



MILWAUKEE COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
& HUMAN SERVICES  
**AGING & DISABILITIES  
SERVICES**

**ADVOCACY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
MAY 2, 2025**

The Milwaukee County Aging Advocacy Committee convened in person at the Wilson Park Senior Center on Friday, May 2, 2025. Members and attendees also joined the meeting virtually and by conference call.

**Members Present:**

Commissioner Brian Peters, *Chair*  
Commissioner George Banda, *Vice-Chair*  
Maureen Conrad  
Paulette Maclin  
Gary Mikolajczyk  
Harold Oemig  
Sopheya Farrell  
Commissioner Janice Wilberg, Ph.D.

**Members Excused:**

Trina Koch  
William Meunier

**Members Excused:**

*Commissioner & County Supervisor*  
Sequanna Taylor

**Milwaukee County Staff**

Daniel Idzikowski, *DHHS*  
Vonda Nyang, *DHHS*  
Emily Petersen, *DHHS*

**Attendees from the Public**

Brook Stanley  
Jill Kenahan-Krey, *ASL Interpreter*  
Stephanie Zito, *ASL Interpreter*

**MINUTES**

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chair Brian Peters called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. The AAA Advocacy and Policy Manager, Emily Petersen, conducted the roll call. A quorum was present.

**II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 11, 2025, ADVOCACY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

MOTION: To approve the April 11, 2025, Advocacy Committee meeting minutes

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Banda Moved, Conrad Second)

**III. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES**

**A. Milwaukee County Aging Advisory Council Recruitment:** The Advisory Council is currently looking for new members. Please share the flyer with anyone you think might be interested in joining. If you have potential candidates,

please contact Ms. Petersen directly with their information. She distributed recruitment flyers to participants at the meeting.

**B. Medicaid Member Experience Council:** The Wisconsin Department of Health Services is assembling a Medicaid Member Experience Council to discuss the experiences of Medicaid users and explore ways to improve services in the future. To be eligible to serve on the council, you must currently be on Medicaid, be caring for someone on Medicaid, or have been on Medicaid or cared for someone on Medicaid within the past two years. For more information on how to be considered for the council, please refer to the flyer included in your packet.

**C. Are You Prepared? Conference:** The “Are You Prepared” conference is scheduled for Saturday, June 28, 2025, at Averno College. This all-day event will focus on end-of-life preparedness and feature planning sessions covering advance care directives, funeral planning, and probate court. More information will be forthcoming.

#### **IV. WELCOME SENIOR LEADERSHIP PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS**

Emily Petersen, the AAA Advocacy and Policy Manager, welcomed the senior leadership program participants and encouraged them to share their experiences. The conversation concluded with a request for past participants to discuss their experiences and current roles on the Advocacy Committee. Members Paulette Maclin and Maureen Conrad shared their experiences completing the Senior Leadership Program and how it led them to join the Advocacy Committee.

#### **V. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICE UPDATES**

##### **A. Federal Aging Policy**

##### **I. Federal Budget and Issues**

**a. Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Final Status Update:** Ms. Petersen discussed the proposed changes to the federal budget that could affect Older Americans Act (OAA) programs. She highlighted the potential elimination of funding for evidence-based wellness programs and other initiatives for the aging population. She also encouraged the Committee to advocate for these programs and provided a template letter for contacting legislators. Ms. Petersen clarified that the organization's structure at the local level would remain unchanged. However, at the federal level, programs would be divided between two agencies: the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF).

She addressed ongoing issues with the federal budget and Medicaid funding, noting that the House Energy and Commerce Committee has not been able to make decisions due to advocacy from Medicaid recipients. Advocacy Committee member Maureen Conrad shared her

experiences at listening sessions and encouraged others to join a town hall meeting with Congresswoman Gwen Moore.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee, which oversees Medicaid funding, is responsible for reviewing potential cuts to Medicaid to meet a spending reduction target of \$880 billion. However, due to significant advocacy from communities and Democrat legislators, they have not been able to implement any cuts at this time. Consequently, the committee postponed its discussion until the week of May 16, 2025, and may revise the initial proposal for \$880 billion in Medicaid cuts in its entirety.

## **II. Federal Regulations and Executive Orders**

- a. EO Lowering Drug Prices by Once Again Americans First (4/15/25):** Emily Petersen discussed the complexities of the President's administration and its impact on Congress. She emphasized the importance of completing and sending a template email to legislators as a form of advocacy. Additionally, she highlighted an executive order issued on April 15, 2025, to lower drug prices for seniors and continue the Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Program. Ms. Petersen noted that while there is a commitment to reducing drug prices, especially for seniors, there are also discussions about tariffs on imported medications, which could potentially increase prescription drug costs for all recipients, including those on Medicare and Medicaid.
- b. NY Times: Trump's Tariff Threat for Imported Medicines Poses Political Risks (4/16/25):** Emily Petersen shared a news article from the New York Times (NYT) discussing the consideration of a tariff on imported medications and its associated political risks. Historically, there has been bipartisan support for revitalizing the domestic production of prescription drugs, as most of these drugs are currently manufactured in other countries, leading to high costs. The aim is to reduce reliance on foreign manufacturing by producing prescription drugs in the United States and lowering drug prices.

## **B. State Legislative Issues**

### **I. State Budget & Legislation**

#### **a. Review State Legislation Tracker:**

The Committee reviewed the updated legislation tracker. In particular, they reviewed AB176 relating to the Financial Eligibility for the Alzheimer's Family and Caregiver Support Program, identified as SB152. The Advisory Council previously took a position on this bill in a few meetings. The proposal includes the removal of the financial stability requirement, which means there will no longer be an income

cap. As a result, anyone diagnosed with Alzheimer's or dementia will be eligible to receive support from a caregiver support program. The Advisory Council and the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network both support this bill. It is currently making progress in both the Senate and the Assembly, and we hope the governor will soon sign it into law.

## **II. Administrative Rules & Governor's Taskforces**

### **C. Milwaukee County Legislative Issues**

#### **I. Milwaukee County Budget and Legislation**

#### **II. Aging Items of Interest**

- a. **Growing MKE/housing:** Chair Peters is a member of the Technical Assistance Committee for the Growing Milwaukee initiative. Although changes are being made, announcements regarding these changes have not yet been released, so he cannot discuss them at this time. During the meeting, they addressed some priorities identified for Milwaukee's growth. There was some disagreement, and as a result, specific proposals will not be implemented. However, the committee is focusing on housing components, particularly single-family housing. They are working to simplify the process of adding Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).

## **VI. 2025-2027 AGING AREA PLAN ADVOCACY GOALS REVIEW**

The Committee reviewed the 2025-2027 Aging Area Plan Advocacy goals to track progress and updates. The Committee focused primarily on the goals regarding recruiting new members to the committee and diversity of membership that targets all state legislative districts. The Committee reviewed an attachment that outlined the membership's legislative distribution and the committee's that those legislators are assigned to. Using that attachment, the Committee discussed strategies for recruiting new members and opportunities where membership is most necessary. Committee members urged Senior Leadership Program participants to consider joining the committee and sharing with other who may be interested.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION: To adjourn.

ACTION: Motion prevailed by unanimous consent (Banda Moved, Conrad Second)

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.. The next Advocacy Committee meeting will be at 9 a.m. on Friday, June 6, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Vonda Nyang  
Executive Assistant