



# Wisconsin Assisted Living Association

## eBlast News

January 3, 2012

### WALA has Moved!

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Happy New Year! Hope your holiday's were wonderful.

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](mailto:membership@ewala.org) or 608/288-0246.

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### 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.

## In This Issue

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**Governor Walker Announces Removal of Family Care Cap**

*A December 13th Letter Shows Feds Directed  
Family Care Cap be removed.*

## **Governor Walker Lifts Family Care Caps**

Earlier this year, the Governor and Legislature included in the state budget a provision to freeze the expansion of Family Care to new counties and capped enrollment in existing Family Care Counties until the Department of Health Services (DHS) determined that the expansion is "cost-effective."

Governor Walker, with DHS Secretary Smith and Deputy Secretary Rhoades and joined by a number of consumer advocacy groups, announced on December 28, 2011 the lifting of those caps on Family Care over the next few months. Governor Walker stated that this decision has come about due to DHS implementing many of the recommendations from a Legislative Audit Bureau report on Family Care released earlier this year and recommendations obtained from the Family Care Town Hall Meetings held earlier this year.

"The Governor's plan to lift the Family Care enrollment cap calls for legislative action and DHS implementation by this spring." The lifting of the caps and the estimated cost of \$80 million will require approval by the Wisconsin Legislature. Originally the budget had assumed a savings of approximately \$284.5 million (all funds) over the two-year biennium. Governor Walker stated many times during the press conference that for the caps to be lifted the program had to be sustainable. With the changes being made to the program - the Governor and DHS believes they have now met that stipulation.

Governor Walker stated in answer to a question that there are 14 counties today that Family Care does not serve. This announcement means that after legislative approval of the lifting of the caps and approval of the additional spending associated with lifting the caps - the remaining 14 counties can again begin moving toward implementing Family Care.

[The Press Release for your review.](http://www.ewala.org/news/blasts/2012/documents/12-28-11PressRelease-freezelifted.pdf)

<http://www.ewala.org/news/blasts/2012/documents/12-28-11PressRelease-freezelifted.pdf>

## **CMS Directs DHS To Remove Caps**

The announcement is now getting more public attention because it has been revealed that the Federal Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) had sent a letter to DHS (which it received on December 13, 2011) - where CMS directed DHS and the State to remove the caps.

Governor Walker's press conference included the announcement of his intent to seek the Legislature's approval to again allow the continued expansion of Family Care into the remaining 14 Counties that are not currently participating in the program. However, reactions from key Republican legislators are mixed and some stating the need to review the plan; to others expressing concern and questioning whether expansion of Family Care should be allowed to occur.

Republicans currently have majority control in both houses of the Legislature - meaning approval of expanding Family Care could face hurdles in the Legislature.

This issue is receiving much attention in the press.

[Excerpt from CMS Letter to DHS](#)

<http://www.ewala.org/news/blasts/2012/documents/CMSLettertoDHSonFamilyCare.pdf>

"Because the currently approved waiver includes an entitlement to waiver services, we are instructing the State to operate the waiver as it was approved by CMS. Therefore, we are directing the State to identify any individuals not currently enrolled onto the Family Care or Self-Directed Supports waivers since the July 1, 2011 implementation of the newly instituted enrollment caps, and immediately enroll those individuals in the waiver programs. This includes individuals living in any counties who had or would have had an entitlement to the waivers as of July 1, 2011, and includes individuals who were or would have otherwise been selected for enrollment from other participating counties."

**DHS Secretary Dennis Smith** ([Press Release](#))

<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/News/PressReleases/2011/122911.htm>

"The sole person responsible for yesterday's announcement on lifting the Family Care caps is Governor Walker. The Governor stated publicly several times that he was committed to Wisconsin's senior and individuals with disabilities with his intention to lift the cap by the end of the year. We knew that this would be a challenging timeline for our Department, but Family Care has always been a top priority for our Administration. We are finalizing a plan with our partners to ensure that seniors and individuals with disabilities will get the services they need in the future, while ensuring financial stability of the program."

