

FraudAlert!

Helping keep the promise.



May 2012 • Volume 15, No. 10

• Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups Elder Law Center

From the Project Director. Elizabeth Conrad

Check out our website at www.wisconsinsmp.org

Let's Get Acquainted

By Judy Steinke, Wisconsin SMP Volunteer Coordinator

It all began with a fire drill. Joanne and John Schroeder of Manitowoc are this month's featured Wisconsin SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol) volunteers. While in high school, they began dating after striking up a conversation and setting up their first date during a fire drill. Since that time, they have continued to enjoy doing things together. When they first heard a radio Public Service Announcement recruiting volunteers for the Wisconsin SMP, they knew that this was something that they could do together.

After marriage, Joanne continued to work in the purchasing department at Manitowoc's Aluminum Specialty Company until the birth of their son. John was employed in Two Rivers by the Hamilton Manufacturing Company, which later became Thermo Fisher. He started as a production worker and worked his way up to become the general superintendent in charge of two plants. John retired after 45 years with the company.

Joanne and John have been involved with many other volunteer activities over the years. Joanne assisted with the funeral dinners served at their church until she had the opportunity to babysit for her two grandchildren. John has been involved with the Volunteer Patrol for the Manitowoc Sheriff's Department and the local TRIAD Group, which is a three-way commitment among the police department, the sheriff's department, and senior citizens. They work together to prevent the victimization of the elderly population. John is also a substitute driver for the county Aging and Disability Resource Center.

Continued on page 2

FRAUD ALERT! • Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups Elder Law Center

Wisconsin SMP

In this issue:

Let's Get Acquainted with Joanne and John Schroeder, SMP Volunteers
WI SMP to Hold Volunteer Trainings in Neillsville, Madison, and Superior
Seven Milwaukee Residents Convicted of Medicaid Fraud
Milwaukee Medical Transportation Company Guilty of Medicaid Fraud
Other Consumer Scams
ABC for Rural Health & Community Health Centers Awarded Federal Grants
Historic Medicare Fraud Bust
More than 25% of U.S. Adults Lack Health Insurance in 2011
CWAG Annual Convention
CWAG & SMP Activities

Published and distributed by the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups Elder Law Center funded in part by grant #90MP0016 from the Administration on Aging, Department of Health and Human Services. Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Administration on Aging Policy.

EDITOR AND PROJECT DIRECTOR

Elizabeth Conrad

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Lisa Turner

This publication may be reproduced ONLY in its entirety. Permission to excerpt portions must be obtained prior to use.

© 2012 CWAG. All rights reserved.



Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups
Advocacy ■ Membership ■ Elder Law

2850 Dairy Drive
Madison, WI 53718-6742
608-224-0606

www.cwag.org • econrad@cwag.org

Let's Get Acquainted *continued*

The hobbies of Joanne and John are centered on spending time with their family and friends. They both love to polka and keep in shape by dancing as often as possible. Another favorite activity has been attending their grandchildren's swimming and baseball events. John and his grandson also enjoy target shooting, rabbit hunting, and fishing together.

Joanne and John enjoy being with people, making new friends, and sharing the SMP message with Manitowoc County seniors. Thank you, Joanne and John, for the work that you do to protect seniors!

WI SMP to Hold Volunteer Trainings in Neillsville, Madison, and Superior **By Kevin Brown, Wisconsin SMP Capacity Building Grant Manager/Trainer**

On May 16, the National Association for Area Agencies on Aging and its partners launched the Aging Network's Volunteer Collaborative, an initiative to increase the number of older adult volunteers to one million by 2015. The Volunteer Collaborative, which is funded by the U.S. Administration on Aging, is a comprehensive online resource center to help leaders in the aging and disability networks engage senior volunteers to expand and improve services for their peers.

