

Waushara County Department of Aging Services 2010 Summary

In 2010 the Department of Aging provided a variety of services to about 3,500 older adults, informal caregivers, and eligible disabled persons under the age of 60. Of those receiving service, 617 were new to the agency. A total of 445,738 units of service were provided for an estimated monetary value of over \$750,000. At least 20% of those served are at or below the federal poverty level. Funding used to support these programs and services is from the federal Older Americans Act, state grants, county levy and other local support, and donations from consumers of services. Throughout the year, the Department of Aging worked diligently on department priorities and toward goals stated in the agency's 2010-2012 Aging Plan document. A summary of significant accomplishments is listed below.

Emergency Preparedness: Mock drills were held at each senior dining center to review processes for exiting in the event of an evacuation or sheltering in place when warranted. Nearly 100 people at the *Picnic with a Purpose* created a personal plan for dealing with emergency situations, with special emphasis placed on caregivers focusing on the needs of a loved one. The Commission on Aging also provided direction on continuation of essential services in the event of a natural disaster.

Transportation: A new software program was implemented into the Coordinated Transportation System which assisted in scheduling nearly 9,000 trips for 400 individuals. New signage was added to the fleet of mini-bus vehicles. The Department received a new grant award which provided the opportunity to open up the current mini-bus schedule to public riders along with elderly and disabled which helped to expand service availability and hours. About 70 public riders utilized this service for a total of 378 trips. The Coordinated Transportation Committee spent time learning about and advocating against the implementation of a statewide MA Transportation Management system which will break down the coordinated system currently operating in Waushara County.

Caregiver Support: The monthly support group was relocated from the basement of the courthouse to Pine Ridge of Wautoma and attendance has grown to 30 participants. Over 1,200 units of service were provided to 242 caregivers during 2010 through information and assistance, access to service, counseling and training, or respite and other supplemental service assistance. A new Caregiver Coalition, called the C-Team, was established bringing together professionals from multiple disciplines in effort to help support and reach the needs of informal caregivers. Two new leaders were trained in *Powerful Tools for Caregivers* and the course offered during the fall. The 2nd Annual Caregiver Retreat attracted over 43 informal caregivers and 30 professionals. Funding from both the National Caregiver Support Program and United Way assisted 10 families directly with in-home support or respite care service.

Health Promotion: An effort of the Aging & Disability Resource Center, a total of 25 health promotion classes were offered in the tri-county area in 2010 with 18 classes completed and 175 individuals participating. Classes include *Stepping On*, *A Matter of Balance*, *Living Well with Chronic Conditions*, and *Tai Chi*. A new community medication management course was started along with participation in a program where individuals list medications in a software system for review by a pharmacist provided through CHN Pharmacy. Nearly 90 individuals were assisted with some form of medication management in 2010. Additionally, over 1,700 File-of-Life packets have been distributed to assist EMS when responding to an emergency. A Nintendo Wii system was purchased with grant funding and games and exercise implemented at the dining centers.

Benefits Assistance: The Elderly Benefit Specialist was kept busy again during 2010, serving 733 older adults with one-on-one appointments, most of whom requested assistance with health insurance benefits, housing, or other financial assistance. The Benefit Specialist reported a monetary value of \$367,995 in savings to people who were assisted with homestead taxes, enrolled in SeniorCare, Medicare Part D, Medicare/Medicaid, or other public benefit programs. The legal pro-bono program, provided through local attorneys, assisted 24 individuals needing legal advice on a variety of topics including wills, life estates, bankruptcies, etc. Over 40 hours of volunteer time was donated to provide assistance with homestead tax credit forms.

Nutrition Program: In 2010 the Nutrition Council worked to gain approval to post uniform signage at each of the 8 senior dining centers. Much discussion took place throughout the year regarding potential new funding sources or cost savings to the program. A total of 48,588 meals were served to 720 participants. 48% of those receiving home delivered meals have been identified at moderate to high nutrition risk. Of those participating in the nutrition program, 28% receive a meal delivered to the home; 72% attend a dining center. The Senior Farmers' Market Program was offered for the 8th year, and 149 vouchers were dispersed.

Information & Assistance: The Aging & Disability Resource Center serving Green Lake, Marquette, and Waushara counties provided assistance 4,754 times in 2010. The top concerns in 2010 were in the area of long-term care assistance and eligibility, health and in-home support services, public benefits and financial assistance, health benefits and nutrition, caregiver support, transportation, adult protective services, legal assistance, nutrition, transportation, housing, and more. The Aging & Disability Resource Center is a local partnership with Waushara County Human Services, and Green Lake & Marquette County Human Services.

Home Repair Assistance: The Volunteer Senior Home Repair Program uses skilled volunteers to provide a variety of home repairs for older adults to help prevent falls and maintain the ability to live alone independently. Individuals receiving service pay for the cost of materials and mileage reimbursement for the volunteers. Home repair volunteers assisted 18 individuals by providing 100 hours of service for a value of \$2,500. The program has provided assistance to nearly 170 unduplicated individuals since its inception.

Outreach/Education: The Department performs various outreach and educational activities throughout the year, including participating in the annual county fair. Educational focuses in 2010 included nutrition education, emergency preparedness, medication management, benefits of laughter, the impact of the new health reform law for seniors, importance of participating in the 2010 Census, and information related to the Older Americans Month theme, "*Age Strong, Live Long.*" In partnership with the TRIAD program, enhanced awareness was provided on identity theft and scams. Working with AARP, a defensive driver safety course was offered. With an arrangement with Weyawega Health Care Center, foot care services made available and through Public Health, blood pressure and flu clinics held at most senior dining centers. Brown Bag Medicine Reviews were offered in partnership with CHN Pharmacy. Finally, large print calendars made available through grant funding to seniors with low vision.

Volunteer Services: Volunteers make it possible for the department to provide services at a much higher level than funding would otherwise allow. Without the dedication of over 172 volunteers, many programs would not exist. In 2010, volunteers logged over 12,000 hours of service for a total monetary value of \$94,000. The efforts of all volunteers contribute greatly to the success of our community. Our "Helping Hands" were recognized at each senior dining center in April, and a formal Volunteer Recognition event held for all registered volunteers in October.