

**Board Meeting**  
Board on Aging and Long Term Care  
DoubleTree Madison East  
Two Lakes Ballroom  
4402 E Washington Ave  
Madison, WI  
November 10, 2023

<b>Members Present:</b>	Jackie Gordon Abigail Lowery	Dr. Dale Taylor Tanya Meyer	Dr. Valerie Palarski Mary Bouche
<b>Staff Present:</b>	Jessica Trudell Kristen Johnson Sheryl Meyer Kim Marheine	Vicki Buchholz Vicki Tiedeman Connie Inda Joan Schmitz	Debbie Walker Kathi Miller

**1. Welcome and Call to Order.**

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

**2. Changes to Agenda.**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**3. Agenda:**

Approval of agenda as submitted M/S/C (Meyer/Palarski)

**4. Minutes:**

Minutes of the August 2, 2023, board meeting approved as presented.  
M/S/C (Taylor/Palarski)

**5. Election of Vice Chairperson:**

Tanya Meyer was nominated and elected Vice Chairperson.  
M/S/C (Taylor/Palarski)

**6. Elder Abuse Initiatives at Department of Justice and Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources (GWAAR) – Mike Austin, DOJ; Doreen Goetsch, Abuse in Later Life Project Coordinator at GWAAR; Joanna Reinstein, Elder Abuse Hotline Coordinator at GWAAR**

- The Wisconsin End Abuse in Later Life Program Overview  
Awarded a 3-year grant in 2018 and a 3-year continuation grant in 2022.  
Major components to the grant:
  1. Training for professionals
  2. Victim Services
  3. Establishment or enhancement of a coordinated community response team
- Growth of Elder Abuse Hotline
  1. 2018 OVW Needs Based Assessment showed many older adults and professionals wanted an elder abuse hotline.

2. US DOJ's Office on Victim of Crime opened annual solicitation on enhancing technology for victims with a specific request for elder abuse hotline proposals.
3. Awarded \$440,000 for 3-years to work with the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources to implement the program.
4. Launched hotline with advertising campaign in May 2020 including the website: [www.ReportElderAbuseWI.org](http://www.ReportElderAbuseWI.org).

**7. Public Records Training for Board Members**

Attorney Johnson provided the mandatory annual Public Records Training for Board Members. All Board Members were present and completed the training.

**8. Comments from the Public**

Chairperson Abigail Lowery called for public comments. No comments from the public were made.

**9. The Intake Process - Debbie Walker, Medigap Intake Advocate; Connie Inda, Ombudsman Program Advocacy Specialist; Joan Schmitz, Ombudsman Lead**

Debbie Walker and Connie Inda, Intake staff for both the Medigap and Ombudsman Program helplines, presented information about their support to callers on the agency's 800 lines, and some of the trends in concerns reported by callers. Both programs have seen an increase in the number of calls, as well as the length of time it may take to resolve a call, given increasing complexity.

Joan Schmitz, Ombudsman Lead provided information about her experiences providing technical assistance to ombudsman staff. Ms. Schmitz echoed the trends and caller needs raised by other staff, and noted the ongoing work of the agency, one client at a time, in resolving increasingly complex casework.

**10. Management and Program Updates**

• **Vicki Buchholz, Medigap Helpline Services Supervisor:**

Ms. Buchholz provided an update on the Medigap Helpline Program. She indicated that overall numbers through August have been 4489 actual calls with 4784 assessments exported to CMS and that time per call is now averaging 44 minutes a call. Ms. Buchholz indicated that staff have been attending outreach events in person, with 26 events taking place. Staff has been targeting 24 counties which we have not been able to attend as far back as 2013. Additional counties will be targeted next year, in addition to maintaining several informational events in larger populated areas. Ms. Buchholz provided an update on complaint tracking modules with CMS, indicating 26 Complaint Tracking Modules have been filed: 17 successful and 9 not successful.

Ms. Buchholz provided the following additional information:

- CMS is making changes to marketing efforts with Advantage/Part D plans due to the many complaints sent across the nation.
- In September, the WI SHIP launched Digital Billboards which has our toll free 800 line listed as well as the DHS link as to where a person can find help which would direct to any number of options including us.

- Aspirus network has sent out notices to UHC beneficiaries stating they will no longer be able to use their network. This may cause issues for those who will not be able to change their coverage.
  - Elixir is dropping their PDP for 2024. Beneficiaries have been sent letters regarding this and explaining their rights. Most of these beneficiaries will be auto assigned to a new plan for January 1.
  - Social Security will have a 3.2 % benefit increase for 2024.
  - Clarification on D-SNP plans giving a 6 month “deemed eligible period” for those who lose Medicaid before their coverage ends. Questions on the copay structure then.
- **Liza Morrow, Volunteer Services Supervisor and Sheryl Meyer, Volunteer Coordinator**  
Ms. Morrow introduced herself to the Board and provided information on her background. Ms. Morrow expressed her excitement upon joining the agency.

