

**STATE OF WISCONSIN
BOARD ON AGING AND LONG TERM CARE
BOARD MEETING**

Wednesday, November 6, 2024

9:30 A.M.

In Person at:

DoubleTree Madison East

Two Lakes Ballroom

4402 E Washington Ave

Madison WI

Members Present: Dr. Marianne Bloch Mary Bouche Jackie Gordon
Abigail Lowery Tanya Meyer Dr. Valerie Palarski
Dr. Dale Taylor

Staff Present: Jessica Trudell Kim Marheine Kristen Johnson
Nick Lutes Rachel Selking Jenny Novey
Liza Morrow Kathi Miller Becky Mulhern
Kelly Gochenaur

Guests Present: Eric Grosso

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Dr. Valerie Palarski called the meeting to order at 9:32 am. It was noted that this meeting was properly noticed under the Open Meetings Notice Law. Board members and staff completed introductions.

2. Change to Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

3. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as submitted. M/S/C (Meyer/Gordon)

4. Approval of Minutes from August 28, 2024

The minutes from August 28, 2024 Board Meeting were approved as presented.
M/S/C (Gordon/Lowery)

5. Aging Demographics in the State of Wisconsin – *Eric Grosso, Demographer, Department of Health Services, Bureau of Aging & Disability Resources*

Mr. Grosso presented on the aging and long-term care demographics in the State of Wisconsin, highlighting census data and population projections. He explained that the aging population is growing faster than the general population, and it will continue to grow as all Baby Boomers are now 60+ and the oldest Gen Xers will turn 60 in 2025.

There was a discussion about similar trends in other states, a decrease in the 60+ population in nursing homes, and disability rates by age demographic. Mr. Grosso confirmed that, in general, the population trends found in Wisconsin are the same as those throughout the western hemisphere. The disability rate data comes from binary yes/no census questions and are self-reported; there are planned changes to the census questions, but those changes have been tabled due to the need for more research and discussion.

6. Ombudsman Complaint Management Process & Referrals – *Becky Mulhern, Ombudsman Services Supervisor, and Rachel Selking, Asst. Ombudsman Services Supervisor*

Ms. Mulhern and Ms. Selking presented on the ombudsman complaint management process and referrals. In their presentation, they summarized the intake, investigation, and resolution steps of the process while highlighting the need to obtain client consent and encourage self-advocacy.

Following their presentation, there was a discussion about Resident Councils, the role of family members or guardians in complaint resolution, and enforcement authority. Volunteer ombudsmen typically attend Resident Council meetings, which are required in nursing homes and are often found in some form in assisted living facilities. The resident is the focus in complaint resolution; family members may bring complaints, but the ombudsman will always go back to the resident to determine what the resident wants. Ombudsmen are not mandatory reporters and rely on resources such as the Division of Quality Assurance (DQA), which regulates nursing homes, for enforcement. They need consent from the resident in order to report complaints.

7. IRIS and Family Care Update – *Kathi Miller, IRIS Ombudsman Lead, and Kelly Gochenaur, Managed Care Lead*

Ms. Miller and Ms. Gochenaur presented an IRIS and Family Care update, including an overview of the Unwinding Task Force, trends for the Family Care and IRIS programs over the past year, feedback from clients, and a review of the 2024 Wisconsin Self-Determination Conference.

There was a discussion on the next steps for the Unwinding Task Force, which is now Healthcare Partner Engagement. Ms. Gochenaur explained that the group will continue to be coordinated by the communications team at DHS and will complete work similar to that of the task force, but the focus will no longer be solely on unwinding and the Medicaid enrollment process.

8. Comments from the Public

Chair Dr. Valerie Palarski called for public comments. There were no comments from members of the public.

9. Public Records Training for Board Members – *Kristen Johnson, Counsel to the Board*

Attorney Johnson provided public records training for the board members. In the training, she reviewed the board members' responsibilities, defined a public record, described best practices for records retention, and explained how to recognize and respond to a public records request.

