



STATE OF WISCONSIN
BOARD ON AGING AND LONG TERM CARE

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Eva Arnold
Patricia A. Finder-Stone
Terry Lynch
Tanya L. Meyer
James Surprise
Dale B. Taylor
Barbara Thoni

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Heather A. Bruemmer

Board of Directors Meeting
Board on Aging and Long Term Care
Conference Room 100
Madison, WI 53704
July 21, 2011

Chair Dr. Dale Taylor called the meeting to order at 9:00 am with a welcome and introductions.

Members Present: Chair Dr. Dale Taylor Eva Arnold Tanya Meyer
Barb Thoni Terry Lynch Patricia Finder-Stone

Members Excused: James Surprise

Staff Present: Heather Bruemmer Kellie Miller Vicki Buchholz
Bill Donaldson Kim Marheine

Guests Present: * State Representative Dan Knodl, Chair, Assembly Committee on Aging and Long Term Care
*Connie Gengle, Vilas County Elderly Benefit Specialist and SHIP Counselor, representing the WI Association of Benefit Specialists
*Gail Schwersenska, Department of Health Services, Director, Office on Aging, Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources
*Cindy Dombrowski, Department of Administration, Budget Office

Presentation to the Board:

State Rep. Dan Knodl presented a Governor's Proclamation to the staff and board of directors honoring the Board on Aging and Long Term Care for 30 years of service to the older adults in Wisconsin, and declaring the week of August 1, 2011 to be a week of recognition of the services of the Board on Aging and Long Term Care.

Recognition:

Dr. Taylor recognized Barb Thoni on her recent retirement from the Dane County Area Agency on Aging; Advocacy Specialist Vickie Borquist for her extraordinary efforts at rolling out the revised database for the Ombudsman Program and Volunteer Ombudsman Program; and Vi Quang was recognized for her efforts at implementing the Medigap Helpline's database, with new changes from CMS. Eva Arnold was recently inducted into the University of Wisconsin Hall of Fame for her service to Rock County.

Agenda:

Approval of agenda as presented. M/S/C Arnold/Lynch.

Minutes: Minutes of the April 20, 2011 board meeting were approved as prepared. M/S/C Finder-Stone/Arnold.

Board Re-appointment: Dr. Taylor recognized Terry Lynch as having been nominated for re-appointment to the board for another term. Mr. Lynch offered thanks to Ms. Bruemmer for her assistance during the process. Mr. Lynch will wait to hear from Governor Walker's office as to when he will go to the Senate confirmation hearing for the final approval of his appointment.

Remarks by a Board Member: Following up on his remarks offered at the last board meeting about self-determination, Mr. Terry Lynch provided information regarding his current work with persons within the IRIS program. Mr. Lynch continues to present sessions at conferences and most recently the Self Directed Supports Forum, noting that current systems often fail to support persons before they have actual need and could benefit from supports, thereby improving health and reducing health-related expenditures. Looking specifically at the IRIS program, Mr. Lynch is hoping to develop materials to assist the Independent Consultants to better support outcomes.

Presentation: WI Association of Benefit Specialists, Ms. Connie Gengle, Vilas County Elderly Benefit Specialist and SHIP Counselor

Ms. Gengle offered comments about her experience as an elderly benefit specialist. Her office assists older adults in understanding and accessing their benefits, and provides support during appeals if persons feel they have been unjustly denied services. Through the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), she supports programs such as the congregate and homebound meal programs, volunteer friendly visitors to the homebound, volunteer drivers for medical and non-medical appts, social programs and caregiver support programs. Ms. Gengle's office assists older adult clients in reviewing financial benefits such as Food Share, Lifeline Discount Program, Fuel Assistance and Weatherization, SHIP counseling and all components of health care. Ms. Gengle works directly with community members and agencies in order to make programs better accessible, making presentations on specific case studies to county boards and other stakeholders who perhaps have funding influence. Ms. Gengle works closely with BOALTC's Medigap Helpline program, assimilating information within her home counties.

New Business:

Dr. Taylor noted that Lynn Breedlove, Executive Director of Disability Rights Wisconsin is retiring at the end of this year.

Ms. Bruemmer introduced Cindy Dombrowski as the agency's budget analyst, and thanked her for her support and guidance in this last budget year. Ms. Bruemmer and ombudsman, Carol Kriemelmeyer will be touring the WI Veterans Home in King in August with members of the new Department of Health Services administration and State Budget Office.

The board took up discussion regarding the request to close the agency's Eau Claire office, as the Volunteer Ombudsman Coordinator position, already vacant, was eliminated via the state budget. Currently that office houses the Eau Claire area's regional ombudsman, who would move to a home office, saving the agency significant costs and efficiencies when compared to keeping this office open. The closure of the office would not negatively impact in any way the provision of ombudsman services to that service area. M/S/C Finder-Stone/ Meyer to approve closure of the Eau Claire office and support home office status for the regional ombudsman serving that area.

