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# ❖ The Volunteer Ombudsman ❖

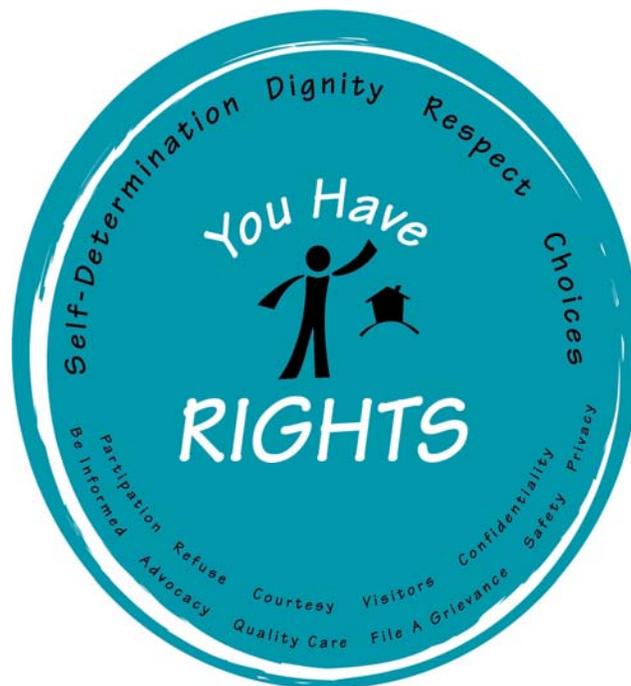
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Volume 12 , Issue 1

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## Board on Aging and Long Term Care



State of Wisconsin

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## **Wisconsin Board on Aging and Long Term Care Celebrates the 7th Annual Louise Abrahams Yaffe Volunteer Ombudsman Program Award Recipient Douglas (Doug) Koehler of Wood County**

The Board on Aging is very pleased to present the 2010 Louise Abrahams Yaffe Volunteer Ombudsman Program Award to Mr. Douglas Koehler.

Doug is our Volunteer Ombudsman at Bethel Home in Wood County. He has been a dedicated advocate for over 5 years. Doug makes weekly unannounced visits to his assigned nursing home, spending 2-3 hours each visit listening and talking with the residents, empowering them to speak up for themselves, reminding them of their rights and letting them know that he will be their voice when need be. During Doug's visits he is the "eyes and ears" for the Regional Ombudsman and together with the Volunteer Coordinator, they make a great team of advocates for the residents.

Doug has made an impact on the lives of the residents living at Bethel Home. His weekly presence lets them know that they are important and valued people, and that we are listening. Doug is a native of Wisconsin, born in Milwaukee. He has lived in Wausau and Wauwatosa, and earned his undergraduate degree from UW-Milwaukee in 1960.

Doug served in the army as an officer in the Artillery and Ordnance Corps. He was stationed in Germany for four years and gained the rank of Captain. He then returned to Wisconsin to earn his post-graduate degree from the UW-Madison.

Doug's career was in the trust field of the banking industry. He is a retired vice president of the Northern Trust Company.

Doug currently lives in Marshfield with Joan, his wife of 50 years. They have 2 children and 4 grandchildren. When Doug is not making his weekly unannounced visits to Bethel Home, he enjoys photography, bicycling and gardening. Doug also spends time volunteering to help elders and low income folks with their tax prep through the IRS/AARP.

The Board on Aging and Long Term Care is honored to have Doug as one of our Volunteer Ombudsmen, and we recognize him with this prestigious award. We congratulate him, and thank him from the bottom of our hearts.

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Pictured from left to right: Joan and Doug Koehler, Dr. Dale Taylor-Board Chair, Joan Cantlon-Regional Ombudsman

## **National Volunteer Recognition Week April 18th-24th**

### **Celebrating People in Action**

#### **Kellie Miller—Volunteer Services Supervisor**

Since 1974, when executive proclamation no. 4288 was signed by the President of the United States, we have been officially appreciating and recognizing Volunteers in an organized fashion across America during the month of April, especially during the week of April 18th, 2010.

Since 1994, the Board on Aging Volunteer Ombudsman Program has been following in those thankful footsteps.

