

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

**Wednesday, August 28, 2024**

**9:30 A.M.**

**In Person at:**

DoubleTree Madison East

Two Lakes Ballroom

4402 E Washington Ave

Madison WI

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

<b>Staff Present:</b>	Jessica Trudell	Kim Marheine	Kristen Johnson
	Nick Lutes	Rachel Selking	Jenny Novey
	Liza Morrow	Kathi Miller	Becky Mulhern

<b>Guests Present:</b>	Travis Martin	Cory Stinebrink	Janet Zander
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**1. Welcome and Call to Order**

Chair Dr. Valerie Palarski called the meeting to order at 9:34 am. It was noted that this meeting was properly noticed under the Open Meetings Notice Law.

Dr. Palarski introduced Dr. Marianne Bloch as the newest member of the Board and shared her bio. 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 (Bouche/Taylor)

**4. Approval of Minutes from May 8, 2024**

The minutes from the May 8, 2024 Board Meeting were approved as presented.  
M/S/C (Bouche/Taylor)

**5. State Aging Priorities, Legislative and Biennial Budget Process** – *Janet Zander, Advocacy & Public Policy Coordinator, MPA, CSW, Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, Inc.*

Ms. Zander presented on the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN), its 2025-2026 priorities, the legislative process, and the state budget timeline.

Some discussion was had. Ms. Zander confirmed that the state family caregiver support program could be expanded to include other groups of caregivers in addition to caregivers for Alzheimer's patients but cautioned that funds may run out. Ms. Zander explained that the request for increase in funding for home-delivered meals is largely due to a loss of federal funding and an increase in food costs. The primary way to deliver food has been through volunteers and contracted drivers, but there has been a struggle to recruit volunteers post-Covid.

Ms. Zander explained that post-COVID, everyone on the meal distribution list was reassessed, and some had to come off the meal list.

Ms. Zander explained that food is not delivered to homeless shelters, but the shelter residents are encouraged to go to congregate sites.

Concerning WAAN's priority of transportation support, Ms. Zander explained that WAAN is partnering with public transportation in some rural areas, and the transportation coordination committee meets at the local level to coordinate.

**6. Systems Advocacy Report** – *Kim Marheine, State Long Term Care Ombudsman*

Ms. Marheine presented on systems advocacy planning for the ombudsman program. She reviewed the history of the ombudsman program, Wisconsin's advocacy timeline, and the people who are served, and she discussed systems advocacy strategies, actions, priorities, and plans.

Ms. Gordon asked for more information on who is involved in resolving complaints after they are submitted, and Ms. Bouche asked if guardians were able to represent the residents. Ms. Marheine explained that not all complaints are shared with the ombudsman, but there is a clear process for managing those complaints that do come to them. Ms. Marheine suggested scheduling a future presentation to the board on the complaint resolution process.

## **7. Comments from the Public**

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

## **8. BOALTC 25-27 Biennial Budget Proposal** – *Jessica L. Trudell, Executive Director and Kim Marheine, State Long Term Care Ombudsman, Board on Aging and Long Term Care*

Ms. Trudell and Ms. Marheine presented the Board on Aging and Long Term Care's 25-27 biennial budget proposal. After providing background on the agency's mission, mandates and standards, demographics of people served, staff needs assessment, and the overall budget process, they shared highlights from the proposed budget, including new position requests, a review of funding, and anticipated next steps.

There was discussion of how the client-to-ombudsman ratio compares to the national minimum ratio. Ms. Trudell explained that the national minimum ratio is 1 ombudsman: 2,000 clients, and Wisconsin currently has a ratio of 1 ombudsman: 6,600 clients. The ratio includes regional ombudsmen assigned to long-term care homes across the state. Ms. Marheine commented that volunteers are assigned a single facility; not all ombudsmen are able to make quarterly visits to each facility, so they rely heavily on their volunteers in the counties that have them.

Dr. Palarski expressed support for the proposed Program & Policy Analyst position and suggested that it would greatly improve agency advocacy efforts. She also recommended that the proposed Communications Specialist could consider implementing and overseeing the use of AI in intake and spreading the message to the aging population. Dr. Taylor recognized the current effectiveness of BOALTC's advocacy and influence despite not having any full-time staff to meet with legislators and advocate in the capitol.

The BOALTC 25-27 biennial budget was approved as presented. M/S/C  
(Bouche/Meyer)

## **9. 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.

Ms. Bouche asked if people could call the Medigap helpline for guidance if they missed the Medicaid enrollment period. Mr. Lutes confirmed that they could call and suggested that the first step would be to reapply. The county benefits specialist could also assist.

Ms. Meyer asked if the Medigap staff are seeing beneficiaries enroll in plans that do not cover the area in which they live. Mr. Lutes affirmed that Medigap staff were receiving calls related to this issue.

- **Liza Morrow, Volunteer Services Supervisor**

Ms. Morrow presented on updates for the Volunteer Ombudsman Program, including updates on personnel, volunteers, outreach efforts, ongoing trainings, and the assisted living pilot project. She also announced that the Volunteer Ombudsman Program received a Certificate of Commendation from Governor Evers in recognition of its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Some discussion was had about the differences between the volunteer program in assisted living facilities and other long-term care facilities. Ms. Morrow explained that there are similarities between the facilities, but some differences that volunteers have noted include closed doors and residents out-and-about more.

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

Ms. Marheine shared an update on recruitment, the current level of ombudsman casework, ongoing issue advocacy work, education and outreach efforts, and the monitoring of rules and regulations/facility monitoring and consultations.

Discussion was had on the most common immediate jeopardy (IJ) cites and the impact staffing and turnover has had on the level of IJ cites.

- **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 Wisconsin legislature is not currently in session and summarized two recent federal legislations involving minimum staffing standards in nursing homes and the final rule implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Attorney Johnson additionally provided an overview of two recent court rulings: Priorities

USA v. Wisconsin Elections Commission 2024AP164 (Wisconsin Supreme Court) and Relentless v. Department of Commerce & Loper Bright v. Raimondo (United States Supreme Court).

There were no questions or comments following Attorney Johnson's report.

- **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 also announced that the board is now fully staffed with the addition of Dr. Bloch.

There were no questions or comments following Ms. Trudell's report.

**10. Board Business** – *Dr. Valerie Palarski, Chair*

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

Ms. Marheine suggested scheduling a future presentation to the board on the ombudsman program's complaint resolution process.

Ms. Trudell recommended inviting someone from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services to attend a future meeting to explain the aging demographic maps and data.

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

No other issues to report.

- **Next meeting dates**

November 6<sup>th</sup>

**11. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m. M/S/C (Bouche/Bloch)

Respectfully submitted,  
Jenny Novey, Recorder