

Board of Directors Meeting

Board on Aging and Long Term Care In-person at
DoubleTree Madison East
Two Lakes Ballroom
4402 E Washington Ave
Madison WI 53704
and virtually via Zoom
November 9, 2022

Chair James Surprise called the meeting to order at 9:30 am. It was noted that this meeting was properly noticed under the Open Meetings Notice law.

Members Present: James Surprise Dr. Dale Taylor
Tanya Meyer Abigail Lowery

Staff Present: Kellie Miller Vicki Buchholz Kim Marheine
Jessica Trudell Vicki Tiedeman Rachel Selking

Guests Present: Cory Stinebrink, Executive Policy and Budget Analyst, Department of Administration
Kristen Johnson
Khyana Pumphrey

Agenda: Approval of agenda as submitted M/S/C (Lowery/Taylor)

Minutes: Minutes of the August 3, 2022, board meeting were approved as presented M/S/C (Meyer/Taylor)

Presenter: Kevin Coughlin, Policy Initiatives Advisor, Department of Health Services

Mr. Coughlin presented on the Wisconsin Caregivers Careers

- Background Information
 1. One in four direct caregiver positions are vacant.
 2. 20,000 additional home care givers needed by 2024.
 3. More than 50% of Wisconsin's annual caregiver turnover.
- Project Goals
 1. Improve caregiver competencies.
 2. Create a pathway for advancement.
 3. Increase the number of direct care workers.
 4. Improve sustainability of the workforce.
- Components of the Direct Care Workforce Project
 1. Staff Stability Surveys
 2. Certified Direct Care Professional (CDCP) program.
 3. Platform connecting job seekers with employers.

Presenters: Kim Marheine and Rachel Selking

Speaking on behalf of the Ombudsman Program's Surveillance Monitoring Workgroup, a presentation was provided regarding the group's advocacy work related to the use of electronic monitoring devices in long-term care settings. Key areas addressed included ensuring the balance of privacy and protection against abuse, reasons for use of the device, potential risk for use, and processes for ensuring residents are involved in the decision and its outcomes.

Jessica Trudell provided the annual public records training for Board members, as required by DOA.

Program Updates:

Volunteer Services Update, Ms. Miller, Volunteer Services Supervisor

Ms. Amy Zabransky, Volunteer Coordinator, shared updates with the Board Members.

General Volunteer Ombudsman Program updates:

Since the last report, the Volunteer Ombudsman Program has conducted two initial training sessions adding nine new volunteers for a total of 66 volunteer ombudsmen.

The Volunteer Ombudsman Program is conducting monthly large group virtual training sessions to achieve the Volunteer Ombudsmen training requirements of the Administration of Community Living (ACL). The large group sessions are well received and followed with small group meetings for further updates and discussions.

The August session was presented by a Health Equity Consultant, Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources; Wisconsin Department of Health Services focused on Health Equity in Action. The September session was presented by a Program Coordinator, Community Access for the Deaf Teacher of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing focused on American Sign Language basics & Deaf Culture. The October session was presented by a three-person panel of Regional Ombudsmen focused on residents' rights. It is the annual mandatory training.

A separate update was presented by an Epidemiologist from the Department of Health Services on respiratory illness in Wisconsin and how it will affect nursing homes.

In-person resident council meetings and in-person room to room visitation by the Volunteer Ombudsmen and their Volunteer Coordinators continue to be critical for increasing advocacy services for the residents. Residents have been empowered to speak up for themselves and with their permission, concerns have been reported to the provider. All concerns are reported to the Regional Ombudsman through the Ombudsman toll free number. Volunteer Ombudsmen are invited to attend virtual resident council meetings and individual resident meetings when in-person visitation cannot occur.

Outreach/Recruitment:

Volunteer Coordinators have been diligent on submitting Public Service Announcements for volunteer recruitment in all regions, and staff have been setting up the new agency exhibit booth at a variety of senior and wellness fairs.

Volunteer Ombudsman Program Staff:

The Volunteer Ombudsman Program is preparing the 2023 year of virtual subject matter expert monthly trainings scheduling to comply with ACL standards. The Volunteer Ombudsman Program staff routinely attend relevant educational trainings, including the agency in-person in-service.

Medigap Helpline Program Update

Ms. Buchholz, Medigap Helpline Supervisor reported on the following:

Year to date from January through August, counselors have worked with 6,302 calls (6,459 assessments), compared to 5,543 (5,779 assessments) from the previous year. The average call length was 33 minutes per call. We have entered the Annual/Open enrollment period.

Outreach. Counselors have participated in 12 outreach events thus far through May. This fall, staff have attended nine in-person events with higher outreach contacts.