Department of Health Services Aging Update, Ms. Gail Schwersenska, Director, Office on Aging, Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources

Ms. Schwersenska reported that her department is required by the federal government to do an aging plan, which is currently at the year two mark of a 3-year plan. In planning for the next plan Ms. Schwersenska's department has been working with the state advisory council to ask for guidance as to how to elicit input from consumers into the plan process. At the council's direction, they went to housing communities, card clubs/social clubs, nutrition sites, faith-based groups, and are now compiling the information gathered. It was found that having peer to peer conversations is likely the best way to elicit honest responses; the top response noted in this process by older adults was economic security, followed by transportation and access to medical services.

Evidence-based prevention programs remain a priority, and recently, having finished its assigned work, the state advisory committee was discharged. Grant awards are coming in, and notice was received approving 501(c) (3) status for the Institute for Healthy Aging.

This work will include partnering with the UW-Madison School of Engineering on \$9.4 million, 5-year grant to create the only nationwide Active Aging Research Center. This project will be a community-based participatory research project teaming three ADRC's and the Institute to find ways to use technology to keep people living independently in their homes. The groups is also working on an e-chess platform, an interactive internet program connecting consumers with medical professionals, research and online support, and is modeled particularly for people who complete the Stepping On falls prevention program.

ABCD (Asset-Based Community Development) is a program that seeks to identify persons' assets instead of needs in trying to initiate community resource building. This is the only grant of its type in the nation, and will work with both national and state advisory groups, with findings disseminated nationally. These programs have excellent potential to develop low tech resources for older adults, considering access and affordability to keep persons in their homes.

Ms. Schwersenska reported that the Office of Resource Center Development is working to manage enrollment challenges under the current Family Care caps. There are recognized concerns for wait lists, and the ADRC's are managing the associated policies while attempting to bring about positive resolutions with flexibility.

The state aging plan recognized that there was a need for systems change in the dementia-capability of services and systems. The Helen Bader Foundation supported through grant funding a full time position, currently a contract position with the WI Alzheimer's Institute. The project will include early screening in ADRC's; will help to influence knowledge among medical students, among many other components. A committee will oversee and approve policies and recommendations, identify content experts around specific topical areas of import, and will address family caregiver issues.

In closing, Ms. Schwersenska offered her appreciation for the immediate and thorough responsiveness of regional ombudsman, Carol Kriemelmeyer, in responding to the disaster-status of the Stevens Point area related to storms in recent days.

Legislative Updates, Mr. Bill Donaldson, Counsel to the Board

Mr. Donaldson reported that this meeting is in compliance with WI Open Meeting law, with notice having been published this past Monday in the WI State Journal.

Regarding AB 147: prohibits evidence in a civil suit of a health care provider that expresses apology. This is an extension of the tort reform law passed earlier in session; is still in committee, public hearing

has been held, but no report of the committee activity has been noted as yet. The bill has not yet been introduced in the senate.

AB 167: addresses a requirement by DHS to obtain the appropriate waiver of federal MA laws to continue the administration of Senior Care. A minority-introduced bill, this has been referred to the Health Committee.

SB 140: creates a state income tax check off allowing state income tax payers to voluntarily contribute funds to be used for education, shared revenue or Medical Assistance to the Dept. of Revenue. Referred to the Public Health Committee, Human Services and Revenue.

Special Session AB 12: modifies FMLA protections for government employees, remains in the Committee on Labor and Workforce Development. Provisions of SS AB 12 were incorporated into a different piece of legislation and later enacted into Act 16, making it effective on the first day of new contracts between the government unit and the employee.

Voter ID Law (Act 23): signed into law on May 25, 2011; will be active and in full force for the general election in November 2012. Contains provisions for persons residing in long term care facilities, but does not address concerns of persons living in the community and who do not possess a required form of ID.

Concealed Carry Law (Act 35): has been reviewed by the Legislative Council. Long term care facilities are subject to the prohibition against carrying a firearm if the management of the facility has made that decision and posted the appropriate notice.

Acts signed as of last week will be e-mailed to board members.

Long Term Care Ombudsman Services Report, Ms. Kim Marheine, Ombudsman Services Supervisor

Ms. Marheine also recognized the efforts of regional ombudsman, Carol Kriemelmeyer in responding to the recent disaster status in the Stevens Point area, and noted that this was also used as an opportunity to review agency practices in disaster preparedness and response.

Ms. Marheine noted casework continues to be steadily increasing, particularly with the newly enacted cap on Family Care enrollment and the associated increase in questions by consumers and health care professionals as to how wait lists will be handled, particularly for those persons who may be at risk for nursing home placement or have other seemingly urgent needs for enrollment.

