

FraudAlert!

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Wisconsin SMP

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• Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups Elder Law Center

From the Project Director. Elizabeth Conrad

Let's Get Acquainted

By Judy Steinke, Wisconsin SMP Volunteer Coordinator

This month our featured volunteer is Carolyn Brandeen of Janesville. Carolyn was introduced to CWAG and the SMP back in 1996-2002 when she served as vice chair and then chair of the Rock County Council on Aging. Carolyn has been and continues to be a very strong advocate for Wisconsin seniors.

Carolyn states, "It pays to be a volunteer." She has been involved in many different organizations and projects over the years, and given her energy and passion, it is no surprise that her volunteer activities provided employment opportunities.

In the 1960's Carolyn was volunteering at a nursery for children with developmental disabilities when she was offered a position as assistant to the director of the nursery. While volunteering at a nursing home in the 1970's, she was recruited to become the volunteer coordinator.

While serving as president of Janesville's Community Council, she was recruited by the UW Extension agent to work with libraries and community centers to provide information to adults considering a return to school.

In the 1980's while serving on an advisory board for a federal job development program (CETA), she was recruited by the Dean of UW Rock County to direct a campus-based continuing education program. She worked in this position for over 7 years and developed programs for video-conferencing and enrichment classes.

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Let's Get Acquainted *continued*

After serving as a census taker in 1980 and 1990, she was recruited to work as a field interviewer for university survey research projects. This assignment offered her the opportunity to travel to: Philadelphia, San Antonio, and Riverside, California. Carolyn enjoys travel and recently visited the beautiful country of France.

In addition to volunteering for the SMP, Carolyn also volunteers at a low-income elementary school, makes regular visits to a local nursing home, is involved with advocating for the extension of recreational trails in Rock County, and is a member of the League of Women Voters.

Carolyn is married and has two grandchildren with whom she enjoys spending time. In her spare time, you can find her enjoying her hobbies, which include hiking, cycling, and reading.

New Legislation Recognizes Important Work of SMPs **By Kevin Brown, Wisconsin SMP Capacity Building Grant Manager/Trainer**

On June 22, Sens. Tom Carper (D-Del.) and Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) introduced legislation to prevent and reduce waste, fraud, and abuse in the Medicare and Medicaid programs. The Medicare and Medicaid Fighting Fraud and Abuse to Save Taxpayers Dollars Act, which is also known as the FAST Act, is cosponsored by a bipartisan group of five senators: three Republicans and two Democrats. Rep. Peter Roskam (R-Ill.) is expected to introduce a companion bill in the House in the coming weeks.

The FAST Act has many provisions to combat Medicare and Medicaid fraud, waste, and abuse, which cost the federal government an estimated \$70 billion in fiscal year 2010. The proposed legislation would enact stronger penalties for Medicare fraud, curb improper payments, curtail the theft of physician identities, help states identify and prevent Medicaid overpayments, improve the sharing of fraud data across agencies and programs, and deploy cutting-edge technology to better identify and prevent fraud. Other provisions would phase out the Medicare "pay and chase" policy and incentivize contractors to avoid overpayments and errors.

The FAST Act would also expand the important fraud identification and reporting work of the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP). The legislation requires Medicare officials to improve outreach to seniors to engage more Medicare beneficiaries in the fight against waste and fraud, especially through the 54 SMP programs across the country.

Since 1997, Wisconsin SMP staff and volunteers have worked in communities throughout the state to educate Medicare beneficiaries, family members, and caregivers about the importance of protecting their personal information, reviewing their Medicare notices to identify billing errors and potentially fraudulent activity, and reporting suspected fraud, waste, and abuse. We are very proud of what we have accomplished over the past 14 years and are pleased that members of Congress from both parties are interested in expanding our efforts in the future.

CWAG Launches Benefits CheckUp Center

The Benefits CheckUp Center is a new program of the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups. The program, which is funded by a grant from the National Council on Aging, is a person-centered, community-based outreach effort to enroll low income seniors and disabled persons in public benefit programs that will assist them in the payment of prescription drugs, medical care, food or utilities.

