

Board of Directors Meeting
Board on Aging and Long Term Care
Virtual Meeting via Skype
August 5, 2020

This meeting was held virtually over Skype in accordance with Governor Evers' Executive Order #72 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 Dr. Valerie Palarski Michael Brooks

Newly Appointed Member: Abigail Lowery (pending confirmation)

Staff Present: Heather Bruemmer Kellie Miller Vicki Buchholz
Jessica Trudell Vicki Tiedeman Jill Helgeson
Rachel Selking Kathi Miller Joan Schmitz
Kim Marheine Sharon Cline

Guests Present: **Alice Page**, Department of Health Services, Bureau of Aging and Disability Recourses, Adult Protective Services Developer
Doreen Goetsch, Department of Health Services, Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources, Adult Protective Services Coordinator

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

Nomination Committee Report: Dr. Valerie Palarski and Dr. Dale Taylor

Dr. Valerie Palarski gave the Nomination Committee Report:
James Surprise was nominated for the Board Secretary.
Michael Brooks was nominated for the Board Vice-Chair.
Tanya Meyer was nominated for the Board Chairperson.

Approval of nominations as submitted M/S/C (Surprise/Palarski)

Minutes: Minutes of the February 19, 2020 board meeting were approved as presented. M/S/C (Surprise/Bechtel)

Program Updates:

Doreen Goetsch, Department of Health Services, Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources
Adult Protective Services (APS) Coordinator

Ms. Goetsch reported on the Incident Report Tracking System and the data collected from 2019:

- 10,018 cases reported in the Elder population
- 14% increase over 2018
- Self-neglect was #1 reason
- 20% of cases were Financial Exploitation # 2 reason
- Higher percentage of perpetrators were female
- 2969 cases reported in the Adults at Risk population (age 18 -59)
- 15% increase over 2018
- Self-neglect was #1 reason
- Neglect by others #2 reason
- Higher percentage of perpetrators were female
- High percentage of perpetrators in both age classes were family members

Alice Page, Department of Health Services, Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources, Adult Protective Services Developer

Ms. Page reported on several updates:

- Number of cases are increasing
- The Baby Boomers are aging
- Funding is stagnant and has not increased in 18 years
- Cases are more complex
- The people served have medical needs and other needs
- APS partners with other agencies and organizations to resolve cases
- Significant cases require several agencies and partners to make decisions and how to proceed
- Cases are taking more time and resources and need to develop new relationships
- Many APS clients are part of other organizations like Family Care, IRIS and other facilities
- Fraud cases have been reported to the Office of Inspector General
- APS works closely with Department of Justice (DOJ) who receives grants which have been used for training law enforcement
- Big trainings have not been possible during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Grant money was obtained for an Elder Abuse Hotline
- APS conference is held every other year where experts from all over the country come together to train
- Working with Emergency Medical Service (EMS) to train personnel to recognize elder abuse

Volunteer Services Update, Ms. Miller, Volunteer Services Supervisor

Ms. Miller gave program updates:

Ms. Brenda K. Pullen-O' Donnell from Milwaukee is the 2020 Louise Abrahams Yaffe Volunteer Ombudsman Program Award recipient. Ms. Pullen-O'Donnell was to receive her award during the 34th Annual Alzheimer's State Conference Awards banquet on Sunday May 3, 2020, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic the event was postponed. The Board on Aging and Long Term Care (BOALTC) congratulates Ms. Pullen-O'Donnell and will present her with her award and recognition as soon as we are able.

All the Volunteer Ombudsman Program (VOP) facility visits, in-person meetings, in-person coffee klatches, and in-person in-services have been suspended since March 12, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, the recognition in-services planned for the summer on Virtual Dementia and Dementia Live have been suspended.

The Volunteer Coordinators telecommute and continue their program and advocacy work during this unprecedented time. The Volunteer Ombudsman Program staff began using the TEAMS platform and Skype to stay connected in a more personal way. The new way of communicating is innovative, often challenging and a fun way to conduct meetings with each other.

The Volunteer Ombudsman Program has maintained 91 Volunteer Ombudsmen who remain committed and connected to the program. The first responses of the volunteers when notified of visitation suspension was when visits can resume!

In addition to individual volunteer phone calls, e-mail correspondence and care cards, the VOP has implemented monthly virtual coffee klatch meetings in all regions. The virtual meetings utilize the WisLine telephone conference line.

Since April, over 50 WisLine calls have been conducted for the volunteers. This provided the opportunity to connect with each other, share positives through this uncertain time, hear relevant nursing home/resident updates from BOALTC staff, and have a guest presentation.

