



Wisconsin Assisted Living Association

News Blast

April 21, 2011

To get this blast as an email instead, please contact the WALA office at 608/288-0246.

Dear Sarah,

Dynamic Dining (WALA's Seminar) is almost here... Don't forget to register for this "out of the box" training! See the WALA Store for more details.


WALA Members receive these blasts whenever breaking news in Assisted Living develops. If you are a member and want to join the mailing list please follow the link on the left of the page.

Have you renewed your membership for 2011? If not, contact Sarah Bass, WALA's Operations Director at sbass@ewala.org or call her at 608/288-0246 to renew or to become a new member today!

For more information about WALA please visit our website at www.ewala.org. Let us know how you feel about the new look and feel of our website!

Get instant updates on what WALA is doing for its members on Facebook and Twitter!

[Find us on Facebook](#) 

[Follow us on](#) 

In This Issue

[DHS News](#)

[New DHS Memos](#)

[Important News from ALFA](#)

[Delay of MA payments resolved](#)

[Jim Moore - Winner of Lifetime Achievement Award from ASHA](#)

[Interview with DHS Secretary Dennis Smith](#)

[Talk to other Members on the WALA Wall!](#)

 [DHS News](#)

Assisted Living Forum on May 10, 2011

Reminder that the meeting will be held using Adobe Connect Software and will not meet in person.

If you participated in the January 11, 2011 Assisted Living Forum via the Adobe Connect Meeting, there is no need to re-test your computer equipment. To test your computer compatibility go to this link:

https://connect.wisconsin.gov/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.htm.

Go to the DHS website at: http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/rl_dsl/Providers/asstdLvgForum.htm for more information about the Assisted Living Forum.

DHS Names New Administrator for the Division of Long-Term Care

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) announced that Pris Boroniec has been appointed to the position of Division Administrator for the Division of Long-Term Care. According to the [press release](#), Boroniec comes to DHS from the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania based health care consulting firm Sellers Dorsey where she served as Director of Health Care Reform. She has more than 33-years of health policy experience including serving as Deputy Administrator of the DHS Division of Health Care Financing. Boroniec holds a Master of Public Policy and Bachelor's Degree from the University of Michigan.

BAL Regional Director, Susan Blount Announces Her Retirement

Susan Blount announced that she will retire on June 30, 2011, from the Bureau of Assisted Living as the Assisted Living Regional Director for the Southern Office based in Madison. After 22 years of being a great leader, innovator and wonderful collaborator, she will be missed by all! Good luck to you, Susan, and all your adventures to come!

DQA and UW Oshkosh Offer Abuse Prevention Training for Trainers

Limited space is available at the remaining Spring 2011 workshops. Because the project funding ends this summer, these no-cost workshops may not be offered again.

Two separate workshops are intended to give facilities regulated by DQA the necessary tools to train their own direct care staff.

- 1) **Experiential DVD Training for Trainers:** Receive a free copy of the award-winning DVD that depicts 6 common scenarios of abuse and neglect by caregivers. This half-day workshop trains participants to use the DVD to maximize learning for direct caregivers.
- 2) **Topical Training for Trainers:** This 4-hour workshop covers approximately 16 hours of ready-made training for direct caregivers on topics such as communication skills, professional boundaries, responding to challenging situations, skills for professional success, reducing stress, and more.

The target audience for these workshops includes facility trainers, supervisors and persons responsible for making training decisions.

Workshops continue to be led by experienced facilitators from the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh CCDET.

The remaining workshops will be presented on consecutive days in the following cities this spring:

Black River Falls (4/26 & 4/27)

DeForest (5/17 & 5/18)

Brookfield (6/7 & 6/8)

Rothschild (6/21 & 6/22)

DeForest and Brookfield workshops have VERY LIMITED openings. You may attend one or both days - material is different each day.



New DHS Memos

DQA Memo 11-010

Notice of Department Designee for CBRF Department- Approved Assisted Living Administrator Training.

http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/rl_dsl/Publications/11-010.htm

DQA Memo 11-009

Emergency Preparedness Flood Preparation and Response

http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/rl_dsl/Publications/11-009.htm

Division of Quality Assurance/ Quarterly Information Update

April 2011

http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/rl_dsl/Publications/dqaUpdate0411.htm



Important News From ALFA

CMS Proposes a Rule that May Jeopardize Medicaid Beneficiaries Access to Assisted Living

The Center for Medicare & Medicaid proposed a rule which may potentially prevent assisted living providers from participating in the Home and Community Based Waiver Program by limiting the definition of what constitutes as a community based option.