Ms. Meyer provided an overview of volunteer services in the southeastern part of the state. Ms. Meyer spoke about some of the challenges of recruiting volunteers, as well as the increased resources and education opportunities available to volunteers and coordinators. Ms. Meyer also thanked BOALTC for the opportunity to be part of the most recently graduated EMDA class.

- **Kim Marheine, State Long Term Care Ombudsman**  
Ms. Marheine provided an update on current vacancies and recruitments and congratulated 2 staff who graduated from the EMDA program, and 2 staff who recently began their EMDA experience.

Several areas of issue advocacy currently being monitored included state and national conversations about the proposed minimum staffing standards in nursing homes; proposed legislative actions of impact to BOALTC consumers; Substance Abuse Disorder issues in long-term care settings; closures and resident relocations; Medicaid “Unwinding;” Patient Care Ombudsman monitoring of bankruptcies; roles in allegations of abuse and neglect. Ms. Marheine also noted staff efforts to monitor specific complaints and cites, and briefly discussed trends in ombudsman casework.

Also noted were numerous education opportunities offered by Ombudsman staff this fall, with presentations for most provider associations and several statewide conferences. As part of the FOCUS Conference, the Heather Bruemmer Award for Excellence will be awarded to nominated assisted living providers.

- **Kristen Johnson, Counsel to the Board:**  
Attorney Johnson provided updates on Equity and Inclusion efforts of the agency, informing the Board that the 2024-2026 Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan was submitted on October 25, 2023. Attorney Johnson anticipates the EI Workgroup will present the plan to the Board at the February 2024 meeting.  
Attorney Johnson provided legislative updates as follows:

Wisconsin:

- County of Residence for Care Management Organization Facility Placements – Assembly Bill 242 (passage unanimously recommended by committee on 6-6-23) and Senate Bill 248 (introduced on 4-20-23, public hearing on 9-21-23)
- 100-day Prescription Drug Supplies under SeniorCare – Assembly Bill 259 (introduced 5-8-23) and Senate Bill 263 (Passed by full Senate and messaged to the Assembly 9-14-23)
- Notification of Certain Facility Closures, Changes in Services or Reimbursement Accepted, and MCO Contract Termination – Assembly Bill 162 (introduced 4-10-23) and Senate Bill 155 (introduced 4-3-23, public hearing on 9-20-23)  
BOALTC assisted the Survival Coalition in reviewing comments that were submitted for the public hearing held on September 20, 2023.
- Patients’ and Residents’ Rights to Visitors in a Health Care Facility, Restricting Visitation, and Liability for the Actions of Visitors – Assembly Bill 257 (introduced 5-8-23) and Senate Bill 257 (introduced 5-2-2023)
- Healthy Aging Grants and Making an Appropriation – Assembly Bill 418 (introduced 9-19-2023) and Senate Bill 407 (introduced 9-8-2023)

Federal:

- CMS Proposes Minimum Staffing Standards in Nursing Homes  
While BOALTC supports a minimum staffing standard, the proposed staffing standard does not go far enough to protect nursing home residents. In collaboration with national advocacy groups, BOALTC submitted comments on November 6, 2023.
- ACL Seeks Input on Updates to Older Americans Act Program Regulations – BOALTC submitted comments on August 15, 2023.
- HHS Takes the Most Significant Action in a Decade to Make Care for Older Adults & People with Disabilities More Affordable and Accessible

- **Jessica Trudell, Executive Director:**

Ms. Trudell provided the following agencywide information:

Staffing

The compensation plan was approved for state employees and all BOALTC staff will receive a 4% general wage adjustment with backpay to effective date of July 2, 2023. Some other classifications will receive parity or market adjustments.

Staff in-service was successful and occurred on August 16<sup>th</sup> – August 17<sup>th</sup>. Our featured speaker was MJ Grant, an ASL interpreter who shared her caregiving experience with her parents who are Deaf as well as her mom’s experience living in memory care.

Budget

Budget is closely monitored with the Bureau of Fiscal Management (BFM). We are in the close out period for Elder Justice funds to fully expend. ARPA funds are being used for staff attendance at the Consumer Voice conference as well as to fund our Volunteer Assisted Living Pilot. Onboarding was provided to the State Ombudsman who has fiscal responsibility for the Office of the State Long Term Care Ombudsman.

Advocacy

The ED attended her first meeting as a liaison to the DHS Council on Physical Disabilities. The ED reported attendance at Disability Summit which brought together all related DHS and Governor councils and committees together. This included presentations, training and group work. The ED has continued involvement in: DHS Long Term Care Advisory Council, WAAN (Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network), Nursing Home and Assisted Living Task Force, Consumer Voice Leadership Council.

Other

BOALTC Biennial Report for state fiscal years 21-23 was submitted.

**11. Approval of 2024 Meeting Dates- February 7<sup>th</sup>, May 8<sup>th</sup>, August 28<sup>th</sup>, November 6<sup>th</sup>**

M/S/C (Palarski/Gordon)

**12. Board Business.** Abigail Lowery, Chair

No other issues came before the Chair.

**13. Adjournment.**

Meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm; M/S/C (Meyer/Palarski)

Respectfully submitted,  
Vicki Tiedeman, Recorder