

FraudAlert!

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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

Wisconsin SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol) introduces Linda Darmody of Green Bay as this month's featured volunteer.

Linda joined SMP in June 2011 after a co-worker told her about the program and a training that was going to be offered in Two Rivers. Linda was planning to retire soon, and given her professional background, SMP sounded like a program that would interest her. Linda was employed by ASPIRO, a nonprofit that serves individuals with disabilities, for almost 38 years. She served as an intake social worker, case manager, community employment specialist, and the Director of Resource Development (for the last 20 years).

During her career, Linda worked closely with the Social Security Administration and developed an interest in issues related to Social Security and Medicare. In addition to her volunteer work for SMP, she also volunteers for Unity Hospice, ASPIRO, and the Brown County Human Services Department. When asked why she volunteers, Linda said "I enjoy meeting people and knowing that I may be making a difference in their lives."

When not volunteering, Linda enjoys reading, going to the movies, knitting, and travel. She and her husband, Dale, recently celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary with a trip to Europe. They also travel frequently to visit their children and grandchildren who are located in Minnesota and Chicago.

In addition to giving SMP presentations in the Brown County area, Linda also represents Wisconsin SMP at the meetings of the Bay Area Managers of Volunteer Services. Thank you, Linda, for joining SMP and for sharing your time and expertise with Wisconsin Medicare beneficiaries!

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Wisconsin SMP

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

Martin Luther King Jr. said, “Everyone can be great because anyone can serve.” A report released last month by the Corporation for National and Community Service and the National Conference on Citizenship confirms what Wisconsin SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol) has known for many years: there are a lot of great people in our state.

The report, “Volunteering and Civic Life in America,” found that more than 1.5 million Wisconsin residents volunteered through a formal organization in 2011. Wisconsinites contributed 154.8 million hours of their time to volunteer efforts, and their service was valued at \$3.4 billion. Our state’s volunteer rate (33.8% of residents) ranked tenth among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, and the Badger State’s “older adult volunteer rate” (32.8%) was the eighth highest.

Wisconsin SMP has dozens of dedicated volunteers, and they contributed 844 hours of service to our program in 2012. Our hard-working SMP volunteers make presentations to groups and distribute materials at community events across the state to educate Medicare beneficiaries, caregivers, and professionals about how to prevent, detect, and report healthcare fraud, waste, and abuse.

Wisconsin SMP has a great group of volunteers, but we are always looking for new ones so that we can spread our message of fraud prevention to more people around the state. I am pleased to announce that we will be hosting two workshops for new volunteers in February. Wisconsin SMP Volunteer Trainings will be held from 9:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. at the following locations:

- Onalaska Public Library – February 13
- Aging and Disability Resource Center of Waukesha County – February 22

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. It is open to volunteers and professionals who are interested in learning how to protect seniors from healthcare fraud. If you would like to attend one of the February sessions, please contact me at (800) 488-2596, ext. 315 or kbrown@cwag.org.

Reprinted with permission of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

January 4, 2013

DATCP Consumer Alert: Medicare Card Scam Pops up in Wisconsin

MADISON – If you receive a phone call claiming that you need a replacement Medicare card, hang up! It is a scam.

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) recently received a complaint on behalf of a senior who received a phone call from a group calling itself “Preferred Benefits to Seniors.” By the end of the call, this consumer had turned over her bank account number to the caller, but was able to close her bank account before any money was stolen.

A number of consumers have complained on different scam-tracking websites about receiving similar calls from this group. In their complaints, consumers note that the caller often tells seniors that they need replacement Medicare cards. In order to process the new card, the caller asks to “verify” the senior’s personal information and asks for the senior’s bank account number.

The caller typically provides a toll-free number for any future inquiries, but the number is simply linked to an answering service and no additional information on the group is made available.

Remember that representatives with the Medicare program will never call you to verify personal information. If you receive a call about a replacement Medicare card, hang up immediately. If you or a family member receives a similar call and turns banking information over to the caller, you should immediately contact your bank and inform them of the situation. The bank may choose to close the account and issue you a new account number.