I am pleased to report that two SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol) programs, Louisiana and Vermont, received "What's Working" awards at the event launching the Volunteer Collaborative. There are almost 5,000 hard-working SMP volunteers who make presentations to groups and distribute materials at community events across the country to educate Medicare beneficiaries, caregivers, and professionals about how to prevent, detect, and report healthcare fraud, waste, and abuse. It is always very gratifying when some of them get the recognition they deserve.

Wisconsin SMP has dozens of dedicated volunteers, but we are always looking for new volunteers so that we can spread our message of fraud prevention to more people around the state. We will be hosting three workshops for new volunteers this summer. Wisconsin SMP Volunteer Trainings will be held from 9:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. at the following locations:

- Clark County Courthouse, Neillsville -- June 21
- Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups, Madison -- July 11
- St. Mary's Hall, Superior -- August 14

The Wisconsin SMP Volunteer Training is an in-depth workshop that provides participants with a foundation of knowledge in three main areas: the SMP program, Medicare basics, and Medicare fraud, waste, and abuse. If you would like to attend one of these sessions, please contact me at (800) 488-2596, ext. 315 or kbrown@cwag.org.

Older Americans Month: 2012 Theme is "Never Too Old to Play"

May is Older Americans Month, and the theme selected for this year is "never too old to play." Play can mean a variety of different things to different people and different generations. Older people played records or albums on phonographs during their teen years. Today's teens play iPods. Older generations played cards and board games. Today's teens play electronic games – some online, so they may not even be in the same city as their opponents. Older generations found enjoyment in

jumping rope and playing marbles and hopscotch outdoors. Today's youth have opportunities to play more competitive and organized outdoor sports.

Times do change, but the message to take away from this year's slogan is that staying active and enjoying life is a lifelong adventure. The activities to participate in may change, but the need to take some time to play will always be there.

According to the website of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, as you age, you lose muscle and bone mass and may develop problems with your muscles, joints, and bones. Regular exercise can slow down this process and also improve mobility and balance. Benefits may be obtained from just 30 minutes of moderate physical activity each day. The key is to find an activity that you enjoy and will commit to doing regularly.

Keeping fit mentally is also important as you age. The website of the Geriatric Mental Health Foundation suggests that physical activity and a diet that helps lower cholesterol levels and blood pressure helps to keep our minds healthy. Research shows that activities that stimulate our minds, such as doing crossword puzzles, reading, writing, and learning new things, play a key role in keeping our brains healthy. Staying engaged with others both socially and through volunteering is also important to staying mentally fit.

Wisconsin SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol) continues to recruit volunteers statewide. If you or someone you know would be interested in learning something new and helping to protect others from healthcare fraud, please contact us at: (800) 488-2596, Ext. 342.

Seven Milwaukee Residents Convicted of Medicaid Fraud

On April 16, six Milwaukee residents pleaded guilty to defrauding the Wisconsin Medicaid program out of more than \$1 million. They, and a seventh defendant who pleaded guilty in March, were charged in October with filing bogus claims for mechanical devices to support weakened joints and limbs, which were never provided. The six defendants who were convicted in April each pleaded guilty to three felony counts of Medicaid fraud. Each count carries a maximum penalty of three years in prison and three years of extended supervision. Sentencing has been scheduled for June 7 and 28.

The Wisconsin Department of Justice's criminal complaint against the seven defendants states that they were engaged in a scheme to defraud the Wisconsin Medicaid program by submitting claims for payment for durable medical equipment (DME) used for orthotic purposes. Orthotics is a branch of medicine that utilizes specialized mechanical devices to support weakened joints or limbs.

All seven defendants had submitted applications to Wisconsin Medicaid to become DME providers. They completed the application process and were granted a provider number and authorization to bill Medicaid for services provided. The equipment the defendants claimed that they provided required specialized medical treatment for installation and use; therefore, there should have been complementary claims from hospitals or physicians for the equipment claims. The complementary claims were never filed and the recipients for whom the devices were allegedly provided did not know the providers, nor did they have a need for orthotic devices.