This year the Board on Aging recognized and celebrated with our dedicated Volunteer Ombudsmen in 6 regional recognition events: April 21st in the La Crosse area; April 22nd in the Madison area; April 23rd in the Milwaukee area; April 27th in the Green Bay area; May 18th in the Eau Claire area; and May 19th in the Stevens Point area.

We were very pleased to celebrate our 7th Annual Louise Abrahams Yaffe Volunteer Ombudsman Program Award event on May 2nd with our award recipient, Doug Koehler, at the Alzheimer's State Conference in the Wisconsin Dells.

The Board on Aging wishes to extend our heartfelt congratulations to the following Volunteer Ombudsmen who were nominated for the Louise Abrahams Yaffe Volunteer Ombudsman Program Award:

- ◆ Elizabeth Dahlk, Milwaukee County
- ◆ Alexandra Kloeckl, Outagamie County
- ◆ Douglas Koehler, Wood County
- ◆ Emily Lane, Dane County
- ◆ Dale Sankey, Dane County
- ◆ Judith Sullivan, La Crosse County

And...We are so very thankful for and truly appreciate all of our valued volunteers each and every day for their care, concern and commitment in providing advocacy and extending the services provided by our Regional Ombudsmen to our elders in this great State of Wisconsin!

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## **What's Happening**

### **News from the Green Bay area VOP**

#### **Cindy Frietag—Volunteer Coordinator**

We just hit 100%! That's a great number when talking about volunteer placements in a county. It's very exciting to have all the skilled nursing facilities in Door county assigned a Volunteer Ombudsman. We look forward to reaching a goal of 100% in all five counties in Northeast Wisconsin!

We have had to say goodbye to several of our wonderful volunteers in the past three months. They have been great representatives of our program and will be sorely missed. The good news is that the training in mid-May allowed us to place Volunteers in facilities that had lost their volunteers due to resignations as well as place volunteers in facilities that had never had a volunteer. We are striving for 100% in all counties!

Over the past six months, the monthly volunteer coffee clutches have proven to be a great addition to the program. The volunteers and I meet to learn, share and encourage one another. Some of the topics covered over the last several months include: Handling Negative Communication; Successful Exit Strategies; and Improving Monthly Reporting. The coffees have given us a chance to become better Volunteers as we share techniques to best serve the residents in our facilities. Our monthly gatherings have been put "on hold" until the fall so we can enjoy our brief, but beautiful Wisconsin summer. Look for us to start up again in September with new faces and new "table topics" in each county's monthly meeting.

More exciting things happened in Green Bay when the Volunteer Ombudsmen were nominated for the Green Bay Packer large group award at the WPS Volunteer Award Celebration held in Green Bay on April 13, 2010. This nomination recognized our volunteers for the difference they make to the community. Although we didn't win the award, the public recognition helped to get the word into the community about the role Volunteer Ombudsmen play in the quality of life for long term care consumers.

Our spring volunteer recognition was held on April 28th at the Green Bay Botanical Gardens. It was a wonderful day full of food, fun and flowers. What a great way to recognize the volunteers who work so diligently in the VOP!

“Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the Key to Success.

If you love what you are doing, you will be successful”

Albert Schweitzer 1875-1965

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## **“On the Western Front”**

### **News from the La Crosse Regional Volunteer Ombudsman Program**

#### **Karen Price—Volunteer Coordinator**

The Western Region Volunteer Ombudsman Program (VOP) has found a new home! On February 1st of this year, we moved into new offices at 118 N. 6th Street in La Crosse. I love being in the historic downtown area and hearing the daily carillon of St. Joseph’s Cathedral.

Plans are afoot to expand the implementation of the Western Region VOP. Introductory Kick-Off Meetings were scheduled in May for Nursing Home providers in Pepin, Buffalo, Trempealeau and Jackson counties. Of course, recruitment efforts are under way for this expansion as well as the three established counties of La Crosse, Monroe and Vernon.

The Western Region VOP co-hosted an educational workshop on April 20th, titled, “Pitfalls and Obstacles to Volunteer Involvement”. The workshop was in Viroqua.

Two of our La Crosse County Volunteer Ombudsmen have recently left our program. Sister Josephine Bryan has been re-assigned to California (lucky lady!) and Jim Stolpa has resigned due to personal and family commitments. We thank them for their service and dedication to the older adults we serve. They are greatly missed and we wish both of them all good things.