Ms. Marheine noted eight immediate jeopardy cites have occurred (as compared to four in the previous monitoring period). It was reiterated that ombudsmen will respond to facilities where IJ's have been cited as well as to those facilities designated as Special Focus Facilities, on an urgent basis. With DQA, ombudsman staff have been closely monitoring particular corporate assisted living facilities, noting there to be several closures without timely or effective notice in the past month. Requests have also increased slightly for assistance with the development of tenant councils in Residential Care Apartment Complexes.

No nursing home closures are currently in process. Tom LaDuke, Relocation Ombudsman Specialist, is currently involved in the replacement plans for approximately 22 nursing homes that have received approval under the MA Incentive Property Replacement program. A brief overview was provided of some of the benefits noted of these replacements to facilities and communities.

Volunteer Ombudsman Program, Ms. Kellie Miller, Volunteer Services Supervisor

Ms. Miller reported on her efforts to support the volunteers in central and western WI related to Coordinator vacancies. A recent provider kick off in Manitowoc County was very successful, with favorable feedback from providers present. It was noted that there are a number of volunteers in that area who are already enthusiastically waiting to be trained and placed. Numerous opportunities are in process and in planning for volunteers to exchange information, network with each other and ombudsman staff, and to receive updates on agency policies and procedures.

Coordinators continue to work at recruitment and identifying compatible facility matches with new volunteers, as well as keeping existing volunteers motivated and supported. Outreach has included live and recorded radio spots to better understand the services of this agency, as well as booths at Wellness and community-based fairs, particularly in outlying counties that are as yet unserved by the Volunteer Ombudsman Program.

Ms. Bruemmer and Ms. Miller accompanied Louise Abrams Yaffe to an advocacy presentation earlier this summer. She remains a strong and determined advocate and supporter of the program, and has many ideas for systems changes.

Medigap Helpline Update, Ms. Vicki Buchholz, Lead Medigap Counselor

Ms. Bruemmer introduced Ms. Vicki Buchholz to the Board as the new Lead Medigap Counselor. Ms. Buchholz reported that there has been a steadily increasing demand for our outreach presentations and preparations are well underway for the new enrollment period which has been moved ahead in the calendar year. Ms. Buchholz is also working on database consistency with all Medigap staff, as well as responding to persons who have been calling after having dropped Badger Care Plus relative to increases in premium costs. Ms. Buchholz recently attended training in Chicago regarding new roll-outs slated for the coming year, and is, with Ms. Bruemmer, part of a national subgroup working on the proposed changes to Medicare Coverage resulting from federal budget action.

Medigap Helpline and Administrative Report, Ms. Heather Bruemmer, Executive Director

Ms. Bruemmer noted a summary of the agency's budget, as well as the preparations for closing out FY 2011 and implementation for FY 2012. She notes that the budget continues to be tight, and requires that staff remain vigilant with regard to expenditures and utilization of resources. The ability to retain the Relocation Ombudsman position is a considerable asset, and very necessary to the agency's work. Ms. Bruemmer thanked board members for their support and assistance during this budget process, and expressed feeling rewarded and fulfilled by the support that goes into serving our communities' most vulnerable citizens. Thanks were extended to Ms. Bruemmer from the board and guests regarding her effectiveness in forging purposeful and productive relationships and representing the agency's standpoint in a manner that is respectful and visionary, on both state and national levels. Complimented by state representatives for the transparency of agency data and service, Ms. Bruemmer is hopeful that she may at some point have the opportunity to meet personally with the Governor regarding aging issues.

Ms. Bruemmer reported on her testimony on aging issues in Washington, DC before Senator Herb Kohl's Senate Special Committee on Aging. She noted that she was able to have some time with the Senator, as well as with AoA Assistant Secretary Kathy Greenlea, and was humbled to share the podium with former First Lady, Rosalynn Carter. Ms. Bruemmer also met with Senator Ron Johnson's aide, as Sen. Johnson, also a member of the committee, was not able to be present.

Ms. Bruemmer reported that she has just received the drafting language for the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act, noting the President's recommendation of an increase to \$5 million for the ombudsman program nationally.

Operationally, Ms. Bruemmer reported that the agency will undergo a major computer migration to Windows 7 and Outlook 2010 in August and September, and will soon be utilizing a web-based meeting system called "Live Meeting" in order to continue to interface frequently with staff but without the extensive costs associated with staff travel. The agency's leadership continues to look at ways to save costs in rents, supplies, etc., so there might be an ability to better focus on service expansion.

Comments from the Public: None offered.

Next Meeting Date:

Thursday, November 3, 2011

Wednesday, February 8, 2012

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 2:15 pm M/S/C Arnold/Thoni

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Marheine, Recorder