

**GWAAR Board  
Advocacy Update  
4-11-25**

**State**

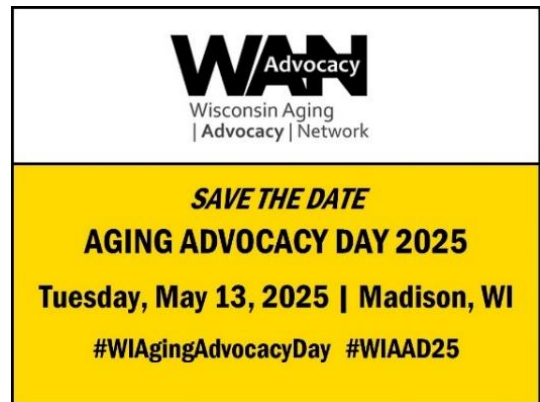
**Aging Advocacy Day 2025 – Save the Date**

Registration is open - <https://gwaar.org/aging-advocacy-day-2025!>

Advocacy priorities include Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) Investment, Direct Care Workforce Supports, Home-Delivered Meal Funding, and Healthy Aging – Falls Prevention Grants.

Find Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN) issue briefs here <https://gwaar.org/waan-issues-and-initiatives>.

Anyone interested in volunteering to help with the event can sign up here: <https://signup.com/go/FelYbrY> or by using the link on the Aging Advocacy Day webpage - <https://gwaar.org/aging-advocacy-day-2025!>



**State Legislation – Alzheimer’s Family and Caregiver Support Program (AFCSP)**

**Action Alert:** Ask Your State Legislators to Protect Wisconsin’s Caregiver Support Programs

**Senate Bill 152 (SB 152) removes income requirements for the Alzheimer's Family and Caregiver Support Program (AFCSP)** to align with the federal National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP). Removing income-based eligibility requirements from AFCSP will protect \$3.5 million in annual federal NFCSP funding and ensure support remains accessible to all families.

**Take Action:** View (SB 152) [Wisconsin Legislature: SB152: Bill Text](#) to see if your state Senator and/or Assembly Representative are signed on as sponsors/ cosponsors on the bill. If they are, please send them a message thanking them for their support of family caregivers. If they are not, please contact them and ask them to protect family caregiver programs by signing on in support of SB 152. Let them know how critical family caregiver supports are to you, your family, and/or those you serve. For more information regarding this request see WAAN's:



- AFCSP Issue Brief: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008453>
- Full Action Alert: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008503>



## State Budget 2025-2027

The state's Joint Finance Committee (JFC) has two remaining State Budget Hearings scheduled - <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/raw/cid/1909520>. If you did not attend either of the first two budget hearings, consider testifying at the budget hearing in Hayward (4/28) or in Wausau (4/29). For tips on testifying before the Joint Finance Committee see: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2006628>.

- April 28 - Hayward High School, Hayward, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- April 29 – Northcentral Technical College, Wausau, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

If you would like to submit written testimony to JFC regarding your priorities for the State Budget, comments can be sent via an online portal at <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/topics/budgetcomment>, by email at [budget.comments@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:budget.comments@legis.wisconsin.gov) or sent via U.S. mail to: Joe Malkasian, Room 305 East, State Capitol, Madison, WI 53702.

For details and talking points on WAAN's budget priorities see: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008488>.

## Federal

### U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Downsizing & Reorganization

On March 27, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced a reorganization (see <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/hhs-restructuring-doge-fact-sheet.html>).

WI Aging & Disability Groups responded to the announcement with this release - (<https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewfile/id/2008511>). The downsizing and restructuring of the department, includes eliminating the Administration for Community Living (ACL) which oversees many programs and services for older adults and people living with disabilities. HHS will reduce its workforce by an additional 10,000 full-time employees (10,000 HHS employees have already accepted buyouts and early retirement offers), consolidate the Department's divisions from 28 to 15, and close five regional offices. HHS's plan includes terminating 300 employees with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), primarily within the Office of Program Operations and Local Engagement, responsible for overseeing the coverage of 60 million Medicare Advantage and marketplace enrollees. The Office of Minority Health, which addresses health disparities in Medicare and Medicaid, will also face downsizing. The restructuring dissolves the Administration for Community Living (ACL), which supports older adults and people with disabilities, and splits the programs it oversees, including the Older Americans Act (OAA) programs, across the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

On March 31, aging advocates from Wisconsin (including GWAAR staff, a board member, and an advisory member, as well as staff and a board member from the Milwaukee Co. Area Agency on Aging) and around the country, participating in USAging's Annual Policy Briefing, had an opportunity to hear from

the Acting ACL administrator and Assistant for Secretary for Aging. She informed advocates that, “nothing would change.” She further indicated that the structure would be new but there would be no changes to programs. She indicated she could not share specifics of where specific staff or programs will go but would tell us more when the decisions have been. On Tues., April 1 (no fooling), as advocates were on Capitol Hill meeting with their Members of Congress, federal workers in HHS were learning they had been let go. One-half of ACL’s staff were fired; raising urgent questions about how the OAA and other ACL programs that support older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers will be administered. The staff reductions included letting go all 10 regional ACL administrators who provide states and Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) around the country with technical assistance and guidance related to OAA programs, the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), and Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP).