Many low income seniors and persons with disabilities are unaware of public benefit programs that they may qualify for, due to language barriers, cultural barriers, or an inability to master the benefit system. Older adults and disabled persons are also often not aware of the qualifications limits for these programs.

Because of the economic downturn, many low income seniors and adults with disabilities are struggling to meet their basic needs. “Many of these people are not aware of all of the programs available to help them achieve economic security, or they need assistance applying for them,” said Jim Firman, National Council on Aging CEO.

The volunteers or social workers trained by the Benefits CheckUp Center will use a customized computer program to assess whether an individual is eligible for benefits by taking phone calls from seniors or by meeting with them in person in neighborhoods, senior centers, and affordable housing complexes or at special senior events. If there is no computer access, the volunteer will assist the senior or disabled person in filling out a paper questionnaire and enter the data into their computer later. The Benefit CheckUp Center advises clients of programs that they might qualify for, gives them the contact information for the programs, and counsels them how to enroll in the programs. In many cases, the volunteer will be able to sign up clients for specific programs.

The core Benefits CheckUp Center programs are Medicare Part D Extra Help (Low Income Subsidy); Medicare Savings Programs; Medicaid; SNAP (formerly FoodShare); SeniorCare; Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program; and Homestead Tax Credit.

All low income seniors in all counties in Wisconsin are welcome to participate in the Benefits CheckUp Center, but the program is targeting the Hmong population in La Crosse County and African Americans in Milwaukee and Kenosha Counties.

Another goal of the Benefits CheckUp Center is to follow up with all the clients and make sure that they got enrolled in the programs and are receiving their benefits and to assist them if they are having problems getting enrolled.

The program is working to recruit and coordinate a group of volunteers in each neighborhood or community to take an active role in the program so that the Benefits CheckUp Center will continue in the future after the grant ends.

For more information about the program, please contact Marthe Jones at (800) 366-2990, ext. 323 or mjones@cwag.org.

Menomonee Falls Medical Transport Owner Charged with Medicaid Fraud

Frederick Rutledge, 43, of Menomonee Falls, owner of a Milwaukee medical transport company, Precious Transit, has been charged with falsifying records of dozens of trips to defraud Medicaid out of more than \$10,000. As part of the scheme, Rutledge submitted documentation that listed him as the driver on multiple trips in different vans at the same time, according to the criminal complaint filed in Milwaukee County Circuit Court. He is charged with 18 counts of medical assistance fraud. The charges came following state audits and interviews with former employees.

According to the complaint, Precious Transit started in 2008 with three vans and about 50 clients and quickly grew to 11 vans and about 500 clients, operating in Madison and Milwaukee. Drivers not certified for Medicaid reimbursement were instructed to leave the driver section of the trip records blank. Rutledge and other employees of the company would fill in the blanks with names of certified drivers such as Rutledge. They also routinely overstated the mileage in the records.

Investigators interviewed Rutledge last year, and he said he only drove five or six times in 2009, denying that he committed fraud. When he was shown records that showed him as the recorded driver on more than 190 trips that year, he denied some were his signature and claimed others might have been mistakes because he signed whatever his office manager told him to sign.

Source: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (6/7/2011)

Fraudsters Use Facebook to Buy/Sell Food Stamps: Another Example of Potential Fraud Involving the FoodShare Program

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (MJS) reported at the beginning of June that it found nine Facebook users in Milwaukee and about 70 users nationwide that had attempted to buy or sell public food assistance benefits, or to help others to do so, through posting on Facebook, a social networking site.

One Facebook user, Angela Gunn of Milwaukee, posted a message asking if any of her friends had food stamps to sell. Within four minutes, a potential seller responded to the request. In just over five months, she put out four more online requests for “stamps” and “food stamps.” In an interview, Gunn claimed she had never actually bought FoodShare benefits despite her repeated Facebook updates. She said she sought the benefits to help purchase groceries for herself and her family because her own benefits through the program weren't enough.

