



Advocacy Brief



November/December 2016

Get to Know Your New State and Federal Legislators (and Their Staff)

The 115th Congress and the 2017-18 State Legislature are slated to begin their work soon. Many of you have new elected officials representing you at the federal and/or state level. Start your new year out right by taking steps to get to know your new legislators. Do a search to find their websites and sign-up to receive their newsletters, like them on Facebook, follow them on Twitter and most importantly get their contact information and schedule a time to meet to get to know one another over coffee in the district, at a listening session that may be scheduled soon or ask them to attend an upcoming aging unit/ADRC board or advisory council meeting.

This is a great time for everyone, whether your legislators are new or not, to reach out and let your legislators know how you can be a resource to them related to the aging and disability needs of their constituents. Let them know what your top concerns are. Introduce yourself to their staff and learn who is working on what issues. Make it a priority to learn the background of your legislators and what their priorities are.

One new U.S. Representative is joining Wisconsin's Congressional delegation. Mike Gallagher will be the new U.S. Representative for District #8. Gallagher is replacing U.S. Representative Reid Ribble who did not seek another term.

Wisconsin also has 15 new state legislators, 4 senators (two new and two transitioning over from the Assembly) and 11 representatives. The new state senators include LaTonya Johnson, Senate District #6 (Johnson is currently the state representative for Assembly District #17), Daniel Feyen, Senate District #18, Patrick Testin, Senate District #24 and David Craig, Senate District #28 (Craig is currently the state representative for Assembly District #83).

New to the Wisconsin Assembly this coming session are representatives Ron Tusler, Assembly District (AD)# 3, Jason Fields, AD #11, David Crowley, AD #17, Robert Stafsholt, AD #29, Shannon Zimmerman, AD #30, Don Vruwink, AD #43, Jimmy Anderson, AD #47, Rob Summerfield, AD #67, Chuck Wichgers, AD #83, Patrick Snyder, AD #85 and Treig Pronschinske, AD #92. (see Statewide Assembly District Map.)

New legislators will be sworn into office on Jan. 3, 2017. E-mail addresses and other contact information for new state legislators will be posted at Wisconsin State Legislature-Senate and Wisconsin State Legislature-Assembly as soon as it is available.

Hint: E-mail addresses of members of the Wisconsin Legislature, with rare exception, all have the same format. For members of the Assembly, the form is Rep.LastName@legis.wisconsin.gov; for members of the Senate, the form is Sen.LastName@legis.wisconsin.gov.

Wisconsin's Joint Finance Committee Members for 2017-18 Session

Joint Finance is the committee that makes decisions on all state spending, including the upcoming state biennial budget. Following are the members who have been appointed to serve on this committee:

Senate members include Co-Chair Alberta Darling (Dist. 8), Leah Vukmir (Dist. 5), Sheila Harsdorf (Dist. 10), Luther Olsen (Dist. 14), Tom Tiffany (Dist. 12), Howard Marklein (Dist. 17), Jon Erpenbach (Dist. 27) and Lena Taylor (Dist. 4).

Assembly members include- Co-Chair John Nygren (Dist. 89), Dale Kooyenga (Dist. 14), Amy Loudenberg (Dist. 31), Mary Czaja (Dist. 35), Mike Rohrkaste (Dist. 55) and Mark Born (Dist. 39). Two Assembly Democrats remain to be appointed to the committee.



Congress Passes Continuing Resolution to Fund Federal Government To Late April 2017



Just before the previous Continuing Resolution (CR) was set to expire on Dec. 9, and in the absence of a longer-term funding strategy for federal fiscal year 2017, Congress passed and the President signed yet another short-term spending bill. The CR extends current funding levels for federal agencies and programs (including Older Americans Act [OAA] and other aging service programs) until April 28, 2017.

Approval of the CR means the Senate's proposed elimination of the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) and cuts to senior employment programs will not occur, at least in the short-term. However, passage of the CR also means OAA programs will not receive the much needed funding increases proposed by the House.

The spending bill includes an across-the-board cut of 0.19 percent, in order to stay under the budget caps for fiscal year (FY) 2017 set by the 2015 Bipartisan Budget Agreement. Individual agencies will be determining how this cut will be distributed across programs, so specific funding levels for OAA programs are not yet available. cuts.

The 115th Congress will now have the responsibility of determining funding levels not only for FY 2018, but will also the final funding levels for FY 2017. **Action needed: Contact your Members of Congress within the next few weeks to convey the importance of protecting and adequately funding OAA programs. Let your federal elected officials know the need for OAA and other aging program services is great and funding increases are critical to meet those needs.**

Advocacy Alert ! Save Medicare

There are numerous *proposals* and *plans* to introduce a variety of controversial legislation in the coming months and year, including the repeal (or significant reforms) of the Affordable Care Act and broad structural changes to the Medicare and Medicaid programs. See the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network's [Save-Medicare-Action-Alert](#) .



Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network Releases Federal Issue Briefs

The Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN) recently released a series of federal issue briefs outlining their positions on the federal charitable driving reimbursement rate, Medicare, Older Americans Act appropriations and Social Security/retirement security.

WAAN's mission is to work with and for Wisconsin's older adults to shape public policy that improves their quality of life. WAAN is organized to:

Expand the influence of each affiliate organization through collective advocacy.

Engage members and their constituencies in developing priority issues.

Utilize member experience, knowledge, and relationships in advocacy strategies and campaigns on priority issues.

Increase organizational capacity for grassroots citizen advocacy.

Help build a society that values and supports people as they age.

You can find the WAAN issue briefs at: <http://gwaar.org/waan>

Advocacy Training

Come to discuss some of the key public policy issues impacting older adults and people with disabilities and learn the "Who, What, When, Where and Why of Advocacy."

- ADRC of Portage Co. - Jan. 4, 2017, 9 a.m. - noon
- ADRC of Dane Co. - Jan. 6, 2017, 9 a.m. - noon
- ADRC of Barron, Rusk & Washburn (Ladysmith location) - Jan. 10, 2017, 9 a.m. - noon
- Kenosha Public Library - Jan. 25, 2017, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
- Oneida Co. Dept. on Aging - Jan. 27, 2017, 9 a.m. - noon

Aging Unit Directors, ADRC Directors, staff, board and advisory council members - all are welcome!