For more information on consumer topics, visit <http://datcp.wisconsin.gov>, send an e-mail to datcphotline@wisconsin.gov or call the hotline toll-free at [1-800-422-7128](tel:1-800-422-7128).

Connect with us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/wiconsumer.

Brookfield PD Warns Residents about Theft Ring Targeting Elderly Women

The City of Brookfield Police Department issued a crime alert in late November stating that area elderly women were being targeted by multiple white men, ranging in age from approximately 40 to about 65, with heavy Eastern European accents. One man would distract the victim by asking a question while the other would take the victim’s wallet from her purse. Several women had their purses or wallets stolen in November.

According to the alert, a woman’s wallet was stolen on November 16 while she shopped at the Piggly Wiggly on 124th Street. Police said that two men distracted the woman while a third took the wallet from her purse. On the same day, another woman’s wallet was taken at a Panera on Greenfield Ave. The wallet contained credit and identification cards, and unauthorized charges totaling \$979 were made on one of the woman’s cards.

Police also stated that similar incidents occurred on November 6 and 20 at the same stores and at Fresh Market on Bluemound Road. Video surveillance showed a white man and woman attempting to make purchases with stolen cards at nearby Target and Best Buys stores.

Captain Jim Adlam said that shoppers can protect themselves by remaining aware of where they keep their valuables. “I’ve seen women walking away from carts with their purses in it,” said Adlam. “I’ve also seen people leave valuables on the seats of their cars in parking lots. You are a target.”

Brookfield police encourage anyone with information regarding the thefts to call (262) 787-3702.

Source: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (November 26, 2012)

Company Ordered to Refund Illegal Fees for Debt-Settlement Services

Payday Loan Debt Solution has been ordered to send refunds to more than 80 Wisconsin residents who were illegally assessed advance fees for debt-settlement services from the company.

The Wisconsin attorney general's office, the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and officials from four other states obtained a federal court order in December that requires Payday Loan Debt Solution to pay up to \$100,000 for regularly charging customers fees prior to settling their debts. That practice is a violation of the Federal Trade Commission's Telemarketing Sales Rule, the Consumer Protection Act, and other laws.

Payday Loan Debt Solution, a company based in Florida, will renegotiate, alter, settle, or reduce the terms of debt between a customer and their creditors, all for a fee. According to the complaint, the company's customers were instructed to deposit money into a savings account from which creditors would be paid, instead of paying their creditors directly. However, creditors didn't receive payment until the savings account attained a certain amount. The fees assessed by Payday Loan Debt Solution were "front-loaded," which means that most of them were paid before any services were performed.

Between 2009 and May 15, 2012, several customers were charged fees even though they had closed their accounts prior to the company settling any debts. The money obtained as a result of the court order will refund the fees to these customers.

Wisconsin law prohibits companies from charging in excess of \$25 to set up a budget, and more than \$120 per month or 10% of the amount of money to be distributed to creditors – whichever is less. According to the complaint, Payday Loan Debt Solution was requesting enrollment fees, processing fees, debt relief service fees, and other fees before providing services. As soon as the company was notified of the government investigation, it stopped charging the illegal fees.

Payday Loan Debt Solution will also have to pay a \$5,000 penalty to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. The four other states that were part of the settlement were Hawaii, North Dakota, New Mexico, and North Carolina.

Source: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (January 2, 2013)

Hartford Man Accused of Defrauding Charities

On January 2, a Hartford man was charged in Washington County Circuit Court for bilking almost \$13,000 from the Alzheimer's Association Southeastern Wisconsin Chapter and Brigg's & Al's Run & Walk for Children's Hospital. He was charged with two felony counts of identity theft to obtain money or credit and four misdemeanor counts of theft-false representation.

According to the Washington County sheriff's office, the man collected \$12,949 from 637 donors by misleading them into believing that he was collecting legitimate donations for the two organizations. He allegedly altered donation forms from the charities, which have no record of him turning in any funds.

