



Wisconsin Assisted Living Association eBlast News

February 15, 2012

WALA has Moved!

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Hope your Valentines Day was great! Here is a small poem to help celebrate the festive occasion.

Rose are Red,
Violets are Blue,
It's almost March 1st,
Don't forget to Renew!

Have you renewed your WALA membership yet? If not, you still have time! Renew today to keep all the great benefits WALA membership offers. Contact the WALA office to renew at membership@ewala.org or 608/288-0246.

Like us on Facebook 

Follow us on 

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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Voter Registration - Make sure your residents are ready per new requirements.

As you know, the requirements to be a valid voter in Wisconsin have changed. Please remind your residents and staff that there is a Spring Primary Election in much of the state on **TUESDAY FEBRUARY 21**. This is a Primary Election for non-partisan local officials.

Even if the candidates and issues are not critical to you in this

election, it is important that all Wisconsin voters understand the new Voter Photo ID requirements and how the new rules may impact them. WALA encourages everyone to vote this Spring if there is an election in your area so you truly understand the new rules and do not find they are unable to vote later. The best way to test that is to vote on February 21 to make sure that each person interested in voting learns now if there are any issues that may hinder their ability to have their vote counted.

Regardless of your political viewpoints, there are some critical elections coming this year, concluding with the Presidential Election on November 6. Here is information for you:

You can learn the new Voter Photo ID requirements via the [Governmental Accounting Board \(GAB\)](#) <http://gab.wi.gov/elections-voting/photo-id> and this includes Quick Reference Topics for Voter Photo ID.

- [Voter ID Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#)
- <http://gab.wi.gov/taxonomy/term/135>
- [FAQ for the Elderly and Disabled](#)
- <http://gab.wi.gov/node/2056>

WALA has been informed that **the above Elderly and Disabled document** also includes assisted living residents **as appropriate**:

1. Some providers have been told that absentee voters need to re-register to continue voting absentee. **This is not true.** Talk to your local or county clerk - see below. If your clerk tells you that, have them contact the GAB at gab@wi.gov or 608/266-8005.

2. Absentee voters can have permanent absentee status (for all elections) or individual absentee status (just this election). We have been told AL residents qualify for permanent status, but each voter must request it, or have it requested for them. Note that a voter qualifies for permanent absentee status if they are indefinitely confined due to age or disability.

3. Indefinitely confined electors (permanent absentees) do not need to provide a copy of photo ID because the witness certification on the absentee envelope will qualify as a substitute proof of ID.

4. Voters residing in facilities visited by Special Voting Deputies may provide a copy of their photo ID, but the witness certification, if signed by both Special Voting Deputies and an authorized representative of the care facility, **does qualify** as a substitute proof of ID. Special Voting Deputies set up specific time frames for absentee voting at the care facility, allowing residents to contact family members in advance if they would like to have assistance in marking the ballot. Contact your local or county clerk below.

5. Voters residing in other facilities that are eligible for Special Voting Deputy procedures, but are **not** visited by Special Voting Deputies, have other requirements as detailed in the [Elderly & DD Link here](#) <http://gab.wi.gov/node/2056>.

- Contact your local or county clerk with questions - [County and Municipal Clerk link here](#). <http://gab.wi.gov/clerks/directory>
- You can request the GAB to come talk to your residents or regional group by the [Speaker request link here](#), <http://gab.wi.gov/elections-voting/photo-id/speaker-request> though they are very busy right now.

We encourage you to support your residents' right to vote by being proactive in educating your staff and residents about changes in the law effecting this important civic process.

WALA is arranging a breakout session at the WALA Spring Conference on the changes in the Voter Photo ID Law and how it impacts assisted living. The session will be **Thursday March 22 at 10:15 am**. More info soon on the [WALA website](#).

New Virtual PACE Implementation Timeline

Through mutual agreement, DHS and CMS have jointly reached a decision to modify the Virtual PACE demonstration implementation date from July 1st, 2012 to January 1st, 2013.

The link below is a summary of the major milestones, based on this revised timeline.

Notice of Revised Virtual PACE Implementation Timeline 1.27.12
<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wipartnership/pace/ImplementationTimeline012712.pdf>

Senate Unanimously Votes to Lift Family Care Cap

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A bill that would remove the cap on Family Care enrollment unanimously passed the Senate Tuesday. It faces a less certain fate, however, in the Assembly where lawmakers have questioned the feasibility of expanding the program.