The rule as proposed defines community based options in such a way that it could prevent Medicaid residents from having the option to live in assisted living if, for instance, the assisted living community uses a residence agreement, versus a lease, or does not have an individual cooking area in every apartment.

ALFA is meeting with CMS on April 29th to voice our concerns with the proposed rule. We hope to work with CMS in a way that will protect assisted living as an option for our nation's seniors.

[The proposed rule is currently viewable](http://www.federalregister.gov) on the *Federal Register* at <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2011/2011-9116.htm> and The Center for Medicare & Medicaid is inviting stakeholders to comment on the matter before June 15, 2011.

Commonly Prescribed Drug May Be Ineffective in Treating Mild Alzheimer's

Memantine, a commonly prescribed drug for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease, is ineffective in treating mild cases and unlikely to effectively treat those with moderate Alzheimer's, according to a new report.

The report published in this month's *Archives of Neurology* studied the results of three trials that included a total of 431 patients with mild Alzheimer's disease and 697 patients with moderate Alzheimer's disease. Using several measurements, the researchers assessed cognition, changes in behavior, and ability to function. The researchers concluded that there was no significant difference in results between patients with mild Alzheimer's disease who took memantine and those who took a placebo. Researchers went on to say that the evidence that memantine was effective in patients with moderate Alzheimer's disease was "meager."

Memantine is currently approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for use in people with moderate to severe Alzheimer's disease, but many doctors prescribe the drug for mild cases off label. [Read the full article about the results](http://health.usnews.com/health-news/family-health/brain-and-behavior/articles/2011/04/11/drug-memantine-ineffective-for-mild-alzheimers-study-finds) here <http://health.usnews.com/health-news/family-health/brain-and-behavior/articles/2011/04/11/drug-memantine-ineffective-for-mild-alzheimers-study-finds>




Issue of "Delay of Payments" to Medicaid Providers Resolved - No Delay of Payments Needed

Both the State Assembly and State Senate passed [Special Session Senate Bill 12](#) on April 5th, a follow up to the original Budget Repair Bill that fixes the budget shortfall in Wisconsin's Medicaid program for this fiscal year that ends on June 30, 2011. By fixing the Medicaid shortfall for this fiscal year, passage of the bill removes the need for delay of payments to Medicaid providers. Governor Walker signed the bill on April 6th and the bill was published into law on April 7.

The original Budget Repair Bill provided funding for the Wisconsin Medicaid program so that "Delay of Payments" to Medicaid providers would not occur. However, this along with other spending provisions in the original Budget Repair Bill were removed as a procedural move by Senate and Assembly Republicans to deal with the higher quorum requirement in the State Senate - allowing the original Budget Repair Bill to move forward. Since the new spending/funding to Medicaid was removed - there was a threat of a delay of payments to Medicaid providers beginning in mid-May through June 30th.

Again, passage of this follow-up Budget Repair Bill ([Special Session Senate Bill 12](#)) means that no Delay of Payments to Medicaid

Providers should occur.

 **Jim Moore - Winner of Lifetime Achievement Award from ASHA.**

Jim Moore was recently awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award at the annual meeting of the American Seniors Housing Association (ASHA).

To read the Article, go here: <http://www.ewala.org/news/blasts/2011/Documents/ASHA-LifetimeAchievementAward.pdf>

 **Interview with DHS Secretary Dennis Smith**

Used with permission. Thanks to Tim Stumm of Wisconsin Health News. Subscription info below.

Wisconsin Health News is an independent, nonpartisan, online news organization designed to meet the information needs of busy Wisconsin health care professionals, decision makers, and consumers. For more information on how to become a member, please visit: <http://wisconsinhealthnews.com/subscribe/>

On the Record with Dennis Smith

Department of Health Services Secretary Dennis Smith has served at CMS, been a state Medicaid director, and worked at a prominent think tank. Still, his newest task won't be easy: finding \$500 million in savings from the state's Medicaid program. A proposal to save \$15 million by transferring eligible seniors off SeniorCare and onto Medicare Part D has been met with strong, bipartisan resistance. At a listening session this week, Smith said a plan to halt FamilyCare took center stage. Meanwhile, others are complaining that the budget repair bill gives his department too much power. Wisconsin Health News checks in with the state's new health secretary to see how things are going so far, and what changes we can expect to come. Excerpts are below.

WHN: You have worked around the country in a variety of roles, why did you want to come to Wisconsin and become the state's new health secretary?