We would like to thank our presenters, Mr. Thomas Haupt from Public Health, Ms. Jill Helgeson from the Medigap Helpline, Ms. Connie Inda from the Ombudsman Program Intake; and Dr. Dale Taylor Board on Aging Board Member.

We would also like to thank Mr. Thomas LaDuke for presenting to the Volunteer Coordinators on the relocation process and nursing home updates via Skype in July.

The volunteer coordinators made an initial call to each nursing home in early March regarding the suspension of Volunteer Ombudsmen visits. In May, the VOP made monthly follow up calls to the nursing homes and documented the calls on a formal checklist.

During the calls, the volunteer coordinators have maintained a professional connection, received resident and facility updates, shared positives, and most importantly have asked the nursing home staff to tell the residents that their volunteer is missing them and waiting patiently to return visiting.

With the virtual coffee klatches and meetings comes a new way of tracking volunteer feedback. The Volunteer Ombudsman Program has developed and implemented electronic evaluations in the FORMS application to capture the volunteers' feedback and ideas after each month of virtual meetings. This new opportunity allows us to have more immediate feedback and compiles data in graphics.

The Volunteer Ombudsman Program has had the opportunity to participate in weekly Department of Health Services (DHS) /Division of Quality Assurance (DQA) webinars, weekly Consumer Voice webinars, and many other webinars related to our work and new way of life. We have also invited the Volunteer Ombudsmen to participate in webinars, which many volunteers have been able to participate.

The Volunteer Ombudsmen have indicated how much they appreciate staying connected through the individual and WisLine conference calls, and how much the personal connection means to them. We have not had a volunteer retire or leave during to the pandemic. In fact, several potential volunteers have expressed an interested in the program in the last month. Screening is per usual with phone calls and packets of forms sent out to be completed and returned prior to the mandatory training.

The 2020 edition of The Volunteer Voice was published in July. The agency newsletter was 42 pages of information, highlights, stories, and personal messages! The newsletter was submitted to the Consumer Voice and sent out on their volunteer managers nation-wide list serve as well as added to their website. Thank you to staff who submitted articles, and to Ms. Amy Zabransky for co- layout and editing and to the proofreaders, Ms. Vicki Tiedeman, Ms. Jessica Trudell, and Ms. Connie Inda.

The VOP staff participated in virtual all staff in-services conducted in June and July.

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

Ms. Trudell reported on the following:

COVID-19

A lot of work continues to be focused on the pandemic and COVID related changes and response. Continue to support and advise our three programs as well as assist the Executive Director as needed.

EEO/AA

Updated Board on the development of our Equity and Inclusion/Affirmative Action plan to satisfy Governor Ever's Executive Order and requirements under federal law.

Legislation and regulations

Monitoring legislative activity on a state and federal law. The WI state legislature last met in April 2020, which resulted in COVID-19 legislation signed by the Governor. This legislation sought to ensure Wisconsin captures money allocated to the state under the federal stimulus bill, including higher Medicaid payments and unemployment benefits. It also barred insurers from prohibiting coverage based on COVID-19 and provided health provider immunity for services provided during the pandemic.

Governor Evers also recently issued a statewide mask mandate. A challenge to the Governor's authority could occur either by the filing of a lawsuit or action by the legislature. Will continue to monitor federal legislation and coronavirus related relief as well as any regulatory changes or guidance documents from CMS or DHS affecting long-term care residents.

Voting

The next elections in 2020 are on August 11th and November 3rd. Special Voting Deputies (SVD) are not deemed "essential" and will not be allowed into long-term care settings. In a typical voting year, SVDs would come into long-term care facilities and conduct absentee voting with residents. Voting by absentee ballot is encouraged as the safest way to vote this year. Information has been sent to long-term care communities by the Wisconsin Elections Commission to inform them of these changes and educate them on their role in assisting their residents in exercising their right to vote.

BOALTC continues to advocate for resident rights, which includes the right to vote and the right to receive assistance in exercising this right.

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

Ms. Buchholz reported on the following:

The calls to the Medigap Helpline thus far in 2020 are 4,529, which is slightly lower than 2019. Staff have been working diligently to work with callers remotely and emailing as much material information as possible. When answering the calls, the counselors have identified those who were impacted by COVID-19 or who had questions regarding coverage changes due to the pandemic. We had identified 286 calls through July.