Senator Jim Holperin (D-Conover) urged the Assembly to pass the bill in its current form.

"There is a lot of sincerity going on in this building right now," he said. "I hope it will continue and the state will keep its commitment to expanding Family Care to every county in the state."

Department of Health Services Secretary Dennis Smith applauded the Senate's action. "Wisconsin is one step closer to again enrolling eligible elderly and individuals with disabilities in the Family Care program and fulfilling Governor Walker's commitment to them," he said. "As the caps are lifted, we also are working with individuals, families, advocacy groups and providers to ensure this vital program is sustainable over time."

DHS has proposed a series of program reforms that it says will cover the nearly \$72 million it's expected to cost to lift the cap. In

December, the Department of Health and Human Services sent Walker's administration a letter ordering him to lift the cap. Two weeks later, Walker announced his support. LFB estimates that \$1.75 billion in federal funding could be at risk if the cap is not lifted.

[Read the bill](#)

<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2011/related/proposals/sb380>
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Joint Legislative Hearing on Worker's Comp Bills Held

From Forbes McIntosh, GPS, WALA Lobbyist

On February 1st, the Assembly Committee on Labor and Senate Committee on Labor, Public Safety and Urban Affairs held a joint public hearing on companion bills [Assembly Bill 499](#) / [Senate Bill 409](#), which make substantial changes to the state's worker's compensation laws. John Metcalf, Administrator of the Department of Workforce Development's (DWD) Division of Worker's Compensation, acknowledged that the bill is complex. Both bills are expected to move quickly, since the Wisconsin Legislature has a tradition of passing these bills quickly without amendments every two years due to the DWD, labor and management negotiated agreements.

Committee member Rep. Stephen Nass (R-Whitewater) questioned a provision in the legislation that calls for the creation of a committee to determine the scope of the audit of health service fee databases. He said that although he doesn't have a problem with the committee recommending parameters for the audit, he hopes it won't preclude the DWD from also giving input on the scope of the audit. Georgia Maxwell, Executive Assistant at the DWD, said it is the DWD's intent to be involved with the audit and to add to the scope of the audit as needed.

Metcalf said that at the minimum the audit should determine whether the databases are meeting the current statutory parameters, such as collecting data by geographic regions, refreshing the data, etc. Metcalf said that with five databases, the question is how far do you want to delve into each database. The DWD is estimating that the audit will cost \$100,000, and Metcalf said he plans to work with the audit committee to come up with parameters for auditing each of the databases that also fit within the fiscal estimate.

James Buchen of Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce (WMC), who also serves on the Worker's Compensation Advisory Council that helped draft this legislation, testified in support of AB 499 and SB 409. He said that although workplaces today have seen fewer injuries due to increased safety regulations and the loss of manufacturing

jobs in the state, the worker's compensation program continues to see increases due to rising health care costs. He said the bill's provision to reduce the standard deviation rate from 1.4 to 1.2 attempts to tackle the rising health care costs.

Areas of Worker's Compensation being modified:

- Increases maximum weekly compensation for permanent partial disability
- Vocational rehabilitation changes
- Prohibits state from allowing compensation for permanent disfigurement for employee that returns to work
- Various changes to the Work Injury Supplemental Benefit Fund
- Traumatic injuries
- Third-party liability
- Reimbursement of supplemental benefits
- Second injury
- Claims processing
- Adequacy of fund balance
- Final practitioners report
- Health service fee disputes (modifies standard deviation from 1.4 to 1.2)
- Study of funding for permanent total disability increases

Others who either testified or registered in support of AB 499/SB 409:

- Ronald Kent, a member of the Worker's Compensation Advisory Council
- Liberty Mutual
- Wisconsin Insurance Alliance
- Nathan Berken (Hoven Consulting)
- Ron Kuehn (DeWitt Ross Stevens) representing Professional Insurance Agents of Wisconsin
- Monica Groves, American Family Insurance
- Misha Lee, Sentry Insurance

No one testified nor has registered in opposition to the bills.

Sincerely,

Jim Murphy, Executive Director
Sarah Bass, Operations Director

Wisconsin Assisted Living Association



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