Smith: Wisconsin has a great reputation as a leader and innovator in health care. I did not know the Governor personally, but a number of people that I admire and respect did and introduced us. I am very impressed with him and his leadership, and vision for the state. It was a great opportunity to be involved in these issues for a very dynamic Governor. The governor really put a great team together and I am delighted and honored to be part of it.

WHN: A pair of prominent Republican lawmakers have added their names to the growing list of SeniorCare supporters. As someone who helped create the waiver for SeniorCare, and other similar programs around the country, have you been surprised at the strong reaction to the program?

Smith: Not surprised at all. I was there to help create it and was still there when Part D came online. Other states had made the decision to pull out, but Wisconsin felt very strongly about SeniorCare and wanting to maintain it.

WHN: Will SeniorCare continue in Wisconsin?

Smith: Low-income seniors are better off on Part D. The cost-sharing and co-payments in SeniorCare are twice what they are in Part D. We think our proposal is the right policy. Having said all that, I understand that SeniorCare is still politically popular. Outside groups have come in and said if we can find \$15 million in savings in other ways, would you be open to considering other alternatives? My response has been, well, I think we have the right policy, but yes, if you have other ways of generating these savings within SeniorCare, then I am open to doing that.

WHN: Your department is working on a waiver request from the federal health reform law's maintenance of effort requirements. How specific will that request be?

Smith: It will be very specific about provisions in our eligibility system. The maintenance of effort is really a snapshot in time and says you have to do everything the same way. We think there are ways to improve how you determine eligibility and how you redetermine eligibility. As the economy recovers and families' incomes increase again, some of those families will no longer be eligible for the program. We need to be looking more frequently at income levels. We think there are ways of improving how you count income, and what should be included as income.

WHN: And this formal request will happen in the next month?

Smith: That's our target date because we know it will take some time to negotiate with CMS. It will take time to implement those changes and this is a race against the calendar. Finding \$500 million in savings is easier over 24 months than it is over 12 months. The longer we are delayed in finding the savings, the more dramatic those policy changes are going to become.

WHN: Will the public see the actual waiver request before it is submitted?

Smith: We intend to be very transparent throughout the process. The public will see what we are proposing before it actually goes to CMS.

WHN: You have said you support keeping people in their homes for care. Yet, the Governor's proposed budget halts the expansion of FamilyCare, a program designed largely to do just that. How do you explain this disconnect?

Smith: I think there is recognition that the overall policy is good. But there is also widespread agreement that the design of FamilyCare should be looked at again. It does not undermine the policy itself in any way. We are great proponents of serving individuals in their own homes and communities. I want to triple the amount of people that self-direct their long-term care services. But I think at different points in time it's always good to step back and say 'are we doing it the best way' and 'what works the best?'

WHN: Some have raised concern about the provision in the budget that increases your department's authority to make changes to Medicaid. How do you address those concerns?

Smith: I know it was a cause for some concern. I would like to point out that the previous administration was given full authority to find \$600 million in changes to the program with absolutely no legislative oversight all together. But, the bottom line is that it is all about the calendar. Those authorities were being provided so we could implement changes as quickly as possible. We are going to be very transparent about our recommendations and changes.

WHN: The Wisconsin Medical Society has suggested that we look at the Oregon Health Plan's prioritized list to help reduce costs in our Medicaid program. Is that something that could be considered here in Wisconsin?

Smith: I would be uncomfortable with that approach. I think that those critical and medical decisions ought to be made by physicians and are not something that should be done in statute or regulation. It's important states have flexibility to try things that are unique to state situations. Oregon built their own particular system over many years. But we also know that the prioritized list has gotten shorter and shorter over the years. It's not the approach I would take, but I also think Oregon should have the flexibility to try those things if they choose to.

WHN: Does Wisconsin have an opportunity to be a leader for reforming Medicaid?

Smith: What we are going to do will be uniquely Wisconsin, but I think it will be a model for other states to follow and learn from.

WALA Wall Now Open to Members

WALA has opened the WALA Wall, an online discussion forum for members to chat with others in the field about the issues relating to them!

Talk about Family Care, Legislative Issues, Regulatory Issues and much more!

All you need to do is go to the WALA Website at www.ewala.org, log in using your member username and password to the member only area and click on the WALA Wall to start the communication!

Please contact the WALA office if you need your username and password, or if you have questions at 608/288-0246 or email membership@ewala.org

Sincerely,

Jim Murphy, Executive Director
Sarah Bass, Operations Director

Wisconsin Assisted Living Association