

**Board of Directors Meeting**  
Board on Aging and Long Term Care  
Virtual Meeting via Blue Jeans  
October 28, 2020

This meeting was held virtually over Blue Jeans in accordance with Governor Evers' Executive Order #90 and Emergency Order #8 of Public Health Madison & Dane County.

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

**Newly Appointed Member:** Abigail Lowery (pending confirmation)

**Staff Present:** Heather Bruemmer                  Kellie Miller                  Vicki Buchholz  
Jessica Trudell                                  Vicki Tiedeman                  Jill Helgeson  
Kim Marheine                                  Kayla Smith

**Guests Present:** Kevin Coughlin, Policy Initiative Advisor- Executive, Department of Health Services, Division of Medicaid Services

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

**Minutes:** Minutes of the August 05, 2020 board meeting were approved as presented. M/S/C (Taylor/Brooks)

**Open Records Training for Board Members:**

Jessica Trudell, Counsel to the Board, Board on Aging and Long Term Care completed and reviewed the mandatory 2020 public records training video provided by the Department of Administration for Board members in attendance.

**Program Updates:**

**Kevin Coughlin**, Policy Initiative Advisor- Executive, Department of Health Services, Division of Medicaid Services

WisCaregiver Career Program

- Received more than \$2.3 million to implement this new program
- Designed to encourage 3,000 Wisconsinites to enter caregiver careers
- 2017-2020
- 11 technical colleges (T/C) with approved nurse aide training programs (NATPs)
- 17 nursing homes with approved NATPs

- 10 private training programs
- 309 nursing home participants who agreed to pay a \$500 retention bonus
- 2218 students tested
- 1097 students employed

#### Wisconsin Coalition for Collaborative Excellence in Assisted Living (WCCEAL)

- 2020-2022
- Applicants - Wisconsin Health Care Association and LeadingAge WI
- \$400,000 in Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) funds
- \$255,375 in Civil Money Penalty (CMP) funds
- Partnership with the FoodShare Employment & Training (FSET)
- Free training, free testing and a \$500 retention bonus after 6 months in a participating nursing home
- Encourage and support more approved CNA training programs
- Create marketing videos for FSET Agencies and nursing home employers
- Recruit 500 FSET participants to work in Wisconsin nursing homes
- Create legacy relationships between nurse aide training programs and FSET agencies
- Ending the fifth of our five-year \$1,000,000 Wisconsin Partnership Grant. One-year extension through 12/31/2021.
- New Gold Membership Status
- Division of Medicaid Services Pay for Performance
- 2020 – Virtual Quality Summit; 2021 two-day in-person Quality Summit
- Two pilot projects
- Coming soon – Division of Quality Assurance (DQA) Quality Survey to all Assisted Living
- Pilot #1 – Free one-year trial of eQuality to any licensed ALC
- Pilot #2 – Open Association free one-year membership to two ALCs per association that are not currently members of any association.

#### Cycling Without Age

- First US chapter, 2015, at Miravida Living, Oshkosh
- State with most chapters and most trishaws
- Host of the first CWA Americas Summit, Oshkosh WI 2018
- Invented in 2012 in Copenhagen
- Represented in 50 countries
- 2,200 chapter locations
- 3,000 trishaws
- 33,000 trained cycle pilots
- Over 1.5 million people served
- Oldest pilot is 90 (Jørgen Hass, Denmark) and oldest passengers (Madam Yeo lu, Singapore, and Dagny Carlsson, Sweden, both 107)

## **Volunteer Services Update, Ms. Miller, Volunteer Services Supervisor**

Ms. Miller gave program updates:

October is recognized as Residents Rights Month. It is an annual event designated by the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long Term Care to honor residents living in all long-term care facilities and consumers receiving services in their home or community. It is a time for celebration and recognition offering an opportunity for every facility to focus on and celebrate awareness of dignity, respect, and the value of each individual resident.

In accordance with celebrating Residents Rights Month and to stay connected with the residents in their nursing homes; the Volunteer Ombudsman Program staff implemented a huge resident centered advocacy project. A bulk mailing of rights and voting information was printed, collated, and assembled into packets for 4,549 residents and sent to 84 nursing homes supported by the Volunteer Ombudsman Program.

The packets for the residents included:

- Personal letters to the residents highlighting Residents Rights, including their right to vote in the upcoming election. The letters contained a photo of their Volunteer Ombudsman from their Volunteer Ombudsman and the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Voting Rights press release composed by Ms. Jessica Trudell, Legal Counsel to the Board
- Laminated Resident Rights cards from the Board on Aging and Long Term Care
- Cover letter to each facility explaining the packets

Heartfelt thanks goes to the Volunteer Coordinators; Ms. Kim Verstegen, Ms. Sheryl Meyer, Ms. Jenny Knudson, Ms. Mary LeMay and Ms. Amy Zabransky for the abundant number of hours spent assembling the packets and delivering them to the Madison office to be mailed out.