We are pleased to announce that Carrie Todhunter, Volunteer Ombudsman with Monroe County, is returning to active status with our VOP! We are so happy to have her back and are looking forward to working together again.

Our Volunteer Recognition event for the Western Region took place in our new office on April 21st. This was a special time to express our gratitude to our Volunteer Ombudsmen for all that they do for our agency and for the individuals that we serve in our communities. “Thank You” doesn’t begin to plumb the depths of how special the gifts are that our Volunteer Ombudsmen bring to us and to the older adults that we serve! All of the Volunteer Ombudsmen in our program are remarkably special people.

If you are interested in becoming a Volunteer Ombudsman in the Western Region, please contact the Board on Aging at 1-800-815-0015 and ask for Karen Price or stop by my office!!!

“In this life we cannot always do great things, but we can do small things with great love.”

Mother Teresa 1910-1997

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## **What's Happening in the Southeastern Region**

### **Duane Mireles—Volunteer Coordinator**

As summer rolls in on us, so does the festival season and a chance to get outdoors. We will hopefully see more sunshine, as we continue our outreach efforts. The past summer saw us make stops at the Harley Davidson Museum, the Brady Street Festival and a few sporting events and motorcycle rallies in Racine and Kenosha.

Coffee clutches will begin, in our area, in June. We are hoping to have one each season in Racine, Kenosha and Milwaukee Counties.

Also coming in June to Milwaukee for the 27th year is Senior Fest at Serb Hall on Wednesday, June 9, 2010 from 9:00am-5:00pm. Please come visit our booth, enjoy some great music and get some valuable information for your residents!

Congratulations to Elizabeth Dahlk for being one of the nominated Volunteer Ombudsmen for the 7th Annual Louise Abrahams Yaffe Volunteer Ombudsman Program Award. Elizabeth was nominated by the VOP and the Administrator at the facility where she is the Volunteer Ombudsman. We are proud of you, Elizabeth, and all of our Volunteer Ombudsmen...Thank You!!!

If you see our brochures in coffee shops or a booth at the next art or street fair it's not a fluke! We'll be out and about in places you might least expect us: we are getting the "Advocacy" out to consumers and their families. We want to make sure our elders know their rights and know about the services available from the Board on Aging and Long Term Care and of course our Volunteer Ombudsman Program!

## **What is new in South Central WI**

### **Julia Pierstorff—Volunteer Coordinator**

In an effort to have more consistent contact with my volunteers, I have organized a number of coffee clutches for Volunteers and me to meet in an informal atmosphere to allow us to connect with one another and to share questions and concerns. This has been well received by volunteers, as it allows them to express frustrations that they may have come up against as a volunteer, and a time to share heart warming stories about relationships that many have developed with residents at their assigned facility. They learn so much from one another, and I am forever learning from each of them. We plan to continue to hold these informal meetings 3 to 4 times per year. We were also proud to have a special presentation from Tom La Duke, relocation Specialist, to share with the volunteers important details on what part the Volunteer Ombudsmen Play with a resident is relocated to a different facility.

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## Welcome Aboard New Faces

### Brown County

**Kathy Polzar**—Ledgeview

**Donna LeFebvre**—Rennes

**Cathie Lenninger**—Bornemann’s

**Cassandra Sturos**—Gran Care

**Clara Simpson**—San Luis

### Dane County

**John Darling**—Nazareth

**Marion Tong**—Skaalen

**Georgette Bathum**—Sunny Hill

**Margot Nardi**—Badger Prairie

**Pat Roloff**—Oak Park

**Donna Miller**—Ingleside

**Maureen Kieso**—Oak Wood

### Rock County

**Helen Nevins**—Cedar Crest

### Monroe County

**Carrie Todhunter**—Tomah Health Care

## Goodbyes and Thank You!

**Barb Frazier**—Odd Fellows—Brown County

**Judy White**—Parkview—Brown County

**James Trammell**—Parkside—Outagamie County

**Vicki Vande**—Northpoint—Winnebago County

**Vickie Corbett**—Columbia HCC—Columbia County

**Lenora Rodin**—City View—Dane County

**Susan Steiner**—Golden Living—Columbia County

**Gail Lasjak**—Grand Prairie—Kenosha County

**Sister Josephine Brian**-Hillview—La Crosse County

**Jim Stolpa**—Onalaska HCC—La Crosse County

**The Volunteer Ombudsman Program**

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## **Do you have a National States Insurance Policy?**

### **Donna Bryant—Medigap Lead Counselor**

The Medigap Helpline has recently received information from Wisconsin's Office of the Commissioner of Insurance about National States Insurance Company. National States issues Medicare supplement, home health care, nursing home care and long term care insurance policies in Wisconsin.