Source: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (January 3, 2013)

Baraboo Computer Company Sued by the State in Donation Scam

A Baraboo computer company and its owner were sued by the Wisconsin attorney general in December for allegedly soliciting people into donating their computers by stating that they would be refurbished and donated to needy children through a charity.

The Department of Justice alleges that Computers for Kids and Robert A. Szweda solicited used computer equipment and cash from people starting in the spring of 2011 by claiming the computers would be given to needy children. According to the complaint, the company received donations of 300 to 400 desktop computers and 10 laptops from 100 to 200 donors. Computers for Kids also received used computer equipment from Baraboo Public Schools and St. Vincent de Paul. However, the complaint states that Computers for Kids was never registered as a charity and never filed the required financial disclosure forms.

The Department of Justice also alleges that Computers for Kids and Szweda lied to donors by telling them most donations were tax deductible even though they were not because the company never registered with the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt entity or with the State of Wisconsin as a charitable organization. Szweda also allegedly told donors that non-functional computer equipment would be recycled in an environmentally responsible way and that the company is a certified recycling facility, which it is not. Finally, the complaint says that Szweda sold parts removed from donated computer equipment on both eBay and Craigslist.

“Defendants have used funds obtained in the sale of donated used computer equipment to purchase parts that are installed in computers that are then given to children,” the complaint states. “However, because Computers for Kids does not maintain financial records for its charitable activities, and has used a bank account that is also used for Szweda’s for-profit business, it is possible if not likely that material donated to Computers for Kids for charitable purposes has been sold and the proceeds used in the for-profit enterprise operated out of the same location.”

The complaint says that in March 2012, Szweda transferred approximately \$500 from a Computers for Kids checking account into his personal checking account. “Upon information and belief, this second checking account had never actually been used to conduct the charitable work of Computers for Kids,” the complaint says. The state stops short of saying that Computers for Kids did not donate any computers to kids.

Source: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (December 13, 2012)

Feds: Sign Up for Electronic Deposit to Continue Receiving Benefit Checks

The Treasury Department is working to get the five million people who are still receiving their benefit payments by paper check to convert to electronic deposit by March 1st.

People receiving Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, Veterans Affairs, Railroad Retirement Board or Office of Personal Management benefits, and other non-tax federal government payments are all affected by the change.

You can sign up for direct deposit or the Direct Express debit MasterCard by calling 800-333-1795. You can also sign up online by visiting www.GoDirect.org. The debit card allows you to pay bills, withdraw cash at ATMs, and make purchases.

The debit cards are issued by Comerica Bank, and there are no fees to sign up. There are also no monthly fees or overdraft charges, and there is no credit check to enroll.

Source: The Washington Post (January 12, 2013)

Original Medicare Part A & Part B 2013 Rates

It is a new year and some of the costs of Original Medicare are different. The costs listed below reflect what you will pay for Original Medicare beginning January 1, 2013.

For Part A, each month (in 2013) you will pay:

- Nothing if you or your spouse worked and paid Medicare taxes for 10 years or more
- \$243 if you or your spouse worked and paid Medicare taxes for 7.5 to 10 years
- \$441 if you or your spouse worked and paid Medicare taxes for fewer than 7.5 years

For Part A, (in 2013) your coinsurance will be:

- \$0 for days 0-60 each benefit period. A benefit period begins the day you start getting inpatient care. It ends when you've been out of the hospital or skilled nursing facility for 60 days in a row.
- \$296 each day for days 61-90 each benefit period
- \$592 per day for days 91-150 (a total of 60 lifetime reserve days, which are non-renewable)

For Part A, (in 2013) your deductible will be:

- \$1,184 each benefit period

For Part A, (in 2013) your skilled nursing facility (SNF) stay coinsurance will be:

- \$0 for days 0-20 each benefit period
- \$148 per day for days 21-100 each benefit period

For Part B, (in 2013) your deductible will be:

- \$147 each year

For Part B, each month (in 2013) you will pay:

- \$104.90 if your income is at or below \$85,000 (\$170,000 for couples). People with higher incomes will pay more for Part B each month.

