



# Wisconsin Assisted Living Association

## News Blast

*September 29, 2011*

This is WALA's last week at our 2875 Fish Hatchery address. Yup! If you haven't heard, WALA is moving! Please make sure your records are changed so we don't lose touch! Our new address is listed on the left hand column of this email.

It is WALA membership renewal time! Provider members can get a discount when renewing before October 15th! Contact the office for more information.

Are you Facebook friends with WALA? If not, come join and hear updates about Education, Legislative activity, Regulatory issues and many more topics!



**Don't forget about our newest membership benefit - ability to write on the WALA Wall!**

It's an online discussion forum that lets you talk about hot button topics, like Family Care, with other members! Contact the WALA office for more information!

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[Department Launches Website on Medicaid Savings Initiatives](#)

*Family Care Enrollment Caps project a savings of \$105.9 million GPR. Below is the actual language of the press release sent by DHS.*

MADISON - Department of Health Services Secretary, Dennis G. Smith, today launched a website that outlines initiatives designed to keep the state's Medicaid program sustainable, fair and equitable. The site was developed in an effort to ensure that the cost savings measures are posted for the public to see prior to any formal submission of changes to the federal government.

"This website is a transparent way for Wisconsin citizens, providers, advocates and stakeholders to view and provide comments on what the Department is proposing to keep Medicaid financially stable," Secretary Smith said. "The feedback we get on these initiatives will be considered before we formally submit our proposed changes to the federal government for approval."

Currently, one of every five Wisconsin residents is served by Medicaid. With a \$1.33 billion decrease of federal matching funds and past budget estimates based on a projected enrollment decline while enrollments actually increased, the Department was tasked with finding savings to keep the program solvent and meet 2011-2013 state budget targets.

Summaries of each initiative are listed individually by program and by four reform categories on the website: eligibility, benefits, service delivery and payment reforms. Additional reforms will be posted on the site as they are finalized. Some of the first initiatives posted on the site include:

Virtual PACE - In Wisconsin, roughly 120,000 Medicaid enrollees are also enrolled in Medicare and are known as "dual eligible" members. Currently, the members must navigate a fragmented health care system that limits coordination between health providers and increases costs. The new program, Virtual PACE, is a coordinated care system for Wisconsin's dual eligible members who wish to receive their services in community settings. This is accomplished by fully integrating Medicare and Medicaid services and funds.

Medical Homes for Children in Foster Care - Currently, there are 5,500 children in foster care who receive Medicaid services in Wisconsin. Many of the foster care children need specialty care and are receiving that care on a fee-for-service basis. As a result, care may be limited among providers, is not coordinated, and may not address the specific needs of foster care children. The Departments of Health Services and Children and Families are creating a medical home model for children in foster care that provides health care services that are evidence-based and will ensure better health, improved behavior and mental health, with the goal of achieving positive permanent placement outcomes. To view the first of several Medicaid savings initiatives and provide input, visit: [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/MAreform](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/MAreform)



## CLASS Act's Future in Question

*From ALFA - Wisconsin is ALFA's State Affiliate*

Although the Department of Health and Human Services denies the CLASS office is closing, many question what will happen to the CLASS Act, following a reduction of the CLASS Office's staff and an

email that leaked last week from the CLASS Office's actuary claiming that the CLASS Office will close down.

The speculation began when Bob Yee, the CLASS Act Office's lead actuary, announced his departure in an email to colleagues. "I'm leaving my position as the CLASS Office actuary as HHS has decided to close down the CLASS office effective tomorrow," wrote Yee. The office had also reassigned much of its staff. However, the Department of Health and Human Services responded by calling reports that the CLASS Act Office was closing "flat out false," and in a follow up interview Bob Yee clarified his previous statements. "My understanding is they're slowing down the development," Bob Yee explained. "They're taking a pause and reducing the amount of work being done."

Many members of Congress are still fighting for the law. "Obviously the administration has put some kind of hold on it," said Rep. Frank Pallone (D-N.J.), "I'm going to try to find out why, but beyond that I'm going to continue to press them to implement it as soon as possible because it makes sense."

Read the Policy Perspectives' post on the issue, [Future Looks Dim for CLASS ACT](#), as well as [the Hill's article "Dem Lawmakers to Fight for CLASS Health Program's Survival."](#)

### **NEW DQA Deputy Administrator Announced**

DQA is pleased to announce that Shari Busse, Director of the Division of Quality Assurance's (DQA) Office of Caregiver Quality (OCQ), was appointed the DQA Deputy Administrator effective September 25, 2011. In this capacity Shari will take on all operational responsibilities with the primary focus of improving efficiency in how DQA carries out its responsibilities and obligations.

Shari comes to the Deputy Administrator position following six years as Director of the OCQ, and 13 years of state service in DHS and the Department of Workforce Development. As OCQ Director, she has been instrumental in expanding and enhancing Wisconsin's nurse aide training programs, increasing the number of certified nursing assistants working in Wisconsin Health Care facilities, expanding background check requirements in Wisconsin and nationally, and has been the recipient of national awards on abuse and neglect prevention of vulnerable residents training.

Shari graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminology and a minor in Sociology in 1991 from Saginaw Valley University, Saginaw, Michigan.

Please join WALA in welcoming Shari in her new role.

### **State Policies Scrutinized by New Scorecard**

*Congratulations to Wisconsin's Long Term Care community for ranking 5th overall in the US! The collaboration and education that is now available within Wisconsin with regulators, associations, and*

*providers have made a huge impact! Check out the report at the end of this article for more information.*

#### *From ALFA - WALA is ALFA's State Affiliate*

A new report, designed to help states foster policies that encourage high quality care for older adults, analyzed the performance of long term services long term services and supports, including assisted living options, across all 50 states.

The report, *Raising Expectations: A State Scorecard on Long-Term Services and Supports for Older Adults, People with Physical Disabilities, and Family Caregivers*, appraised the affordability and access of care options, choice of setting and provider, quality of life and quality of care offered, and support for family caregivers as measures of success. The top performing states designed public policy initiatives that improved access and created flexible and comprehensive Medicaid programs, allowing older adults to use Medicaid on alternatives to nursing homes. "A high performing system, a person and family centered approach to long term services and supports places a high value on offering families choice and control over where they receive them and who provides them. That would be our ideal," said Susan Reinhard, Senior Vice President for Public Policy of AARP.

Successful states also developed systems that allowed people to easily navigate services offered and address the needs of family caregivers. Although no state scored in the top quartile in all 25 indicators, the highest performing states overall were Minnesota, Washington, Oregon, Hawaii, and Wisconsin. The lowest ranking states, Mississippi, Alabama, West Virginia, Oklahoma, and Indiana, were affected by high rates of poverty and disability, which may continue to pose challenges, though Reinhard emphasized that positive changes don't always increase costs, and all states are capable of policy changes that improve overall care quality.

Read the full report and press release, or watch video of AARP's recent meeting, AARP Solutions Forum: [Raising Expectations: A State Scorecard on Long-Term Services and Supports](#), where the results were announced.



### **Dementia Training from alea**

alea is proud to support the Alzheimer's Association with a program designed for directors, lead workers and care staff. We welcome you to join us for this 1 day event, and receive 8 CE Credits!

Some of the topics covered will be -

- Understanding Alzheimer's
- Dementia and Aging issues
  - Environment
  - Communication
  - Strengths and Abilities that remain
  - Activities

Please join us for this Dementia Care Training on Thursday October 27, 2011. [See attached Brochure for more details.](#)