

Board of Directors Meeting
Board on Aging and Long Term Care
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
February 9, 2022

Chair Tanya Meyer called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. It was noted that this meeting was properly noticed under the Open Meetings Notice law.

Members Present: James Surprise Dr. Dale Taylor Barbara Bechtel
Tanya Meyer Michael Brooks Abigail Lowery
Dr. Valerie Palarski

Staff Present: Heather Bruemmer Kellie Miller Vicki Buchholz
Jessica Trudell Vicki Tiedeman Rachel Selking
Jill Helgeson Joan Schmitz Mary LeMay
Kathi Miller Kim Versteegen Victoria Meyer
Melani Quarles Steve Shapiro Hanna Luckasson
Mary Jane Ripp Christy Rohrmayer Sharon Cline
Gina Singletery Mary Mckeown Sheryl Meyer
Kim Marheine Vi Quang Amy Zabransky

Guests Present: Taylore Ransom, Human Resources Specialist, Department of Administration
Nick Wittwer, Equity Inclusion Specialist, Department of Administration

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

Minutes: Minutes of the August 4, 2021, board meeting were approved as presented M/S/C (Taylor/Brooks)

Presenter:

Medigap Helpline Program COVID-19 Response and Open Enrollment Discussion:

Medigap Helpline Program staff presented on the following:

- Preparation and training for AEP, Annual Enrollment Period.
- System changes and reports.
- Part D plan changes and reeducating callers.
- Commercial advertisements confusing consumers.
- Unsolicited phone calls after consumer requesting information.
- Covid-19 impacts: loss of job, early retirement, changes in healthcare services.
- Counseling trends: Medicare Advantage inquiries, return to supplement plans, complications with expenses or providers.
- BadgerCare Plus and Medicaid extended during public health emergency.
- Complaint tracking module, OCI Compliant process, Medicare Advantage and RX access.

Equity and Inclusion Agency Discussion:

Jessica Trudell, Equity and Inclusion Officer and the BOALTC Equity and Inclusion Survey Workgroup presented on the status of the BOALTC Equity and Inclusion Plan which runs from through June 30, 2023. Goals were set in three areas: Recruitment, Retention and Culture and progress updates were given in each goal area. The Equity and Inclusion survey workgroup administered a staff survey. Information gathered will be used to better inform the 2023-2026 Equity and Inclusion agency plan.

Program updates:

Volunteer Services Update, Ms. Miller, Volunteer Services Supervisor

Ms. Miller reported on the following:

General Volunteer Ombudsman Program updates:

Seven formal nominations were submitted for the 2022 Louise Abrahams Yaffe Volunteer Ombudsman Program Award. The Executive Board members will review the nominations and select the award recipient.

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.

The January 2022 virtual in-service for the Volunteer Ombudsmen was on Covid -19 updates from Public Health.

Volunteers are attending virtual and in-person Resident Council meetings.

Outreach/Recruitment:

Public Service Announcements with local media including radio have increased awareness for the need of Volunteer Ombudsmen. The results of the recruitment efforts have been steady with interested respondents. The Volunteer Ombudsman Program is now tracking the time invested in recruiting, screening, and training potential volunteers.

An in-person initial training was conducted for the Milwaukee region in November, adding two volunteers to the area. We welcome our new volunteers, and express thanks to the trainers.

Volunteer Ombudsman Program Staff:

Volunteer Ombudsman Program staff met virtually with the newest Regional Ombudsman in December to discuss the Volunteer Ombudsman Program.

The Volunteer Services Supervisor presented the Wisconsin Volunteer Ombudsman Program standards to the National Long Term Care Ombudsman Volunteer Management Network during

the Technical Assistance Talk in December. Over 200 participants were in attendance for this virtual presentation.

The Volunteer Ombudsman Program staff routinely attend relevant educational sessions and webinars provided by the Department of Health Services.

Jessica Trudell, Counsel to the Board, Program and Legislative Updates

Program support

I continue to support and advise our three programs as well as assist the Executive Director as needed.

Legislation

Wisconsin

SB103/2021 Wisconsin Act 88

Requires MA to cover wheelchairs or power mobility devices for residents in a nursing home. To be covered, the device must be medically necessary and be prescribed by a physician. The device must contribute to the resident's independent completion of activities of daily living, support the resident's occupational, vocational, or psychosocial activities, or provide the resident with the independent ability to move about the facility or attain or retain self-care. Signed by the Governor.

Voting, LRB-5269, LRB-4680

Bills introduced would limit who can identify as an indefinitely confined voter, would require photo ID or the last four digits of a social security number and would not allow this status due to reasons linked to the pandemic. Penalty could include up to a \$1,000 fine or up to six months in jail. This proposal would also specify under which circumstances special voting deputies can enter a nursing home during a public health emergency.

Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)

Wisconsin increased reimbursement rates by 5% for HCBS services provided to Wisconsin's Medicaid programs, funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). These increases took effect January 1, 2022, and will run through March 31, 2024 and are in combination with funding increases provided in the 21-23 budget. Rate increases were also provided for nursing homes in the 19-21 and 21-23 budgets, funded through the CARES Act.

Federal

Infrastructure

President Biden signed a \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill into law. This bill focuses on more traditional infrastructure (roads, bridges, railroads). Agreement still needs to be made on the budget to fund these programs. Negotiations on social infrastructure programs (education, health care, childcare) continues.

No Surprises Act

Goes into effect January 2022 and limits surprise medical bills for out-of-network care in emergency settings or from out-of-network providers at in-network facilities. Limits a patient's payments to the same coinsurance they have for in-network care and requires providers to negotiate and bill the insurance company directly instead of the patient.