The total amount claimed through this scheme was \$1,253,817, but the Bureau of Public Integrity at the Wisconsin Department of Health Services was able to identify and intercept \$199,747 before the claims were paid.

The seven Milwaukee residents who were convicted of Medicaid fraud are:

1. Donnis Carrington, 37, doing business as (d/b/a) DC Medical Services.
2. Lynnesha Craig, 31, d/b/a Wisdom Medical Supply.
3. Erica Danley, 35, d/b/a Essential Services.
4. Darius Jarrett, 40, d/b/a Great Medical Services.
5. Elizabeth Thomas, 35, d/b/a Direct Medical Supply.
6. Ericka Thomas, 26, d/b/a Ericka's Medical Supply.
7. Kimberly Thomas, 44, d/b/a Cudahy Medical Supply.

Sources: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (April 16, 2012) and Wisconsin Department of Justice

Milwaukee Medical Transportation Company Guilty of Medicaid Fraud

A medical transportation firm in Milwaukee was convicted of 18 counts of Medicaid fraud on May 1. The owner of Precious Transit, Frederick Rutledge, 44, of Menomonee Falls, was initially charged in June 2011 with falsifying records to defraud the Wisconsin Medicaid program out of more than \$10,000. The charge was later amended by the state to list the company as the defendant, and Rutledge pleaded no-contest to 18 counts of fraud. Milwaukee County Circuit Judge Jeffrey A. Wagner declared the defendant guilty and ordered him to pay a fine of \$10,000, plus costs, which must be paid within 60 days or it will convert to a civil judgment.

Precious Transit began operations in 2008 with three vans and about 50 clients but eventually grew to 11 vans serving around 500 clients in Milwaukee and Madison. Some of the company's drivers were not certified for Medicaid reimbursement and were told to leave the driver section of their trip tickets blank. Rutledge, along with other employees, would then fill in the blanks with the names of certified drivers. In addition, the firm routinely overstated its mileage.

Source: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (May 2, 2012)

Oak Creek Man Fined \$20,000 for Charity Scam

Michael T. Messmer, of Oak Creek, has agreed to pay \$20,000 for what state officials say was a scam to solicit donations by using candy donation canisters designed to suggest that the money would help find missing children. Messmer denies the allegations against him but signed a consent judgment ordering him to make the payment, which covers fines, fees, and surcharges.

In the same enforcement action, filed in 2010 in Waukesha County, Marilyn L. Broerman, of North Carolina, is also listed as a defendant. In December, Broerman signed a similar consent judgment and will also pay \$20,000. According to the Wisconsin Department of Justice, Broerman created the scheme and sold hundreds of the canisters to Messmer.

Messmer placed more than 700 candy canisters at small businesses throughout southeastern Wisconsin. The canisters suggested individuals donate \$1 in exchange for five little pieces of candy. Messmer allegedly paid more than \$30,000 for the canisters, candy, and other operational costs. He made the purchase in response to an ad that implied he could earn \$3,000 a week. M. Nicol Padway, Messmer's attorney, said that some of the money did indeed go to charity and that Messmer disposed of the canisters before the state went to court in 2010.

Source: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (May 3, 2012)

Oshkosh Woman Accused of Selling Phony Facebook Shares Faces New Charges

Marianne Oleson, an Oshkosh resident accused of selling fake shares of Facebook stock, is now facing additional charges. On April 18, Oleson, who is 46 years old, was charged with 22 additional felonies, including perjury and theft by false representation. The new charges are in addition to the 34 counts she is already facing.

Prosecutors allege that Oleson deceived at least four people into buying Facebook shares from her. A criminal complaint states that one man gave Oleson \$28,000 in cash and concrete work in exchange for some stock documents that appeared to be genuine.