The annual October Residents Rights in-services for the Volunteer Ombudsmen are being conducted virtually via conference calls. The Volunteer Coordinators and the Regional Ombudsmen are using an interactive game of Residents Rights BINGO to discuss Residents Rights with the Volunteer Ombudsmen in all regions.

Virtual meetings and conference calls are planned and conducted monthly in all regions for the Volunteer Ombudsmen. The Volunteer Ombudsmen continue to state how much they appreciate staying connected through the Individual and group calls. The Volunteer Ombudsmen look forward to the time together, receiving beneficial information provided and hearing the updates about their nursing home assignment(s) and the residents.

Many thanks to Megan Barwick, Funeral Director from Milwaukee County and Christine Mickelson, Funeral Director from Dane County for presenting during the August and September virtual volunteer meetings. The Directors presented information on what a day in the life of a funeral director, what to know before planning a funeral and how COVID 19 has impacted their work.

The Volunteer Coordinators continue to make monthly follow up calls to each nursing home in their region. The calls with the nursing home administration have been instrumental in many facilities implementing virtual resident council meetings. The participation in the virtual

meetings by the Volunteer Ombudsman and the Volunteer Coordinator are consistent with the Volunteer Ombudsman Program expectations and goals.

The virtual resident council meetings have been very well received by the residents who have participated. The nursing homes use a variety of methods for conducting the meetings. Some meetings are simply conducted by telephone, but many meetings are much more interactive by using an iPad or laptop allowing the residents and the volunteers see each other. The meeting might be set up with residents in a small group (social distanced wearing masks) or the meeting takes place resident room to resident room. Many of the residents are speaking up during their meeting and sharing concerns with their Volunteer Ombudsman. Residents' concerns are reported to the Regional Ombudsman. The overall reaction of the residents and volunteers is happiness to see each other and have some interaction during this unprecedented time.

We have had a few volunteer retirements this last month, leaving 89 volunteers on the VOP rosters. Several potential volunteers have expressed an interest in the program in all regions. Screening is per usual with phone calls and forms sent out prior to the mandatory training.

The Volunteer Ombudsman Program continues to participate in weekly Department of Health Services (DHS) /Division of Quality Assurance (DQA) webinars, weekly Consumer Voice Webinars, and other webinars related to our work and new way of life. We have also invited the Volunteer Ombudsmen to participate in relevant webinars. Several Volunteer Ombudsmen have been able to join in the shared webinars and appreciated the opportunity.

The VOP staff participated in virtual all staff in-services conducted August 19 and September 22 and 23, 2020.

VOP staff are registered to attend the FOCUS conference on a virtual platform. The conference takes place this November.

### **Legislative and program updates, Ms. Trudell, Counsel to the Board**

Jessica Trudell, Counsel to the Board, Program updates

#### Program support

A lot of our work continues to be focused on the pandemic and COVID-19 related changes and response. Counsel to the Board continues to support and advise BOALTC's three programs as well as assist the Executive Director as needed.

- Medigap publications (Annual Medicare enrollment)
- Background checks for Volunteer Ombudsman Program and Medigap volunteers
- Review contracts
- Review policies and procedures
- Website work
- Hiring, interviews and onboarding

## Legislation

Legislation on both federal and state level is quiet for long-term care. State legislature has not met since April 2020 when coronavirus related legislation was passed.

Governor's public health declaration and mask order (Emergency Order #90) survived challenge so far. Governor's 25% indoor capacity order (EO #3) is on hold due to an appeals court ruling. State and federal election will occur on November 3rd. BOALTC continues to provide support and advocacy to ensure residents have access to voting. Assisted by creating voting publication, assisted VOP with materials send out to Nursing Homes for Resident Rights month.

## Equity and Inclusion plan

Equity and Inclusion plan was submitted to the Bureau of Equity and Inclusion for review. Final plan is due at the end of December. Governor Ever's Executive Order #59 requires State agencies to develop and implement equity and inclusion action plans designed to recruit and retain a diverse workforce and promote an inclusive work culture.

All state employees are required to complete "Moving Beyond Compliance" e-learning by the end of the year to bring greater understanding and awareness to diversity, equity and inclusion issues. We will continue to provide diversity training within the agency and through DOA offerings. Supervisors also completed a "Microaggressions, Unconscious Bias and Inclusion" training.

## Public Records and Records Management

September in-service was focused on public records and records management. Dr. David Clark from UW-Milwaukee presented on technical writing. Assistant Attorney General Paul Ferguson with the Department of Justice Office of Open Government gave an overview of public records and open meetings laws. Counsel to the Board followed up with agency specifics regarding confidentiality of our work, public records, and records management. Five hours total training was provided on these topics.

All employees are also required to complete the 2020 Public Records Training e-learning by the end of the year.

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

Ms. Buchholz reported on the following:

### A. Call Volumes:

Estimated counts for the Medigap Helpline January through 2020 is currently at 6722, compared to 2019 counts of 7281. This does not consider the delay Wellsky database had with exporting records to Administration of Community Living (ACL).

