wiha
Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging

Learn more and to register for the training: https://wihealthyaging.org/for-professionals/become-a-facilitator/

Medicare Outreach and Assistance

Stephanie Haas, Medicare Outreach Coordinator

Nice to Know

Reminder: New Shareable Video: Applying for Medicare with the Social Security Administration at SSA.gov

A new video was created to walk beneficiaries through the process of applying for Medicare online through the Social Security Administration at SSA.gov.



View the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g74oM-S8HXw

In case you missed it on page 1:

Stephanie Haas, Medicare Outreach Coordinator, had two of her videos featured by the State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) Technical Assistance Center, the national hub that provides training, technical assistance, and resources to the nation's 54 SHIPs.

View the national resource: https://www.shiphelp.org/open-enrollment/

Nutrition

Kristi Cooley, Nutrition Program Specialist
Jean Lynch, Program Specialist Manager
Pam VanKampen, Nutrition Program & Senior Center Specialist

Nice to Know

New Nutrition Resources Available from ACL

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) has added new resources to its Dietary Guidelines for Americans/Dietary Reference Intakes (DGA/DRI) Toolkit to help senior nutrition programs plan healthy menus and meet Older Americans Act Title III-C nutrition requirements.



New resources include guidance on menu creation, special dietary needs, protein and fiber, dairy requirements, nutrients of concern, seafood, sodium and saturated fat, and more. The Fact Sheets on the Nutrients of Concern can be used to fulfill your annual requirement to provide Nutrition Education on these.

Explore ACL's DGA/DRI Toolkit and new nutrition resources:

https://acl.gov/senior-nutrition/nutrition-guidelines?tab=dga-dri-toolkit

https://acl.gov/senior-nutrition/nutrition-guidelines?tab=fact-sheets2#fact-sheets2