Medigap has three position openings with limited volunteers available to help with 2022 Annual Enrollment Period. As a result of the Pandemic and the changes within the pharmacy school, we did not have students last year and this year it was determined we needed a new student sponsor to complete coordinating efforts.

PHE Unwinding Project – The Public health Emergency (PHE) continues to hold off the Unwinding Project. Beneficiaries who were eligible for Medicaid (T19) did not have a review nor will they lose their Medicaid coverage until the PHE has ended, which at this time has been extended through January 11, 2023.

Covid Impact. Actual callers who report having been impacted by the PHE has been declining through July. Total callers in 2022 are about 1,117, with total callers from the start of the PHE at 1918 callers. Recent calls were primarily relating to those questioning when their Badgercare Plus or Medicaid would be reviewed.

Complaint Tracking Modules. Year to date counts is at 30 complaints. Last year's total was 37 CTM's filed, with 28 of 30 CTM's found in favor of the beneficiary. The bulk of the complaints continue to be for Advantage plans and beneficiary responses to TV ads.

Trends: Network Health Advantage Plans will no longer have a contract with Aspirus Health Center (formerly Ascension). Aspirus has informed their patients they will not set up appointments in 2023 for any person who has Network Health. Portage County is primarily impacted.

WPS Health Ins is non-renewing their WPS Part D Plans, impacting approx. 4,000 persons. A list of resources has been added to the website and the voicemail message has been updated to assist in notifying impacted individuals of this update. Impacted individuals will have from September through end of February 2023 to obtain other coverage.

Ombudsman Services Update, Ms. Marheine, Ombudsman Services Supervisor and Ms. Selking, Assistant Ombudsman Services Supervisor

Ms. Marheine reported that staff have resumed their pre-pandemic level of in-person field work, education and networking, continuing to follow any changes in guidance as might be received. It was also noted that one ombudsman resignation was recently received, and recruitment is in process.

Provider associations have resumed their in-person conferences, and the Ombudsman Program was represented at all, including a presentation about Dignity of Risk to the Texas PASRR Virtual Conference. Ombudsmen presented in-services for Resident Rights Month in October, including an in-service for the Volunteer Ombudsman Program. Several ombudsmen and the VOP will also be represented at FOCUS later this month.

The Ombudsman Program continues to monitor trends in casework, including any changes or impacts related to Family Care and IRIS. Among items being monitored are the unwinding of the PHE and pending acquisitions of two managed care organizations.

Ms. Marheine reported thirty-five Immediate Jeopardy sites were issued since the August Board meeting. No changes were noted to the bankruptcies currently being monitored as the Patient Care Ombudsman. Closure activity and pending closure activity remain higher than typical.

Administrative and Legislative Report, Jessica Trudell, Executive Director and State Ombudsman

Administrative Report

I. Budget

- Agency's budget request was submitted September 15th, including requests for positions: State Ombudsman, Communications Specialist, Executive Assistant.
- Elder Justice funding no cost extension was received. Funds are available through September 30th, 2023 and are focused on activities related to abuse and neglect.
- CARES funds expired at the end of September and were fully expended.
- We received a second round of APRA funding which is directed towards Assisted Living.
- Working to fill Medigap positions.

II. Equity & Inclusion

- Our on-site monitoring visit and report was completed with the Bureau of Equity and Inclusion (BEI). Received results from BEI and we are in compliance.
- The BOALTC Equity & Inclusion workgroup has regrouped and is planning our December staff in-service with a focus on wellness.

III. Long Term Care and Medicare

- Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for approximately 70

million Americans will increase 8.7 percent in 2023, the Social Security Administration announced. On average, Social Security benefits will increase by more than \$140 per month starting in January. At the same time, most Medicare beneficiaries will not have an increase in their Medicare premium in 2023.

IV. Other

- Regular meetings with DQA, DOA, OCI continue to occur.
- Legal consults with the programs are continuing while I cover the vacancy in the interim.
- Applied to the Leadership Council with Consumer Voice which is a national organization representing consumers in issues related to long-term care, helping to ensure that consumers are empowered to advocate for themselves. They also provide technical assistance for Ombudsman programs through NORC.
- Three staff graduated EMDA (enterprise management development academy).
- Two Board vacancies. Per our statute, member cannot have worked for long-term care provider in past five years, work for health insurance company or have other similar conflicts.

Comments from the Public

No comments from the public.

2023 Board meeting dates: February 8, 2023, May 4, 2023, August 2, 2023, November 1, 2023

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm M/S/C (Taylor/Surprise)

Respectfully submitted,
Vicki Tiedeman, Recorder