Nursing home data

Beginning January 26, 2022, CMS began posting additional information the Care Compare website, including staff turnover and weekend staffing.

Medigap Helpline Update, Ms. Buchholz, Medigap Helpline Services Supervisor

Ms. Buchholz reported on the following:

Medigap Outcomes

The Medigap Data Report shows 8,962 persons contacted the Medigap helpline for assistance. We had another 909 in December to bring the total to 9,871. During the last Quarter of 2021 (Annual Enrollment Period), the Medigap Helpline had an overall call volume of 3,541 with actual assessments uploaded to CMS of 3,748 which shows more than one person helped on many calls.

Outreach Events

Counselors participated in 29 Outreach events in 2021, reaching 4,010 added persons. Included some press releases on Topics of interest to Wisconsin's Beneficiaries. I.e: Consumer Alerts; Medicare Advantage Trial Periods; and Covid and Medicare coverage. The rest of the events were Virtual Events with different entities, presentation to consumer groups, trainings for other advocates, participation in the SHIP's National Medicare Virtual Fair. Medigap has already had three events in 2022.

Complaint Tracking Module with CMS

There have been an overwhelming number of complaints the helpline has filed to help beneficiary disenroll or fix their enrollment issues. 37 have been filed with 33 had resolutions in favor of the Beneficiary.

OCI/BOALTC Quarterly Meetings

Will be starting new for 2022 after the past year of monthly meetings with their staff to discuss issues/trends about healthcare coverage in Wisconsin. Medigap has a committee developing updated reports to identify the information OCI finds helpful regarding trends.

Prepping for Future Needs

Participating in the "Unwinding Task Group" with DHS/OCI which is formed to prepare for the end of the Public Health Emergency (PHE) and Medicaid reviews. Will have impact on Medicaid beneficiaries who have not had a review since their Medicare began thus may no longer be eligible for Medicaid benefits. Counselors are preparing for the increase in calls this may bring to the helpline.

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

Ombudsman Program Updates:

Issue Advocacy/Facility Monitoring

- The program's annual data has been submitted to the Administration on Aging; the data was consistent with expectations, given the second full year of operating under the pandemic and in consideration for the number of new staff onboarded during the monitoring period.
- Nursing home and assisted living closures continue to be managed at a higher than typical level as compared to years past. Insufficient staffing appears to be the most frequently stated reason for closure, at times combined with financial stress.
- Inadequate provider capacity remains the most consistent complaint as concerns Family Care clients, often made more significant by facility closure.
- Significant gains have been made in advocacy complaints about the lack of accountability on behalf of residents living in 1-2 bed Adult Family Homes.
- Provider requests for education have been received regarding topics of preventing abuse and misappropriation, rights related to the pandemic response, and rights related to decisions of risk.

Monitoring of Rules & Regulations

- Fourteen Immediate Jeopardy cites (as compared to 20 in the previous reporting period) have been noted since the October Board meeting.
- Since the last Board meeting the Ombudsman Program has received an increase in complaints related to the use of cameras and other surveillance devices, staffing and care, discharges, and staff attitudes, in both nursing homes and assisted living communities.
- Family Care and IRIS staff continue to monitor changes to new contracts as well as DHS plans for resuming usual work under the Medicaid program for persons in Family Care and IRIS.

Administrative Report and Program Updates: Ms. Bruemmer, Executive Director/State Ombudsman

Ms. Bruemmer reported on the following:

Financial updates and Personnel

- The fiscal 2022 year began July 1, 2021, and the agency's budget is on track.
- The Stevens Point office closed December 31, 2021. The only lease the agency holds is the Central Office in Madison.

Program updates

- The ED has been appointed as the Patient Care Ombudsman by the Honorable Catherine J. Furay, from the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Western District of Wisconsin, to monitor six assisted living facilities. The Patient Care Ombudsman work will be monitoring the homes for the next two years according to the court documents. The ED was appointed September 10, 2021, as the Patient Care Ombudsman by the Honorable Catherine J. Furay for an additional two assisted living facilities.
- The ED is serving on the “Dementia Summit” steering committee and actively engaged on the committee by co-leading the facility-based subgroup. The meetings are all virtual and the activity and involvement has increased these past couple of months.
- The ED is working with management on the re-entry plan and reviewing daily for our long-term care homes and community based services, Volunteer Ombudsman Program, and our Central Office. We monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and evaluate program work daily in accordance with the Department of Health Services Public Health guidance and the Centers of Disease Control.
- The ED participated in the virtual Consumer Voice Conference November 3-5, 2021, and State Ombudsman meetings. The ED and Ombudsman Program staff participated in the annual Department of Health Services “FOCUS” Conference virtually November 15-18th, 2021.
- The ED is working with the Department of Administration Human Resources in establishing a new performance evaluation process for the agency.
- The agency’s website will be launched soon as the details are being finalized.
- The ED and the OSS Supervisor met with the Connecticut Ombudsman Program and a group of legislators to discuss the WI Family Care Program as they have interest to pursue “Home and Community Based Services” for consumers within their state.

Comments from the Public

No comments from the public.

Nominating Committee

Dr. Palarski presented the Nominating Committee’s slate of candidates to the Board in compliance with the bylaws:

Chair- Michael Brooks

Vice Chair- James Surprise

Secretary- Abigail Lowery

The slate of nominees was approved unanimously by voice vote by the members of the Board, with no one opposed and no abstentions. Present:
Brooks/Meyer/Lowery/Taylor/Bechtel/Palarski/Surprise

New business: No new business.

2022 Board meeting dates: May 11, August 3rd, October 26th

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm M/S/C (Brooks/Surprise)

Respectfully submitted,
Vicki Tiedeman, Recorder