

**STATE OF WISCONSIN
BOARD ON AGING AND LONG TERM CARE
BOARD MEETING**

Wednesday, August 13, 2025

9:30 A.M.

In Person at:

DoubleTree Madison East

Two Lakes Ballroom

4402 E Washington Ave

Madison WI

Members Present:	Dr. Marianne Bloch	Mary Bouche	Jackie Gordon
	Dr. Valerie Palarski	Dr. Dale Taylor	
Staff Present:	Jessica Trudell	Kim Marheine	Kristen Johnson
	Nick Lutes	Rachel Selking	Jenny Novey
	Liza Morrow	Becky Mulhern	Jenna Helminski Juve
	Mary LeMay		
Guests Present:	Helen Sampson	Amber Miller	Erin Fabrizius
	Ed Bauer	Thomas Lutzow	Anonymous Guest

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Chair Dr. Valerie Palarski called the meeting to order at 9:31 am. It was noted that this meeting was properly noticed under the Open Meetings Notice Law. Board members and staff completed introductions.

Ms. Helminski Juve introduced herself as the new State Long Term Care Ombudsman.

2. Election of Officers

Ms. Gordon nominated Ms. Bouche as Secretary. The Board approved the nomination unanimously.

3. Change to Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

4. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as submitted. M/S/C (Bloch/Taylor)

5. Approval of Minutes from May 14, 2025

The minutes from the May 14, 2025 Board Meeting were approved as presented.
M/S/C (Bouche/Gordon)

6. Social Isolation and Loneliness Grants and Reframing Aging – *Helen Sampson, LCSW, Public Policy Strategist, Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources, Division of Public Health, WI Department of Health Services*

Ms. Sampson presented on social isolation and loneliness, livable communities, and grants that were awarded within the past year using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to promote social connectedness. She described the impact of social isolation and the importance of social connectedness, and she shared examples of how each of the 32 organizations who received grants used them to create more livable, healthy communities for older adults and those with disabilities.

Following her presentation, Ms. Sampson was asked to share some key takeaways from the grants. She explained that the results highlighted the importance of connectedness, the benefits of encouraging creativity among grant recipients, and the potential to make an impact with even limited resources. There was also a discussion on how to respond to those who say it is not the government's or taxpayer's responsibility to combat social isolation, and Ms. Sampson recommended focusing on the benefits of healthy communities.

7. Age Friendly Communities and AARP State and Federal Priorities – *Amber Miller, Sr. Assoc. State Director, Outreach, AARP Wisconsin*

Ms. Miller presented on AARP's age-friendly communities, other livable programs, and AARP state and federal priorities. She described what makes a community age-friendly, and she provided examples of current AARP age-friendly communities in Wisconsin. Ms. Miller additionally highlighted programs such as the AARP Community Challenge grants, the Livable Communities Technical Advisors Program, the AARP Rural Lab Program, the AARP Homefit Guide, and the AARP Livability Index. She concluded by describing AARP's priorities, including supporting family caregivers, protecting consumers, and promoting health equity.

Following her presentation, Ms. Miller was asked how AARP's presence within Wisconsin compares to other states. She explained that some of the larger states

might have more staff, but the numbers are still very low. Ms. Miller was also asked about AARP's funding, and she clarified that AARP does not receive federal or state funding; they receive some grants, but most of their funds come from memberships and ads placed in magazines.

8. Comments from the Public

Chair Dr. Valerie Palarski called for public comments. There were no comments from members of the public.

9. Medigap Helpline Program Updates – *Nick Lutes, Medigap Helpline Services Supervisor*

Mr. Lutes provided an update on the Medigap program, including the status of personnel, Medigap helpline data reporting, education and outreach, and Medicare and related insurance trends.

Following his presentation, there was a discussion about ways to keep the Board Members informed of local outreach events. Mr. Lutes was also asked about the results of the unwinding from Medicaid and the potential impact of new legislation and cuts to Medicaid for Wisconsin. Mr. Lutes explained that there is still uncertainty regarding the impact of proposed changes to Wisconsin residents, but he is continuing to monitor it.