Learn more about Medicare costs in 2013 at www.medicareinteractive.org

January 22, 2013

Abuse of Trust: Mentally Disabled Used to Scam Government

It's hard to believe...a longtime Detroit doctor taking advantage of severely mentally disabled adults to line his own pocket.

Earlier this month, Dr. Alphonso Berry and two criminal colleagues—a married couple named Marcus and Beth Jenkins—[pled guilty to defrauding the government](#) by submitting more than \$13.2 million worth of phony claims to Medicare over a seven-year period for group and individual psychotherapy sessions that were never provided.

How the scam operated. In 2004, Marcus and Beth Jenkins incorporated Quality Recreation and Rehabilitation (QRR), an adult day care center that claimed to provide psychotherapy services. At the same time, they also operated adult foster care homes in the Detroit area that provided 24-hour personal care, protection, and supervision for individuals who were—for the most part—mentally or physically disabled. The couple obtained Medicare provider numbers for QRR and clinicians working on staff, including Dr. Alphonso Berry.

For four years, the Jenkinses transported Medicare beneficiaries residing at adult foster care homes (both theirs and others) to QRR, and in concert with Dr. Berry—who often signed patient progress charts and progress notes for individual and group psychotherapy sessions—submitted claims to Medicare for psychotherapy services for these beneficiaries that were never provided. The funds received from Medicare—approximately \$1.8 million—were diverted from QRR's bank accounts into the hands of the Jenkinses and Dr. Berry.

Then, around June 2008, QRR received notice from Medicare questioning its submitted claims and the legitimacy of its psychotherapy services. But rather than shut down their fraudulent scheme, Marcus and Beth Jenkins simply opened a new adult day care facility called Procure a few months later, which also supposedly offered psychotherapy services. Again, the Jenkinses would transport Medicare patients from adult foster care homes to Procure, and Dr. Berry would sign patient charts and notes. Over the next four years, approximately \$6.5 million more in phony claims were submitted; Medicare ended up paying Procure approximately \$2.5 million on those claims. And once again, the funds were diverted into the hands of the Jenkinses and Dr. Berry, who spent the money on lavish lifestyles.

The case began in October 2010 when the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) received a referral based on an unusually high number of hours being billed per day by Dr. Berry (sometimes surpassing 24 hours in one day). HHS reached out to the FBI, and we soon began investigating with our partners from HHS' Office of Inspector General. We examined financial records. We interviewed QRR and Procure office staff, the Medicare beneficiaries, and social workers. And we conducted surveillance of the suspects.

In October 2011, our evidence led to indictments against Dr. Berry and Marcus and Beth Jenkins. The case was brought as part of the [Medicare Fraud Strike Force](#), operating in nine cities across the country and comprised of interagency teams of analysts, investigators, and prosecutors who target fraud.

And what of the Medicare beneficiaries living in the Jenkinses adult foster care homes? They are being moved to other facilities, where they will get the care and medical treatment they are entitled to.

Resource:

- [Health Care Fraud](#)

IRS Finalizes New Tax for Medical Devices

Final rules for a new tax on medical devices were released by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service in December. Medical devices ranging from surgical sutures to knee replacement implants are included in the new tax, which was part of President Barack Obama's 2010 healthcare law. Effective January 1, 2013, the 2.3 percent tax must be paid by device-makers on their gross sales. The tax is projected to raise \$29 billion in government revenues through 2022.

“The excise tax is on the medical device manufacturers and importers (who) will now have access to 30 million new customers due to the healthcare law,” said Sabrina Siddiqui, Treasury Department spokeswoman, in a statement.

The tax applies mostly to devices used and implanted by medical professionals, including complex items, such as pacemakers, or simple items like tongue depressors. Products sold for humanitarian reasons, such as experimental cancer treatment devices, are not exempt from the tax.