All Medicare supplement and long term care health insurance policies issued in Wisconsin are guaranteed renewable. This means that the policies will continue to be in force and alive, provided that you pay the premiums, regardless of what happens to the insurance company. There is no reason to panic.

Earlier this year, the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance stopped National States from taking applications due to some concerns about their financial reserves.

The Missouri Insurance Department has placed the insurance company in rehabilitation. It is not in bankruptcy. If you or someone you know has insurance with this company, you may call the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance at 1-800-236-8517 for more information.

Here are some tips to help you:

1. You must keep paying your premium.
2. No one should panic. The policies will remain in force forever, the insurance regulations of Wisconsin have guaranteed their renewability.
3. All Wisconsin Medicare supplement policies and long term care policies are guaranteed renewable.
4. All policies are still in force and will continue to pay claims according to the terms of the policy.
5. All Wisconsin Mandated benefits are still valid benefits of the policy.
6. Do not be frightened into changing your National States insurance policy because of this news. If you are a current National States policy holder and you decide that you want to change insurance companies, you will have to apply to a different company and answer their health questions.
7. If you do not pass the health questions, the other company can decide not to issue a policy to you. The new company can say "thank you for applying , but no thank you. We do not want to insure you." Under current law, insurance companies can refuse to issue a policy to a person that does not pass their underwriting guidelines.
8. If you have any questions about Medicare supplements and the consumer protections available to you under current Wisconsin insurance law, please contact the Medigap Helpline at 1-800-242-1060 and ask to speak to a Medigap insurance counselor.

**1-800-242-1060**

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## **A brief Summary of Legislative Activity on Several Issues of Interest to the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program**

### **Bill Donaldson—Legal Counsel**

During the recently completed session of the Wisconsin Legislature, a number of bills of interest to this program were considered. Several of these made significant progress, although none were ultimately enacted into law.

Assembly Bill 152 (AB152) and Senate Bill 108 (SB108) were identical bills that would have limited the ability of health care providers to require their employees to work overtime. These bills were introduced at the request of nurses and other professionals who complained that their ability to act at their best performance levels was compromised with forced to work “double shifts” due to inadequate overall facility staffing. Both bills died in committee.

AB259 and SB594 both addressed the idea of establishing state minimum standards for “dementia specific” long term care facilities. Currently any nursing home, CBRF or other assisted living facility can market itself as being especially well suited to care for persons suffering from dementia or related illness. Whether or not the facility actually has any special programs, services or staff to provide this promised “special care” is left to the consumer to assess and decide for herself or himself. While the assembly version of the bill died on its way to the Assembly floor, the Senate bill was passed and was on its way to the Assembly for consideration when the session ended, thus assuring that it would receive no action this year.

AB684 and SB470 would have created a new state certification for health care provider staff who have taken additional training and proven themselves competent at providing care to residents with dementia. Neither of these bills left their respective committees.

Ab389 and SB538 would have required facilities to notify residents and their families if the resident had been the subject of a serious violation of rules by the facility. This bill arose as a result of a newspaper article in Milwaukee that related the experiences of several families who discovered, ten months after the event, that their loved ones had been harmed due to serious breaches of the rules by the facility. These violations are characterized as instances that create a situation of “immediate jeopardy” to the residents of the facility.

The bill was vigorously supported by the BOALTC and other advocacy and regulatory agencies, and it was just as vigorously opposed by the provider industry. In the end, the bill was left foundering in the committees and never sent to the floor of either house for a vote. It will most likely reappear next year.

There were, of course, other bills that the BOALTC followed, but I believe that the bills listed above were the most important to the interest of our clients.

