

# Member Newsletter

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## Featured Article

# November 8th Election: Make Your Plan to Vote!

**By Barbara Beckert**  
**Director of External Advocacy - Disability Rights Wisconsin, Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition**

November 8th is an important election day in Wisconsin. The candidates who are elected will have a big impact on your life – make sure you are prepared to vote! They will make decisions about services that are important to you: transportation, long-term care, housing, mental health services, and more.

## Voters will decide on the following offices:

- **Governor**
- **Lieutenant Governor**
- **Attorney General**
- **State Treasurer**
- **Secretary of State**
- **State Senator (odd-numbered districts)**
- **State Representative**
- **U.S. Senate and Congressional Representative**

## Start now to make your plan to vote! Think about the following questions:

### Are you registered to vote?

Register to vote online at [myvote.wi.gov](http://myvote.wi.gov), by mail, in-person at your clerk's office, or at your polling place on Election Day. If you think you have registered before, make sure it is up-to-date by checking online at [myvote.wi.gov](http://myvote.wi.gov).

### Do you want to vote at your polling place or vote by mail?

In Wisconsin, any registered voter can vote by mail. This is also called "absentee voting". Registered voters may request an absentee ballot on [myvote.wi.gov](http://myvote.wi.gov) or by submitting a request to their Municipal Clerk. If a voter will always need to vote absentee because of age, physical illness, infirmity, or they're disabled for an indefinite period, the voter may select "indefinitely confined" when requesting an absentee ballot. This requests an absentee ballot be sent to the voter for every election. Indefinitely confined voters are not required to provide a copy of their photo ID with their request.

*November 8th Election - continued inside*

# Letter from the CEO

## Dear My Choice Wisconsin Members:

Every year Medicare evaluates plans based on a 5-star rating system. For the 2023 plan year, we received a 4-star rating for the Partnership and Dual Advantage plans! This is considered above average. We also get a quality score for the Family Care and Family Care Partnership plans from MetaStar, an external review organization. We are excited to share our plans have earned a score of 91.7% which equates to “Excellent”! We at My Choice Wisconsin are all committed to providing the best care and services possible for our members.

Early autumn is an excellent time to make plans for voting. Remember, if you are voting absentee and need help returning your ballot because you have a disability, your rights are protected by federal law. You may request a disability-related accommodation to have someone else deliver your completed ballot. Check out the articles in this newsletter written by DisabilityVote.org and the MCW MAC for more info on voting!

An updated COVID-19 booster is also now available. This shot is a “bivalent” booster, meaning it protects against two antigens. In this

case, that’s the original COVID-19 virus, as well as the Omicron variant. With cold weather ahead, COVID-19 and flu vaccines are the best way to stay healthy all winter long. According to the WI Department of Health Services, unvaccinated people died from COVID-19 in June at a rate 3.5 times higher than those who got a booster. Ask your care team for help or go to [vaccines.gov](https://vaccines.gov) for more information.

Lastly, please check out our website ([www.mychoicewi.org](http://www.mychoicewi.org)) and find us on Facebook (@MyChoiceWI) and Twitter (@MyChoiceWI). You’ll see MCW updates, community events, and important topics of the day. We share inspirational and fun content too. In October, keep an eye out for the Pets of My Choice Wisconsin Halloween Costume Contest!



As always, thank you for trusting us with your care.

**Maria Ledger**

### Reference

[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/vaccine-data.htm](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/vaccine-data.htm)

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*November 8th Election - continued from cover*

## Do you have a photo ID?

Wisconsin requires a photo ID to vote for most voters. The most common forms of photo ID are a driver’s license or a State ID card. You can get a free State ID card for voting at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). To learn more, call the DMV Voter ID Hotline: (844) 588-1069.

## Do you know your rights?

If you are a voter with a disability, it is your right to have a full and equal opportunity to register to vote, cast a ballot, and access disability-related accommodations. You have the right to vote privately and independently. If you need help completing or returning your ballot, you may have assistance by a person of your choice. However, that person cannot be your employer or union representative.

## Help is available!

- The Disability Rights Wisconsin Voter Hotline can help you make your plan to vote and answer your voting questions. Contact the hotline at 844-347-8683 or email [info@disabilityvote.org](mailto:info@disabilityvote.org).
- Your Municipal Clerk is a great resource for voting questions. Find your clerk at [myvote.wi.gov/en-US/MyMunicipalClerk](https://myvote.wi.gov/en-US/MyMunicipalClerk)
- More information is available on the Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition website at [disabilityvote.org/](https://disabilityvote.org/)

Voting is your right and duty as an American. Don’t wait! Plan now so you can cast a ballot in November.

## Member Advisory Committee (MAC) – Voting



We on the Member Advisory Committee are all about helping your voice be heard. That's why we encourage My Choice Wisconsin members to vote in local, state, and federal elections. Not voting is like giving up your voice. We want you to be heard!

It's important to know your rights. Some people find voting challenging as they get older or because they have a disability. Do you know under federal law all polling places must be fully accessible for everyone? You have the right to use an accessible voting machine. You have the right to receive assistance with marking your ballot. You have the right to ask for reasonable accommodations at the polling place.