Source: www.reuters.com (December 5, 2012)

Agrace HospiceCare to Offer Educational Discussion Group in February

A free educational presentation focusing on communicating with clarity when someone is ill will be held at Agrace HospiceCare in February. “Clear Communication in Tough Situations,” will be presented at the Agrace campus, 5395 E. Cheryl Parkway, Madison, on Tuesday, February 12, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Attendees will learn effective ways to communicate to help reduce stress and prevent misunderstandings. In addition, the presentation will teach how to get the most from doctor visits, including five critical questions to ask if you or someone you love is diagnosed with a life-limiting condition.

Pre-registration is requested; please call Amy Ketterer at [\(608\) 327-7202](tel:6083277202).

Agrace HospiceCare to Offer Grief Support Opportunities in February

In February, Agrace HospiceCare will offer a variety of grief support and discussion groups that are open to the public and provided without charge. Pre-registration is requested, and all groups are held at Agrace HospiceCare, 5395 E. Cheryl Parkway, Madison, unless otherwise noted.

- **Family Series Support Group** will be held February 7 through March 21 (Thursdays), from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Call Jessie Shivelor to register, [\(608\) 327-7135](tel:6083277135).
- **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 Agrace HospiceCare grief support groups. This session is available by appointment only. Call Cheri Milton at [\(608\) 327-7300](tel:6083277300) to make an appointment.

For details on all Agrace grief support groups, visit agracehospicecare.org.

CWAG Activities

Date	Activity	County
January 28-30	CWAG Senior Statesmanship Class-Madison	Dane

SMP Activities

Date	Activity	County
January 7	SMP Presentation-Learning in Retirement-UW-Green Bay	Brown
January 8	SMP Presentation-Racine Elderly Services Network	Racine
January 11	SMP Presentation-Senior Companions-Milwaukee	Milwaukee
January 14	SMP Presentation-Jefferson Court Apts.-Milwaukee	Milwaukee
January 18	SMP Presentation-Serra Club-Wisconsin Rapids	Wood
January 22	SMP Presentation-Peace Lutheran Church-Waunakee	Dane
January 25	SMP Presentation-Fountain Hill Apts.-Racine	Racine
January 28	SMP Presentation-The Nightingales-Sun Prairie	Dane
January 29	SMP Presentation-Thelma Woodland Villa-Rhineland	Oneida
February 2	SMP Booth-Health & Wellness Expo-Superior	Douglas
February 8	SMP Booth-Super Senior Friday-Milwaukee	Milwaukee
February 13	SMP Volunteer Foundations Training-Onalaska	La Crosse
February 13	SMP Presentation-St. Luke's UMC-Crandon	Forest
February 13	SMP Presentation-Madison East Kiwanis Club	Dane
February 19	SMP Presentation-Sun Prairie United Methodist Church	Dane
February 22	SMP Volunteer Foundations Training-Waukesha	Waukesha
March 4	SMP Presentation-People's United Methodist Church-Oregon	Dane
March 6	SMP Presentation-Milwaukee County Dept. of Aging	Milwaukee
March 12	SMP Presentation-Elder Abuse I Team Mtg.-Marinette	Marinette
March 15	SMP Presentation-2013 Aging in America Conf.-Chicago, IL	
March 18	SMP Booth-WIARA 5 th Biennial Convention-Madison	Dane
March 19	SMP Booth-UWEC Senior Americans' Day-Eau Claire	Eau Claire
March 19	SMP Presentation-Wilson Park Senior Center-Milwaukee	Milwaukee
April 8	SMP Presentation-St. Stephen Lutheran Church-Wausau	Marathon
April 10	SMP Presentation-Mequon Philanthropic Org. of Ozaukee	Ozaukee
April 11	SMP Presentation-50+ Fest-Onalaska	La Crosse
April 24	SMP Presentation-Muskego Public Library	Waukesha

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.

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ATTENTION: All of You with Email...

In an effort to save paper, postage and be “volunteer friendly,” we will email issues of the *Fraud Alert!* to those who have email. Please contact Lisa Turner at LTurner@cwag.org and give her your email address to add to our list. Thank you!

For more information, contact:

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