10. Management Program Updates

- **Nick Lutes, Medigap Helpline Services Supervisor**

Mr. Lutes provided an update on the Medigap program, including the status of personnel, Medigap helpline data reporting, education and outreach, and Medicare and related insurance trends.

Following his presentation, Mr. Lutes was asked to expand on the changes to the coverage phases for Medicare Part D, the availability of SeniorCare in Wisconsin, and the Medicare Part B enrollment requirement changes for new retirees.

- **Liza Morrow, Volunteer Services Supervisor**

Ms. Morrow shared updates for the Volunteer Ombudsman Program, including updates on personnel, volunteers, outreach efforts, ongoing trainings, and the assisted living pilot project.

There was a discussion on the timeline for the assisted living pilot project expansion. Ms. Morrow confirmed that the expansion is already underway and anticipated adding other areas in the spring of next year.

- **Kim Marheine, State Long Term Care Ombudsman**

Ms. Marheine presented updates for the Ombudsman Program, including personnel status, issue advocacy work, education and outreach efforts, and the monitoring of rules and regulations/facility monitoring and consultations. She also announced the agency's application for a grant from the Inclusa Foundation. If awarded, the grant would pilot a project position for a Resident Advocacy Specialist that will support volunteer development in three counties and help to meet federal facility visit standards.

- **Kristen Johnson, Counsel to the Board**

Attorney Johnson updated the board on her efforts in supporting and advising the programs and the Executive Director. She noted that the 2025 Inauguration for the Wisconsin legislature is scheduled for January 6, and she summarized two recent court cases, including Evers v. Marklein in Wisconsin and a lawsuit related to the minimum staffing standards rule for nursing homes. Attorney Johnson additionally highlighted two recently released reports concerning aging and long-term care.

- **Jessica L. Trudell, Executive Director, Administrative Report**

Ms. Trudell presented an update on agency staffing and staff support, the current and FY25-27 budget, and ongoing advocacy work. She announced that the Board on Aging and Long Term Care will be receiving another grant of Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) funds. Jessica is also working to restart the Wisconsin Working Interdisciplinary Network of Guardian Support (WINGS) group with administrative assistance from Corporate Guardians.

Ms. Trudell requested approval to attend Envision Green Bay's Strategic Foresight Training, the 2024 FOCUS Conference, and the 2025 State Ombudsman Conference. There was a discussion on the cost and the benefits of the training.

The board approved Ms. Trudell's attendance at the above-listed conferences and training. M/S/C (Lowery/Gordon)

11. Approval of Budget Documents

Board members reviewed a draft letter for each of them to send to Governor Evers in support of the Board on Aging and Long Term Care's 2025-2027 Biennial Budget request.

There was a discussion about also having the option to send personalized letters. Attorney Johnson asked for board members to send any personalized letters to her for review prior to mailing them on Monday, November 11.

The budget documents were approved as presented. M/S/C (Taylor/Meyer)

12. Approval of Meeting Dates for 2025

There was a discussion on quarterly meeting dates for the 2025 board meetings. The following dates were approved: February 18, May 14, August 13, and November 5.

M/S/C (Taylor/Bloch)

10. Board Business – Dr. Valerie Palarski, Chair

- **Other topics or presenters Board members would like at future meetings**

Ms. Trudell suggested scheduling a future presentation on Resident Councils, including an overview of how they work in nursing homes and assisted living facilities and what role the Volunteer Ombudsman Program has in the meetings.

Ms. Gordon recommended inviting Devon Christianson from the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Brown County to provide an overview of ADRC services and the Envision Green Bay training.

Ms. Lowery suggested a presentation on WINGS, and Ms. Trudell offered to see if the American Bar would have anyone available who could share how it works in other states.

Ms. Meyer proposed a future presentation on the limitations of guardianship when it comes to the work of ombudsmen.

- **Other issues to come before the Chair**

No other issues to report.

- **Next meeting dates**

February 18th, May 14th, August 13th, and November 5th

11. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 2:16 p.m. M/S/C (Gordon/Meyer)

Respectfully submitted,
Jenny Novey, Recorder