10. Volunteer Ombudsman Program Updates & Recognition of 2025 LAY Award Winner – *Liza Morrow, Volunteer Services Supervisor; Mary LeMay, Volunteer Coordinator; and Ed Bauer, Volunteer*

Ms. Morrow shared updates for the Volunteer Ombudsman Program, including updates on personnel, volunteer recruitment and training, outreach events, the assisted living pilot project, and the Inclusa Foundation grant.

Following her presentation, Ms. LeMay introduced Mr. Bauer, who has served as a volunteer with the Board on Aging and Long Term Care since 2022 and was the recipient of this year's Louise Abrahams Yaffe (LAY) award. Mr. Bauer described his background and how he first became involved as a volunteer. He shared some of his experiences serving the residents at his assigned facilities, and he discussed some of the benefits and challenges of volunteering. He mentioned some of the ways that help him connect with the residents, and he expressed his appreciation for receiving the award.

11. Executive Report: Administrative, Legislative, Long-Term Care and Budget Updates

– Kristen Johnson, Counsel to the Board; Kim Marheine, State Long Term Care Ombudsman; and Jessica Trudell, Executive Director

Attorney Johnson updated the Board on her efforts in supporting and advising the programs and the Executive Director. She discussed the increase in State Fair Hearings and her ongoing work with HCBS staff to establish related templates, best practices, and trainings for staff. She continues to see an increase in public records requests, as well, and she has been working to review policies and complete onboarding for new staff. Attorney Johnson also updated the Board on the status of relevant state and federal bills.

Ms. Marheine presented updates for the Ombudsman Program. She explained that staff are continuing to work at unsustainable levels with high call rates and complex cases. Ms. Marheine discussed systems advocacy, education and outreach efforts, and the monitoring of rules and regulations, as well as an update on facility monitoring and consultations. Following her presentation, there was a discussion on civil money penalties, the average penalty amount, and how the funds are used.

Ms. Trudell presented an update on agency staffing and staff support, the current and FY25-27 budget, federal funding and changes to Medicaid and FoodShare, and ongoing advocacy work. She described changes that have been implemented to streamline and improve processes at BOALTC, including fiscal year tracking, access to databases and use of technology.

12. Consideration and Possible Action on Request from Executive Director for Conference Attendance

The Board approved Ms. Trudell's request to attend the Consumer Voice Conference on November 3rd-6th in Arlington, VA. M/S/C (Taylor/Bloch)

The Board approved Ms. Trudell's request to attend the FOCUS Conference on November 19th-20th in Green Bay, WI. M/S/C (Bouche/Gordon)

13. Discussion and Possible Action on Format of 2026 Board Meetings

The Board discussed potential changes to the format of the 2026 Board meetings, including changing the format from in-person to virtual and reducing the length of some of the meetings.

The Board approved switching one meeting from in-person to virtual in 2026 and reevaluating the meeting format at the end of the year. M/S/C (Bloch/Bouche; Dr. Taylor abstained)

Dr. Bloch proposed changing the first Board meeting of the year, which is typically held in February, to a virtual format. Attorney Johnson reminded the Board that the Executive Committee meeting that accompanies the first Board meeting of the year would also need to change to a virtual format.

14. Board Business – *Dr. Valerie Palarski, Chair*

- **Other topics or presenters Board members would like at future meetings**

Dr. Taylor proposed scheduling a future presentation on the effects of proposed cuts to Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act cuts.

- **Other issues to come before the Chair**

Dr. Palarski recognized Ms. Marheine's upcoming retirement and thanked her for her years of service.

The Board discussed moving the next meeting from November 5 to either October 29 or December 10. Ms. Gordon proposed moving the meeting to October to complete the annual open records training by the November deadline. The Board unanimously approved rescheduling the meeting to October 29, 2025. M/S/C (Gordon/Bouche)

- **Next meeting dates**

October 29th

12. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 2:04 p.m. M/S/C (Bloch/Taylor)

Respectfully submitted,
Jenny Novey, Recorder