The MJS article provides another example of how one can illegally sell the state-issued Quest cards, debit cards used to pay benefits through Wisconsin's \$1 billion a year FoodShare program, and their benefits. In April, the newspaper reported that nearly 2,000 FoodShare recipients claimed they lost their card six or more times in 2010 and requested replacements, a sign investigators say shows many are cheating the program (<http://www.jsonline.com/watchdog/watchdogreports/120550974.html>).

Law enforcement and state officials are also investigating allegations that nine Milwaukee County employees stole at least \$290,000 from FoodShare over the last five years (<http://www.jsonline.com/news/milwaukee/119794529.html>).

Sources: <http://www.jsonline.com/watchdog/watchdogreports/123172423.html> and Wisconsin State Journal (6/6/2011)

Protect Your Child's Identity This Summer

June 24, 2011

MADISON – Now that summer is in full-swing, many children are spending extra hours in front of a computer or on their cell phone with Internet access. Unfortunately, this also makes them ideal targets for identity thieves.

“The younger the victim, the more time these thieves have to exploit the child’s identity,” said Sandy Chalmers, Administrator of the Division of Trade and Consumer Protection. “Identity theft against a child can go undetected for years and do a lot of damage to their good name.”

The Office of Privacy Protection, part of the Bureau of Consumer Protection, reminds parents to tell their children not to give out personal information unless it’s vitally important and exchanged with a reliable source.

The Federal Trade Commission enacted a law in 2000 called COPPA, or Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act. It requires websites directed at children, or that knowingly collect information from kids under 13, to post notice of their information collection practices that includes:

- Types of personal information they collect from kids – for example, name, home address, e-mail address, or hobbies.
- How the site will use the information – for example, to market to the child who supplied the information, to notify contest winners or to make the information available through a child’s participation in a chat room.
- Whether personal information is forwarded to advertisers or other third parties.
- A contact at the site.

“In many cases, a site must obtain parental consent before collecting, using, or disclosing personal information about a child,” added Chalmers. “Parents should review the privacy policy on any website aimed at children.”

In addition to talking to children about potential online dangers, the Bureau of Consumer Protection’s Office of Privacy Protection also encourages parents to occasionally check their child’s credit report. If a report exists, that is a red flag, and often the first sign of identity theft.

“The credit reporting agencies do not knowingly maintain credit files on children,” Chalmers explained. “A check of your child’s credit should turn up nothing until the age of 18 unless they are a victim of identity theft or a secondary user on a credit card authorized by a parent.”

For more information about identity theft and privacy protection laws, visit www.privacy.wi.gov or call the Bureau’s Office of Privacy Protection at 1-800-422-7128.

Updates from Recent Health Care Fraud Prevention Summit: Focus on New Technology to Help Fight Medicare Fraud

On June 17, 2011, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder hosted the sixth regional health care fraud prevention summit in Philadelphia, where many of the nation's health care fraud recoveries have taken place. In the past two calendar years, the Department of Justice has recorded \$2.69 billion in recoveries in the area.

Nationwide, according to the HHS news release on the summit, over \$4 billion in fiscal year (FY) 2010 was returned to the Medicare Health Insurance Trust Fund, the U.S. Department of the Treasury and others as a result of enforcement activities targeting false claims and fraud perpetrated against government health care programs. This represents an increase of \$1.4 billion, or 56 percent, over FY 2009. The \$4 billion includes recoveries from the \$2.5 billion in settlements and judgments obtained in FY 2010 by the Department of Justice in False Claims Act matters alleging health care fraud.

At the summit, Secretary Sebelius announced that HHS will begin using innovative predictive modeling technology on July 1, 2011 to identify fraudulent Medicare claims before they are paid. Medicare has awarded the initial \$77 million contract for the new system to Northrop Grumman in partnership with National Government Services and Federal Network Systems, a Verizon subsidiary.