**1-800-815-0015**

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## **Greetings from the Executive Director**

### **Heather Bruemmer—State Ombudsman**

Congratulations to all the wonderful Volunteer Ombudsmen in Wisconsin. The staff at the Board on Aging and the Board of Directors would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to you for your commitment and dedication to our program.

I wanted to take this opportunity to highlight a “few” topics that the Board will be focusing on in the Health Care Reform Provisions affecting Older Adults and Persons with Special needs:

#### 1. Nursing Home Transparency

- ◆ Require nursing homes to disclose their owners, operators, suppliers, financiers and others they do business with so they can be held accountable for the care their residents receive.
- ◆ Require nursing homes to take steps internally to reduce criminal and civil violations.
- ◆ Establish a quality Assurance and Performance Improvement Program to improve quality assurance standards.
- ◆ Require the government to implement a system to collect and report information about how well nursing homes are staffed, including accurate information about the hours of nursing care residents receive; staff turnover rates; and how much facilities spend on wages and benefits.
- ◆ Require cost reports that nursing homes will file with the government to show expenditures by category-nursing, therapy, capital assets, and administrative services.
- ◆ Require civil monetary penalties (fines) to be held in escrow pending appeals rather than allowing nursing homes to delay payment indefinitely while they file appeals.
- ◆ Implement a pilot program to improve federal government oversight of nursing home chains that have quality of care problems.
- ◆ Provide training for workers who care for residents with dementia and to prevent abuse.

#### 2. Elder Justice

- ◆ H.R. 3590 contains the Elder Justice Act (EJA) that will:
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- ◆ Establish an Elder Justice Coordinating Council to make recommendations to the secretary of HHS on the coordination of activities of Federal, state, Local and private agencies and entities relating to elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Recommendations contained in the report are due in 2 years.
- ◆ Provide \$400 million in first time dedicated funding for adult protective services (APS). Provide \$100 million for state demonstration grants to test a variety of methods to detect and prevent elder abuse.
- ◆ Provide \$26 million for the establishment and support of Elder Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation Forensic Centers to Develop forensic expertise and provide services relating to elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- ◆ Provide \$32.5 million in grants to support the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program and an additional \$40 million in training programs for national organizations and state long term care ombudsman programs.
- ◆ Authorize \$67.5 million in grants to enhance long-term care staffing through training and recruitment and incentives for individuals seeking or maintaining employment in long-term care, either in a facility or community based long-term care entity.

### 3. Criminal Background Checks

- ◆ Extend to all states an existing pilot program that enables states to conduct national criminal background checks, including fingerprint checks, on individuals who apply for direct patient access jobs in long-term care facilities and with home care agencies that receive funding from Medicare or Medicaid, thus eliminating the ability of persons with criminal histories to mover from state to state to work with vulnerable seniors and persons with disabilities.
- ◆ The federal government will provide Federal matching funds to states to conduct these activities. The provisions specifies that the checks should be implemented in such a way that does not result in application fees for long-term care workers.
- ◆ States will be required to guarantee (directly or through donations from public or private entities) a designated amount of non-Federal contributions to the program. The Federal government will provide a match equal to three times the amount a state guarantees; except that Federal funds will not exceed \$3 million for newly participation states and \$1.5 million for previously participation states.

We will be spending this next year advocating for these provisions. Exciting days ahead!

We hope you have enjoyed our spring recognition events. Thanks again for all that you do!

### Helpful Websites

- AARP Wisconsin.....<http://longtermcare.state.wi.us>
- Advancing Excellence.....<http://www.nhqualitycampaign.org>
- Administration on Aging.....<http://www.aoa.gov>
- Alzheimer’s Association.....<http://alz.org>
- Board on Aging and Long Term Care.....<http://longtermcare.state.wi.us>
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid.....<http://www.medicare.gov>
- Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups.....<http://www.cwag.org>
- Disability Rights of Wisconsin..... <http://www.disabilityrightswi.org>
- National Ombudsman Resource center.....<http://www.ltc.ombudsman.org>
- Social Security Administration.....<http://ssa.gov>
- US Department of Veterans Affairs.....<http://www.va.gov>
- Volunteer Match.....<http://www.volunteermatch.com>

*Volunteer Ombudsman Program*

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*Welcome New Staff*

Inside this issue:

**The Volunteer Ombudsman**  
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