Source: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (April 20, 2012)

ABC for Rural Health Awarded \$449,000 Federal Grant

ABC for Rural Health Inc. and a group of community partners have been awarded a three-year federal grant for \$449,000 for a counseling project in western Wisconsin on mental health benefits. Based in Balsam Lake, ABC for Rural Health is an affiliate of ABC for Health, a public interest law firm in Madison. The project will help people understand the mental health benefits covered by private health plans and other benefits that might be available through government programs. "Too often, persons with mental health needs cannot navigate the complicated bureaucracy of public and private insurance benefits," said Project Director Mike Rust. "If patients are lucky enough to even have coverage, they may have benefits unfairly limited, terminated, or denied by both public and private coverage programs."

The project partners include the Polk County Health Department and Human Services Department, St. Croix Regional Medical Center, Peace Tree Counseling, an evaluator from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and ABC for Health. "It's an opportunity to build a better model that could go statewide," said Bobby Peterson, a lawyer with ABC for Health.

Funding for the project comes from the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Source: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (May 3, 2012)

Five Community Health Centers in Wisconsin Receive Expansion Grants

Five community health centers in Wisconsin have been awarded a total of \$16.1 million in federal grants to expand their operations. The grants are part of \$11 billion allocated under the Affordable Care Act to expand community health centers across the country. The health centers, located in low-income urban neighborhoods and rural areas, provide care primarily for individuals who are uninsured or on Medicaid. People without health insurance are treated on a sliding-fee scale based on their incomes.

Community health centers provided care for around 271,000 individuals in Wisconsin in 2010, which is more than three times the number of people they treated in 1999. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the grants will help the centers provide care for an additional 29,306 patients in Wisconsin and an additional 860,000 people in the U.S.

The Affordable Care Act allocated \$9.5 billion to expand community health centers over five years and \$1.5 billion to support construction and renovation projects. Subsequent federal budget cuts have reduced the amount available for the community health centers by \$3 billion over five years. DHHS officials said that the federal health care reform law has supported the construction and renovation of 190 clinics and the creation of 67 new clinics across the country.

The five community health centers in Wisconsin that were awarded the grants are:

- Progressive Community Health Centers, Inc., Milwaukee, \$5 million
- Family Health Center of Marshfield Inc., Marshfield, \$4.4 million
- Primary Connection Health Care Inc., Wausau, \$3.4 million
- Madison Community Health Center Inc., Madison, \$3 million
- Outreach Community Health Centers, Milwaukee, \$348,853

Progressive Community Health Centers, Inc. will use its grant funds to replace its current 8,500-square-foot clinic on Lisbon Avenue in one of the poorest neighborhoods in Milwaukee with a 42,000-square-foot clinic. The new clinic is projected to cost between \$10 and \$11 million. Froedtert Health has also committed to contribute \$2 million for the project. Progressive Community Health Center, Inc. plans to begin construction in six to nine months and to open the new clinic in the summer of 2014. The community health center provided care for 8,500 people last year and anticipates seeing close to 20,000 patients a year in five years with its new clinic.

Source: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (May 2, 2012)

Historic Medicare Fraud Bust: 107 Doctors, Nurses, and Social Workers Charged

On May 2, federal authorities charged 107 doctors, nurses, and social workers in seven cities with Medicare fraud in a nationwide crackdown on a series of scams that allegedly billed the program \$452 million, which is the highest dollar amount in a single Medicare bust in U.S. history.

The bust was the latest in a series of major arrests over the past two years on healthcare fraud, which costs the government an estimated \$60 to \$90 billion a year. U.S. Health and Human Services

Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and Attorney General Eric Holder partnered in 2009 to increase fraud enforcement by allocating more money and staff and creating strike forces in high fraud areas. “When President Obama took office he asked Attorney General Holder and me to make fraud prevention a cabinet-level priority,” Sebelius said.

Hundreds of federal agents spread out throughout the country to raid businesses, seize documents and charge 107 suspects in Miami, Los Angeles, Houston, Detroit, Chicago, Tampa, and Baton Rouge. The government also suspended payment to 52 providers. “We are determined to bring to justice those who violate our laws and defraud the Medicare program for personal gain,” said Attorney General Eric Holder.