You even have the right to curbside voting! If you are disabled and not able to enter the polling place, curbside voting must be available to you under Wisconsin law. Contact your Municipal Clerk before going to

your voting location to find out the details. You may need to ring a bell or honk your horn, etc.

Maybe you prefer voting by absentee ballot. Did you know that you can call your Municipal Clerk before Election Day to request a large-print or braille ballot? You have the right to request assistance completing your absentee ballot from anyone who is not your employer or a representative of your labor union. The person assisting you

cannot answer questions about the candidates or tell you who to vote for.

Whether you want more information, help with understanding your voting rights, or assistance in navigating the election process, you can contact the Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition. You can call them at 1-844- 347-8683. You can also choose to email them at [Info@disabilityvote.org](mailto:Info@disabilityvote.org) or go to their website at [disabilityvote.org](http://disabilityvote.org)

There are people out there ready to support you. Vote and let your voice be heard!

# America's Population is Aging



**Dr. Eric Quivers**  
Medical Director

As people live longer than ever, the American population is growing older too. There are about 10,000 people turning 65 each day. It is expected that by 2060 that there will be more than 98 million people over the age 65, more than double the number today. The number of individuals aged 85 and older is

projected to triple: 6 million today to 20 million by 2060. The majority of older individuals are still in the workforce: about 80% of those over 50 are planning to work past 65 years of age. That group contributes \$7.6 trillion to the economy every year!

Aging does bring its challenges. Most older adults have at least one chronic health condition such as high blood pressure, diabetes, arthritis, or dementia. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia and the fifth leading cause of death among seniors. A third of older adults have limitations in daily activities of living like meal prep or housekeeping. They may not have the assistance of family members as caregivers, as families tend to be smaller and may be separated by long distances.

Older individuals are looking to stay active and involved during their senior years. Here are things seniors can do to age gracefully and healthfully from the CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention:

**Older individuals are looking to stay active and involved during their senior years. Here are things seniors can do to age gracefully and healthfully from the CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention:**

- **Eat and drink right – healthy fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and lean meats; drink water and low-fat milk**
- **Move more and sit less – moving can help prevent and manage some chronic diseases**
- **Don't use tobacco – if you smoke, try to quit**
- **Get regular checkups – preventive care can help catch problems early when treatment is most likely to work**
- **Know your family history – share it with your provider**
- **Be aware of changes in your brain health – though changes in our brains happen as we age, dementia is not normal**

As the “boomers” age, there are benefits and challenges. Health care challenges will increase, but we're learning more about healthy aging every day. Take control of your own aging process by getting the care and support systems you need. Make your wishes known about end-of-life expectations, so you can get the treatment you want throughout your life.

## References

[www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/infographic/healthy-aging.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/infographic/healthy-aging.htm)

[www.prb.org/resources/fact-sheet-aging-in-the-united-states/](http://www.prb.org/resources/fact-sheet-aging-in-the-united-states/)



## Featured Article

# Advance Directives for Healthcare

By **Deanne Wecker**

MCW Associate General Counsel

Advance directives are important documents that protect your dignity and help avoid arguments and assumptions about your care. They tell your family and doctors the type of healthcare you would or would not want if you became unable to communicate your wishes because you were incapacitated.

## Healthcare Power of Attorney (POA) Advance Directive

The healthcare POA lets you to name someone you know and trust to make medical decisions for you when you cannot. This person is called your POA Agent. You would want to discuss your goals, values, and beliefs about healthcare treatment with your agent in advance.

Wisconsin has a state healthcare POA form which your care team can provide to you. Two people must be present when you sign the document, and they must sign it as well. The witnesses cannot be related to you, cannot be the person you've chosen as your agent, and cannot be your medical provider.

Your healthcare POA goes into effect when two medical professionals sign a statement declaring that you are incapacitated. Just remember: if you have a healthcare POA and it is not in effect, you are the only one who can make your healthcare decisions. Even after your POA goes into effect,

your agent must follow your treatment wishes if you are able to express them.

If you become incapacitated and do not have a healthcare power of attorney, your family or providers may have to request guardianship from the court. Guardianship can be restrictive and could result in removing some of your fundamental rights.

## Other Advance Directives:

**Living Will** (Declaration to Physicians) is a document that tells your doctor and family your wishes about life support and feeding tubes if you have a terminal condition or are in a long-term vegetative state.

**Do Not Resuscitate Order** (DNR Order) is a medical order signed by your doctor that tells emergency medical personnel to not perform CPR on you due to an existing critical illness or for personal reasons.

This is a basic overview of advance directives. Your care team can answer questions you may have. Don't be shy to ask!

*Information in this article is for educational purposes only and should not be used as legal advice.*

The healthcare POA form can be found here: [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/forms/advdirectives/adformspoa.htm](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/forms/advdirectives/adformspoa.htm)

## Quality Update

# Flu Vaccine

### By the MCW Quality Department

As the summer air begins to chill and the leaves turn beautiful shades of fall, we enter the time of the year commonly known as “the flu season”. The seasonal influenza vaccine, or “flu shot,” can reduce flu-related illnesses, visits to the doctor, and missed work or activities due to the flu. It can prevent flu-related hospitalizations and even death. Flu vaccination prevents tens of thousands of hospitalizations each year. During 2019-2020, flu vaccination prevented an estimated 105,000 flu-related hospitalizations (CDC.gov/flu/prevent/flushot.htm).