### B. COVID-19:

COVID-19 calls continue to be one of the issues reported by counselors. As of October 24th, staff have identified 385 calls that relate to the COVID-19 health crisis. The numbers have been

steady as beneficiaries are making decisions to retire or lose their employment due to closures. Transition issues or an inability to get family members into facilities or the inability to see family members has also been concerning.

C. Complaint Tracking Module (CTM):

Medigap staff continue to help various beneficiaries with erroneous enrollments into Medicare Advantage plans or Prescription Drug plans. In some cases, we filed complaints through the CTM program so that both CMS and the plan may correct the situation. We are usually successful in helping the beneficiaries.

D. Outreach:

Due to the Pandemic, all outreach has been cancelled or rescheduled into 2021. We have participated in the Fall Medicare Professional Training which was held virtually. We have also participated in events for the Volunteer Ombudsman, Elder & Disability benefit specialist trainings, as well as being invited to have a virtual outreach event with a couple consumer groups about Medicare.

E. Trends:

Planfinder issues have been ongoing thus far this Annual Enrollment Period (AEP). The first few weeks usually have issues and corrections in the planfinder tool, however this year there are still reports of inconsistencies in the planfinder which makes the information unreliable. For those persons who are running them themselves, we encourage them to wait until mid-November for the inconsistencies to be worked out. Use of NDC# for prescriptions has also caused major price discrepancies from what is seen on the planfinder and the actual cost of the prescriptions. We have seen prices as high as \$100 difference, and the tier limit does not void that price difference per Medicare.

Counselors have noted a trend in number of beneficiaries who are looking for premium pricing with supplemental policies. The current listing available from OCI does not help them understand the costs they are looking for compared to the premium and copays of an advantage plan. Websites are not providing this information to the beneficiaries, nor do they explain the differences between Medicare Supplements or Medicare Advantage plans. Beneficiaries may be able to use the Medicare.gov planfinder to identify supplements, but the site has not been consistent in pricing nor the companies listed.

**Ombudsman Services Update, Ms. Marheine, Ombudsman Services Supervisor**

Ms. Marheine reported on the following:

Ms. Marheine reported that complaints about lack of visitation continue to be the most frequent to the Ombudsman Program. CMS recently released mandates related to visitation of nursing home residents, but this appears to be a continuing area of disconnect between providers and other stakeholders, and are not easily resolved. Facility closures have also proven more challenging, and the agency is currently monitoring one large closure on behalf of residents with special needs, as well as other smaller closures with similar challenges of being able to retain enough staff to provide care until the closure is finalized, also noting the increasing difficulties in accessing local relocation options for moving residents.

Ombudsman staff are involved in several areas of issue advocacy, including several related to the pandemic response, but also relative to ensuring residents receive their rights related to voting. Ombudsmen continue to resolve complaints and provide oversight via virtual means.

Experiencing a higher than typical rate of resignations due to retirement, the recruitment and hiring process to get back to a full contingent of staffing is underway. Accommodations have been made to provide all onboarding by virtual means, in accordance with current ombudsman certification standards.

Comments from the Public:

Comments were heard from 1 individual, Sherry VH:

- Shared personal experiences regarding family in a long-term care community during COVID-19.
- Shared frustrations regarding visitation in long-term care communities during COVID-19 and the Ombudsman Program.

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

Ms. Bruemmer reported on the following:

**Financial updates and Personnel:**

The Department of Administration (DOA) Budget Director informed us of our required lapse of \$115,000 for the FY2021 budget.

The Agency's FY2021-2023 Biennial Budget was submitted to Governor Evers on September 15, 2020. The Governor will review all agency budgets and share his budget in early 2021.

The Agency staff continue to do a tremendous job with their work during the COVID-19 pandemic. They are working hard to connect with our consumers and provide the services they need. All staff are teleworking currently as we are following the Badger Bounce Back Plan.

We have provided virtual training for our staff each month and had a very successful September in-service. Ms. Trudell did an excellent job in coordinating the training and providing training to the staff.

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 ED has completed all six virtual tours and resident visitation.

The ED and the management team are working on our new website. Pigorsch Media is working with the team to develop a new logo, web-site enhancements, and an animated video to help consumers understand the Agency's programs. Completion is getting closer and our goal is to roll our new site out in mid to late January 2021.

The ED is serving on the “Dementia Summit” steering committee and actively engaged on the committee by co-leading the facility-based subgroup.

The ED chaired the September 8, 2020 Long Term Care Advisory Council. Full day meetings are now occurring.

The State Ombudsman Conference was attended virtually October 15th and 16th. Training Standards for the Ombudsman Program are due September 2021 per the Administration of Community Living.

The ED had the opportunity to meet with the Deputy Administrator at the Department of Health Services on September 11th to share and discuss the quality of life and care issues we are experiencing and hearing about in our long-term care facilities. The ED also shared the Medigap Helpline COVID-19 calls.

New business: No new business.

Next Board meeting date: February 10, 2021

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 12:15 pm M/S/C (Bechtel/Brooks)

Respectfully submitted,  
Vicki Tiedeman, Recorder