On April 2, the Secretary of the Department of HHS announced plans to reinstate some programs and personnel that had been cut as part of the recent restructuring and workforce reduction at HHS (about 20% of the layoffs could be reversed). It is unclear how this might impact ACL or the OAA and other aging service programs.

**Take Action:** USAging is encouraging anyone concerned about how these changes will affect older adults and family caregivers served by these programs, to please **let Senators Ron Johnson and Tammy Baldwin and your Representative know about your questions and concerns as soon as possible.** See the [USAging Advocacy Alert 4-02-25 for talking points and a template email](#). Find contact information for Wisconsin’s Members of Congress at: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008426>.

## Protect Medicaid

### U.S. Senate Prepares to Vote on Budget Resolution

The U.S. Senate is expected to vote on its recently introduced Budget Resolution soon (likely by 4/05/25). The Senate’s budget resolution differs greatly from the resolution bill passed by the House back in Feb. The House plan approved allowing up to \$4.5 trillion in tax cuts, as long as lawmakers find \$2 trillion in spending reductions. To help meet those spending reductions, the House plan directs the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which oversees Medicaid, to cut hundreds of billions of dollars. The Senate plan would allow \$5.3 trillion in tax cuts; this includes giving the Senate Finance Committee (which oversees Medicaid and of which Sen. Ron Johnson is a member) instructions to make \$1.5 trillion in tax cuts, in addition to using an alternative accounting technique that would extend \$3.8 trillion worth of tax cuts (many of which were set to expire in 2026) at what appears as no additional cost.



The Senate’s budget plan includes “reconciliation instructions” for both Senate and House committees. The House instructions call for the committee with jurisdiction over Medicaid to cut at least \$880 billion over ten years and the committee with jurisdiction over food assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP called FoodShare in Wis.) to cut at least \$230 billion (these instructions are the same as those include in the House budget resolution passed in Feb.). The instructions for the Senate Committee with jurisdiction over SNAP is directed to cut at least \$1 billion over ten years and the instruction to the Finance Committee (responsible for the tax provisions and Medicaid) does not clearly assume large Medicaid cuts. This does not; however, prevent deeper cuts to Medicaid, SNAP, and other programs from occurring. The instructions establish the “floor” for the reductions needed and not the ceiling; concern remains that the reconciliation bill could still deepen poverty, raise costs, and leave more people uninsured.

A budget plan must be adopted by both chambers. Once passed in the Senate and House, the budget reconciliation process begins, and Congress can begin writing legislation that makes cuts to federal Medicaid spending and other programs important to older people and family caregivers. Numerous advocacy efforts to save critical programs are happening throughout the country and state. Additional advocacy efforts will be shared as they become available.

### Congress Passes Continuing Resolution to Avert Government Shutdown

Last month, Congress approved a continuing resolution (CR) to fund the federal government for the remainder of fiscal year 2025. The CR extends government funding through Sept. 30. The bill was signed into law by the President on Saturday, March 15, 2025. **The CR level funds Older Americans Act (OAA) programs, the State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs), and most federal agencies at fiscal year 2024 (FY24) levels. Below are some of the program extensions also included in the CR:**

- **Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers (MIPPA) programs** – funding to continue outreach to enroll low-income Medicare beneficiaries in cost-saving Medicare programs through Sept. 30, 2025,
- **Medicare Telehealth** and Hospital-at-home Extensions. The bill would **extend key telehealth waivers** and the hospital-at-home program through Sept. 30, 2025, and
- **Medicare Rural Ambulance.** The bill will extend add-on payments for ambulance services through Oct. 1, 2025. These add-on payments support rural, “super-rural,” and urban ambulance services.

Advocacy efforts to support FY 2026 funding for OAA, elder justice, and the Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) are already in full force, as the House and Senate continue to negotiate on a budget resolution bill that both houses can support. Advocacy efforts to prevent significant cuts to Medicaid (including home and community-based services [HCBS]) and SNAP (FoodShare in Wisconsin) in FY 2026, and to advance OAA Reauthorization will also continue.