The flu shot works with our body’s natural defenses to lower your risk of getting sick. Getting the vaccine also lowers the chance of spreading the flu to other people. The flu vaccine is not always a perfect match with the season’s virus types, but it is the best way to protect against flu infection and its outcomes. Any flu vaccination is better than none!

The best time to get the flu shot is before the end of October. However, as long as the flu virus is going around, you can still get vaccinated. A good plan is to get your shot before the holidays. That way you can keep yourself and loved ones healthy.



Getting the flu shot can be easy and convenient. Adults can get the flu shot at their doctors’ office, local pharmacies, workplaces, community health clinics and health departments. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) also provides helpful flu vaccine information on their website at [www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/vaccinations.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/vaccinations.htm). If you have question or need help finding where or how to get your flu shot, please reach out to your My Choice Wisconsin Registered Nurse.

Let’s stay healthy together this flu season!

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## Affordable Connectivity Program

The Affordable Connectivity Program is a new federal program to help low-income households pay for monthly internet service and connected devices like a laptop or tablet.

### **As a member of a Medicaid-funded program, you may qualify. You may be able to receive:**

- Up to a \$30/month discount on your internet service
- Up to a \$75/month discount if your household is on qualifying Tribal lands
- A one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, tablet, or desktop computer (with a copayment of more than \$10 but less than \$50)

*The Affordable Connectivity Program is limited to one monthly service discount and one device discount per household.*

To apply, visit [www.affordableconnectivity.gov](http://www.affordableconnectivity.gov). You may also call 1-877-384-2575 to request an application. Use the website’s “Companies Near Me” search feature to select a participating provider and then call to choose a plan!

## Member Spotlight

# Meet Bruce

Bruce and his wife moved to southwest Wisconsin 27 years ago. Though he grew up outside of Chicago, Bruce appreciated the slower pace of life of Wisconsin and the opportunities it gave his children. For 40 years he worked in transportation, driving truck over 42 states. He was also his own boss as owner of his own trucking company.

After becoming disabled, Bruce knew he needed to find a new purpose out of the work force: "I think it's part of what I'm doing here: some people just enjoy what they've got, but I have goals - and I reach them."

Bruce and his wife both went back to school and graduated this spring. He worked hard and was on the dean's list! Bruce earned his degree in supply chain management and continues to self-educate. Woodworking has kept his hands busy in his spare time - from birdhouses to furniture. Bruce hopes to one day have a bigger home where he can have the space to build.

Another way Bruce is filling his time is by joining the Member Advisory Committee. A member of Medicaid SSI and Medicare Dual Advantage, Bruce hopes to spread the word about how MCW can help members live their best lives. He's especially passionate about MCW's Medicare Dual Advantage program, "Not enough people know about it. There's a lot more out there that can benefit you!"

Before Dual Advantage, Bruce had to drive to Milwaukee for dental. With his new plan, he only has to go four blocks away! His drug plan is also wrapped into Dual Advantage. Besides convenience and many benefits, Bruce knows he will always be able to get the service he needs. "I get all my stuff from one place. It's easily accessible. I can call my caseworker and she can direct me. It reduces my stress. For my supports, it makes it easier for them too. Every little thing they have in my programs helps me. Add them up and it has a great impact."





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**Follow us:**



**Connect with us:**

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800-963-0035 TTY: 711

## Important Changes for WI Medicaid Eligibility

My Choice Wisconsin offers programs for individuals that qualify for Medicaid. During the COVID-19 emergency, Medicaid had special rules so more people could get and keep Medicaid benefits. One of those changes has allowed you to keep your coverage without renewing your Medicaid eligibility.

When the COVID-19 emergency ends, you will need to provide details about your current situation. That time is not yet here though – more information will be sent to you in the future.

### **How to be prepared:**

- **Make sure your contact info is correct.** Log in at [www.access.wi.gov](http://www.access.wi.gov) or contact your local agency to update your contact information today.
- **Check your mail.** When the emergency end date is announced, the WI Department of Health Services (DHS) will send you information. Read any letters you receive from DHS to find out how changes will affect you.

## Medicare Dual Advantage

Are you eligible for Medicare and Medicaid? Then My Choice Wisconsin's Medicare Dual Advantage Plan may be for you! Start saving money through the over-the-counter, dental and eyewear benefits. MCW Medicare Dual Advantage also includes prescription drug coverage and extra benefits to keep you healthy. Plus, there are no monthly premiums or annual deductibles!

Call today at 1-800-963-0035 (TTY: 711) to learn more! You may fill out an online request to receive a call from one of our Medicare Advisors at: [www.mychoicewi.org/speak-with-a-medicare-advisor](http://www.mychoicewi.org/speak-with-a-medicare-advisor). You can read about Medicare Dual Advantage on our website at: [www.mychoicewi.org/MDA](http://www.mychoicewi.org/MDA).