**Sen. Alberta Darling (R-River Hills), Co-Chair of the Joint Finance Committee** ([Press Release](#))

[http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?llr=ehdq5rhab&v=001qNmFLvMdrPCjBZ3DLx3LJVR\\_GuwGscpSA-O8GUrUZ19aCOWB1G2QWSkua9fQsbUtCxrRVaymXnk\\_dXW7utwDSG4GB2PsJYnX5hCfKDTnrb7HmUs61wRm7w==](http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?llr=ehdq5rhab&v=001qNmFLvMdrPCjBZ3DLx3LJVR_GuwGscpSA-O8GUrUZ19aCOWB1G2QWSkua9fQsbUtCxrRVaymXnk_dXW7utwDSG4GB2PsJYnX5hCfKDTnrb7HmUs61wRm7w==)

"I strongly support Governor Walker's effort to lift the cap on Family Care. Despite our tough economy, we continue to find ways to be more efficient with the taxpayer's money. The cap was always meant to be temporary and I'm thrilled to learn Governor Walker and Secretary Smith have found savings that make lifting the cap a possibility. I look forward to hearing more details of the plan and I expect lifting the cap will be a top bi-partisan legislative priority in the coming year."

**Rep. Robin Vos (R-Burlington), Co-Chair of the Joint Finance Committee**

"Expanding another unsustainable program is irresponsible. Perhaps before expanding, we should figure out how to make it work under sustainable parameters. Poorly planned rapid expansions by the last administration are what caused the current budget problem. For future budget health, I'd prefer we take a different course."

**Rep. Sandy Pasch (D-Whitefish Bay)** ([Press Release](#))

<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/assembly/pasch/pressreleases/Pages/Rep.-Pasch-Statement-on-Walker-Family-Care-Announcement-.aspx>

"I am equally shocked by - and dizzy from - the amount of political spin Gov. Walker put on his Family Care announcement yesterday. Not only did he attempt to pat himself on the back for removing his self-imposed caps on this important program, but he somehow failed to mention that the federal government actually ordered him to immediately

lift his caps two weeks ago."

## DHS Projects Significantly Lower Medicaid Budget Deficit

*From: Forbes McIntosh (WALA lobbyist)*

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) released a report to the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee today providing the overall condition of the Medicaid budget.

In short, DHS is providing new projections which lowers the Medicaid deficit\shortfall from \$554.4 million (all funds) to \$231.8 million (all funds) - a \$322.6 million decrease in the projections.

In September 2011 DHS indicated that \$554.4 million (all funds) \ \$219.5 million (GPR) in savings (or reductions) would be needed to balance the program budget in 2011-13 biennium. Today, DHS new projection indicate that \$231.8 million (all funds) \ \$92.3 million GPR) in savings (or reductions) is needed. The \$322.6 million (all funds) projected decrease in the overall shortfall is due to "we now have the benefit of five months of actual caseload and expenditure data for this fiscal year." Based on the this new data the DHS is lowering the projected shortfall.

[DHS Letter for your review.](#)

<http://www.ewala.org/news/blasts/2012/documents/DHSReportonMedicaidDeficit.pdf>

## Announcing the Virtual PACE Listserve

DHS is pleased to announce the availability of a new listserv for the Virtual PACE demonstration initiative in Wisconsin.

The Department of Health Services and the Virtual PACE team will use this listserv to notify you about information and updates related to the Virtual PACE planning grant and program. All interested parties are invited to join this free service.

### ***How can I sign- up for the listserv?***

If you wish to join the listserv, go to the listserv website at:

<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wipartnership/pace/listserv.htm> and complete the sign-up form. You must have an individual e-mail address to participate in the listserv.

### ***How do I unsubscribe?***

If you wish to unsubscribe from the listserv, go to the listserv website at: <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/wipartnership/pace/listserv.htm>