“For the first time, CMS will have an integrated view of fee-for-service Medicare claims nationwide, providing our investigators both the ability to see billing patterns in real time and the technology to analyze those patterns,” said Sebelius. “These are the same type of predictive modeling tools that banks and insurance companies use to identify potential fraud. They are how your credit card company can raise the alarm if they see a dozen flat-screen televisions charged to your card in one day.”

The technology system will look at such variables as the beneficiary, the provider, the type of service, and other patterns. Based on its analysis, the system will assign alerts and risk scores to potentially fraudulent claims. Medicare will then be able to investigate the claim before the payment is sent out.

According to a CMS press release, “This initiative builds on the new anti-fraud tools and resources provided by the Affordable Care Act that are helping move CMS beyond its former ‘pay & chase’ recovery operations to an approach that focuses on preventing fraud and abuse before payment is made.”

More information on the predictive modeling and HHS’ effort to detect fraud and abuse are available www.HealthCare.gov/news/factsheets/fraud03152011a.html

Sources: HHS Press Office, CMS Media Relations Group and Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (6/18/2011)

This article is reprinted with permission of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

More People with Medicare Receiving Free Preventive Care

New CMS campaign to educate seniors about new free preventive care provided by Affordable Care Act

June 20, 2011

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) today released a new report showing that more than 5 million Americans with traditional Medicare – or nearly one in six people with Medicare – took advantage of one or more of the recommended preventive benefits now available for free thanks to the Affordable Care Act. Also today, Medicare launched a nationwide public outreach campaign, including a letter to doctors and a new Public Service Announcement that will raise awareness about all of the important preventive benefits now covered at no charge to patients, including the new Annual Wellness Visit benefit created by the Affordable Care Act.

According to the report, over 5.5 million beneficiaries in traditional Medicare used one or more of the preventive benefits now covered without cost-sharing including, most prominently, mammograms, bone density screenings, and screenings for prostate cancer. In 2011, Medicare began covering an Annual Wellness Visit at no cost to Medicare beneficiaries.

Medicare's *Share the News, Share the Health* campaign will run throughout the summer, with online ads and community events all over the country starting in July. HHS is releasing a nationwide public service announcement that is available on www.youtube.com/CMSHHSgov. As part of these outreach efforts, CMS has issued a "Dear Doctor" letter to providers today, calling on them to discuss preventive care with their patients.

The agency also launched the full Spanish version of the www.Medicare.gov website, <http://es.Medicare.gov>. In addition, Medicare's dedicated caregivers' website "Ask Medicare" (www.Medicare.gov/caregivers) now has a prevention section especially for caregivers. You can find additional information on prevention benefits on line at www.Medicare.gov, and at www.healthcare.gov (click on "Learn about Prevention" at the top).

This announcement comes during Prevention & Wellness Month, as the Obama Administration is highlighting announcements, activities, and tips that will help Americans get healthy and stay healthy.

To read the entire CMS Press Release issued today (6/20) click here:

<http://www.cms.gov/apps/media/press/release.asp?Counter=3987>

SMP & CWAG Activities

Date	Activity	County
June 1	SMP Volunteer and Professional Partner Luncheon-Eau Claire	Eau Claire
June 3-4	SMP Booth-Supermarket of Veterans Benefits-Green Bay	Brown
June 7	SMP Presentation-Menomonee Falls Library	Waukesha
June 8	SMP Volunteer and Professional Partner Luncheon-Rhineland	Oneida
June 9	SMP Presentation Neenah-Menasha Kiwanis Group	Winnebago
June 14	9 th Annual Ozaukee County Senior Conference-Grafton	Ozaukee
June 15	SMP Volunteer and Professional Partner Luncheon-Madison	Dane
June 21	SMP Foundations Volunteer Training-Two Rivers	Manitowoc
June 23	Preventing Elder Fraud-Froedtert Health Community Memorial Hospital	Waukesha
July 12-14	Wisconsin Farm Technology Days-Marshfield	Marathon
July 13-17	La Crosse County Interstate Fair-West Salem	La Crosse
July 16	SMP Booth-Taste of Rome Event	Adams
July 19	SMP Presentation-Milwaukee Yacht Club	Milwaukee
August 9-11	National SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol) Conference-Washington DC	
September 21	Presentation-Kelly Senior Center-Cudahy	Milwaukee
October 4	SMP Booth-Beloit Senior Fair	Rock
October 11	23 rd Colloquium on Aging Conference & Health & Resource Fair	Dane
October 13-14	Wisconsin AIRS Conference-Kalahari	Sauk
October 28	Rock County Senior Fair-Janesville	Rock
November 11	SMP Presentation-Separated, Divorced, and Widowed Group	Washington