Among those arrested were the owners of two community mental health centers in Baton Rouge, who were charged with fraudulently billing Medicare for \$225 million. Hoor Naz Jafri and Roslyn Dogan allegedly recruited vulnerable patients, such as elderly people, drug addicted individuals, and the mentally ill. The patients’ charts were altered to indicate services that were billed to Medicare but never provided. Authorities suspended their companies in May 2011, but they purchased another fraudulent company and continued to bill Medicare. When federal officials shut down that company, the pair attempted to sell their “beneficiaries” to other providers for financial gain.

During the investigation, Dogan requested to visit the U.S. Attorney’s Office to review and copy documents that had been seized in the search. According to the indictment, “Dogan and co-conspirators bragged that, while pretending to copy files, they actually stole incriminating documents from the files and later destroyed them.” Dogan and Jafri could face life in prison if convicted. Five others were charged in connection with the Baton Rouge scam, capping a six-year investigation.

Source: The Huffington Post (May 2, 2012)

More than 25% of U.S. Adults Lacked Health Insurance in 2011

A new survey has found that more than a quarter of adults ages 19-64 in the U.S. lacked health insurance for at least some period of time in 2011. In addition, nearly 70% of those without health insurance had been lacking coverage for more than a year, according to a study conducted by the nonprofit Commonwealth Fund, a leading authority on health policy.

Nearly 50 million people in the country lack health care coverage, as jobs are eliminated and health benefits are cut back by employers. Research indicates that people without health insurance often skip needed medical care and do not receive vital preventative services. According to the Commonwealth Fund survey, 28% of women ages 40 to 64 who had been without insurance for a year or more had received a mammogram while 74% of women in the same age group with health insurance had received a mammogram within the last two years.

The Affordable Care Act is slated to guarantee coverage to all Americans beginning in 2014. Under the federal health care reform law, insurance companies will no longer be allowed to exclude people with pre-existing conditions and low- and moderate-income Americans will be able to get subsidies to help them buy health coverage. The authors of the Commonwealth Fund study predicted that the coverage gaps would be reduced as a result of the new law.

Source: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (April 20, 2012)

CWAG to Hold Annual Convention on July 26-27 in Stevens Point

Many Wisconsinites are concerned about the lack of bipartisan compromise and are ready to turn the page to a future with elected officials who are committed to implementing common sense policies and working together in the best interest of Wisconsin citizens. At this year's Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups (CWAG) Annual Statewide Convention, which will be held at the Holiday Inn Hotel & Convention Center in Stevens Point on July 26-27, participants will hear from current and former Democratic and Republican office holders and will have the opportunity to learn what bi-partisan efforts are needed to move Wisconsin forward.

A highlight of this year's convention will be two forums for the U.S. Senate and 7th Congressional District candidates.

This year's CWAG convention will feature:

- A bipartisan panel discussion of former Wisconsin legislators discussing Wisconsin's history of bipartisanship and common sense solutions and how we can move forward in the current polarized political climate.
- Dynamic candidate forums for the individuals vying to represent Wisconsin in the U.S. Senate and 7th Congressional District.
- A training entitled *Protecting and Empowering Wisconsin's Citizens* on how to protect yourself and your family from identity theft, how to detect and report Medicare and Medicaid fraud, and safeguarding your rights and the rights of your loved one in a nursing home or assisted living facility.
- A celebration honoring the hard work of State Senators Dale Schultz (R) and Tim Cullen (D) for their bipartisan leadership in the Wisconsin State Senate and retired Congressman Dave Obey (D) who has worked tirelessly on behalf of Wisconsin's 1.3 million elderly and people with disabilities.

For more information about the convention or to register online, go to www.cwag.org.