The Medigap Helpline has made use of the Complaint Tracking Module (CTM) through CMS to report issues/complaints for the past several years. 10 Complaints in 2020 have been filed to CMS to assist beneficiaries with resolving issues with their Medicare Advantage or Medicare Drug plans. Some of the situations involved errors in enrollment, misinformation by agents, and claim denials. Most of our filings have been successful and found in favor of the beneficiary.

Trends – COVID-19 has been the biggest trend thus far with the counselors. Working remotely and helping beneficiaries understand options has been successful.

Counselors document issues regarding insurers and the issues that callers have had with them. Complaints are filed with Office of Commissioner of Insurance (OCI), so they are aware of the information regarding different insurers.

A popular community care program in Dane County has elected to end the SOS (Save our Security) Capital Care program. The program provided funding to help with Medical costs for low income persons. The program has helped many persons with Medicare with coinsurance or the copays after a Part D plan. This is not considered insurance, so it may be a challenge to help members find alternate coverage.

Ombudsman Services Update, Ms. Marheine, Ombudsman Services Supervisor

Ms. Marheine reported on the following:

The pandemic response has mandated that all ombudsman work be done remotely; ombudsmen are not face to face with any clients or other members of the public related to casework at this time. All care conferences, resident and family council meetings, complaint intakes, appeals, grievances and fair hearings, conference presentations are being done by phone, Skype or other virtual means.

The overarching aspect of issue advocacy presently is centered around quality of life protections for the agency's clients, as impacted by restrictions imposed due to the pandemic. The majority of calls and consultations in this area concerns restrictions on visitation, including when those visits might be essential in order to prevent excess disability. The Ombudsman Program is a standing participant in weekly virtual meetings for both nursing home and assisted living providers. Presentations have been both formal and informal to these groups, as well as to virtual meetings of the provider associations, ADRCs and APS units. Combined, these opportunities reach almost 2000 providers and other stakeholders each week. Several entities have requested virtual presentations continuing into the fall, largely on rights issues related to the pandemic response. Agency staff continue to participate in a range of workgroups examining quality of life and well-being issues, interfacing not only with representatives of the Department of Health Services and the Division of Quality Assurance, but also with various schools of the UW system, local public health departments and members of the medical community.

The Ombudsman Program is presently involved with several other entities to ensure access to voting for persons who live in long-term care settings.

Several staff continue to provide support to areas of staff vacancy. Discussed internal promotions into vacant positions and introduced the corresponding staff.

The following were noted as particular areas of casework regarding rules and regulations: continuous monitoring of changes in provider and regulatory response to the Covid-19 pandemic, as issued by CMS, CDC and DHS. For the Ombudsman Program most of this has

translated to casework primarily around visitation, rights related to transfers and discharges; consultations with residents, families, providers, and regulators regarding relocations from closing long-term care settings also continue. The pandemic response has mandated the closure process be done virtually.

Agency leadership meets weekly with DQA leadership to review updated guidance, as well as provider, regulatory and advocacy responses to current issues and challenges.

Comments from the Public: No comments from the public were received.

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

Ms. Bruemmer reported on the following:

Financial updates and Personnel:

The ED closed Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 budget successfully with our Department of Administration (DOA) Budget staff. DOA Budget office is looking at each agency to provide a lapse for the FY2021 budget. The ED is working closely with the Executive Budget Office to discuss this matter.

The Agency's FY2021-2023 Biennial Budget is due to Governor Evers by September 15, 2020.

The Agency staff have done 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. I am very proud of the management team working together to support their staff and the work they are doing. All staff are teleworking currently. Due to our essential work, we do have staff who go to the Central Office to collect and send mail, faxes, packages to the appropriate staff with ED approval.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, DOA has frozen the merit and equity awards for staff. Also, a hiring freeze has been in effect for non-essential positions. All essential positions must be approved for the hiring process.

Staff in-service was cancelled March 17th and 18th due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have provided virtual training for our staff each month as it is extremely important to stay connected.

The Board on Aging and Long Term Care Board members and staff are required to complete the mandatory 2020 Wisconsin Public Records Law Basics by 12/31/2020.

The Ombudsman Program received CARES Act money for the COVID-19 pandemic.

Program updates:

The ED and the management team are working on our new website. Pigorsch Media is working with the team to develop a new logo, website enhancements, and an animated video to help consumers understand the Agency's programs.

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 is working with the Counsel to the Board on the Agency's policies and procedures. Specific policies and procedures are being developed for reentry into the field when the timing is appropriate.

New business: No new business.

Next Board meeting date: October 28, 2020

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 11:30 am; M/S/C (Bechtel/Taylor)

Respectfully submitted,
Vicki Tiedeman, Recorder