We are always looking for opportunities to support our colleagues in the aging network. Please contact Wisconsin SMP and let us know about your upcoming 2011 activities.

HospiceCare Inc. to Offer Two Question-and-Answer Seminars in July

Two free educational seminars will be presented at HospiceCare Inc. in Madison during July. Both will be held at the Don & Marilyn Anderson HospiceCare Center, 5395 E. Cheryl Parkway, Madison. On Tuesday, July 12, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., HospiceCare will offer “Spiritual Needs and Questions at the End of Life.” Participants will learn how to address spiritual questions and concerns of the dying and find out about spiritual preparation at the end of life. On Monday, July 18, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., HospiceCare will offer “Making the HospiceCare Choice,” a presentation about the support that’s available for people with life-limiting conditions, and their caregivers. Participants will learn who is eligible, in what settings the care can be provided, and who pays for HospiceCare. A tour of the HospiceCare buildings will be offered following the seminar for those who are interested.

Pre-registration is requested; please call Carrie Glantz, HospiceCare public affairs, at (608) 327-7202.

HospiceCare to Offer Three Grief Support Opportunities in July

In July, HospiceCare Inc. will begin a grief support group series, offer a recurring support group and provide an introductory session for those grieving the death of a loved one. All of the sessions are open to the public and are provided without charge, unless otherwise noted. All groups require pre-registration and are held at the Don & Marilyn Anderson HospiceCare Center, 5395 E. Cheryl Parkway, Madison, unless otherwise noted. To register for any HospiceCare grief support group or session, call (608) 276-4660 and ask to speak with a grief counselor.

- ***Kids Grief Retreat*** is held Saturday and Sunday, July 30 and 31, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. This two-day grief retreat is for kids and teens grieving the death of someone close to them. Participants will be split into age-appropriate groups.
- ***Bridges Weekly Support Group*** is held every Wednesday from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Pre-registration is not required.
- ***Introduction to Grief*** is an informative session for adults that offers suggestions on how to navigate the grieving process and provides information about HospiceCare grief support groups. This session is available by appointment only. Call Mary Severson at (608) 327-7182 to make an appointment.

Family Caregiver Education Series

Join the Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin on Monday, July 11, 2011, 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. at their offices at 517 N. Segoe Rd., Madison for this month's Family Caregiver Education Series session. The topic will be, "Is your home really safe for someone with dementia? What you may not know." Home safety is more than disabling the stove and removing throw rugs. Discover ways to look at the home with new eyes and be proactive about potential hazards.

No registration necessary, just drop in. Donations appreciated. Questions? Call the Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance at (608) 232-3400.

FRAUD ALERT – ELECTRONIC VERSION

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giving her your e-mail address,
to add to our list.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Check out the new Wisconsin SMP web site
www.wisconsinsmp.org

You Can also Access Our Publication by visiting our new web site www.wisconsinsmp.org
Or you can visit the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups web site www.cwag.org
Click on Publications then click on Wisconsin Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) and scroll down
and click on the edition you wish to view.

ATTENTION: All of you with E-mail...

In an effort to save paper, postage and be “volunteer friendly,” we will E-mail issues of the *Fraud Alert* to those who have E-mail. Please contact Patti Wiersma at pwiersma@cwag.org, giving her your e-mail address to add to our list. **WE DO SUGGEST THAT YOU PRINT EACH ISSUE AND SAVE IT IN YOUR MEDICARE BINDER FOR FUTURE USE. Thank you!**

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