CWAG Activities

Date	Activity	County
July 26-27	CWAG Annual Convention-Stevens Point	Portage
November 14-16	CWAG Senior Statesmanship Class-Madison	Dane

SMP Activities

Date	Activity	County
May 3	SMP Booth-60+ Expo-Pontiac Convention Center-Janesville	Rock
May 3-4	Wisconsin Volunteer Coordinators' Annual Conference	Sheboygan
May 7-8	SMP Presentation & Booth-State Alzheimer's Conference	Sauk
May 11	SMP Booth-Multi-Cultural Senior Health Fair-Madison	Dane
May 14	SMP Update Training-Onalaska	La Crosse
May 15	SMP Booth-Women's Health Policy Summit-Madison	Dane
May 15	SMP Booth-Faith in Action Health Fair-Rothschild	Marathon
May 15	SMP Presentation-St. Claire Coalition of Parish Nurses-Baraboo	Sauk
May 16	SMP Presentation-VOICES Group-Rhineland	Oneida
May 16	SMP Presentation-Portland Square Apts.-Fond du Lac	Fond du Lac
May 16	SMP Booth-Community Healthy Living Fair-Fish Creek	Door
May 16	SMP Presentation-Cadott Senior Center-Cadott	Chippewa
May 23	SMP Presentation-Monona Senior Center	Dane
May 23	SMP Booth-Health Fair-Manitowoc Ice Center	Manitowoc
May 23	SMP Booth-Senior Resource Fair-Marshfield	Wood
May 24	SMP Booth-It Takes a Village Caregiver Fair-Wisconsin Rapids	Wood
June 4	SMP Presentation-Neighbor to Neighbor Group-Sturgeon Bay	Door
June 7	SMP Booth & Presentation-Vital Aging Conference-La Crosse	La Crosse
June 12	SMP Booth-Prevention Summit-Neenah	Winnebago
June 12	SMP Presentation-Columbus Manor Apts.-Columbus	Columbia
June 12	SMP Presentation-Terrace Estates-Sheboygan	Sheboygan
June 14-15	SMP Presentation & Booth-WI Assn. of Service Coords. Conf.	Dane
June 15	SMP Presentation-World Elder Abuse Awareness Event-Kenosha	Kenosha
June 20	SMP Presentation-Grace United Methodist Church-Wautoma	Waushara
June 21	SMP Volunteer Foundations Training-Neillsville	Clark
June 22	SMP Presentation-West Madison Senior Center-Madison	Dane
July 11	SMP Volunteer Foundations Training-Madison	Dane
July 14	SMP Booth-Taste of Rome	Adams
July 17-19	SMP Booth-Farm Technology Days-New London	Outagamie
July 26-27	SMP Presentation & Booth-CWAG Convention-Stevens Point	Portage
August 14	SMP Volunteer Foundations Training-Superior	Douglas
August 15	SMP Presentation-St. Mary's Hall-Superior	Douglas
August 28	SMP Presentation-Grobschmidt Senior Center-South Milwaukee	Milwaukee
September 6	SMP Presentation-South Wood County Heart Club	Wood
September 24	SMP Booth-WI Counties Association Annual Conf.-La Crosse	La Crosse
October 2	SMP Booth-Colloquium on Aging-Madison	Dane

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

FRAUD ALERT – ELECTRONIC VERSION

In previous issues, we told you that Wisconsin SMP *Fraud Alert* will be sent electronically unless we receive a “request for a paper copy” from you.

Contact Lisa Turner at lturner@cwag.org,
giving her your e-mail address,
to add to our list.
Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Check out the new Wisconsin SMP website
www.wisconsinsmp.org

You Can also Access Our Publication by visiting our website www.wisconsinsmp.org
Or you can visit the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups website 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 Lisa Turner at lturner@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!**

For more information, contact:

Elizabeth Conrad, SMP Project Director
Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups Elder Law Center
2850 Dairy Drive – Suite 100
Madison, WI 53718-6742
Phone: 800/488-2596 608/224-0606
E-mail: econrad@cwag.org

