

WALA ADVOCATE

WISCONSIN ASSISTED LIVING ASSOCIATION • SPRING 2025 VOL. 30 • NO. 1

Possibilities
WALA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2025



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CHAIRPERSON'S CORNER

By Jill Kreider, WALA Board Chairperson



Dear WALA Community,

On behalf of the entire team and WALA Board, I want to extend a warm and heartfelt thank you to each and every one of you who joined us at this year's annual Spring WALA conference. Your presence, energy, and dedication made it an unforgettable event. We gathered to share knowledge, reconnect with colleagues, and recharge our spirits—and you delivered on all fronts. It's no small feat to carve out time for a conference when our lives in healthcare are so relentlessly demanding, and we're grateful you chose to spend it with us.

Let's be honest: working in healthcare is a marathon, not a sprint. Our days are a whirlwind of resident care, administrative tasks, and the constant push to stay ahead of the curve and take on things thrown our way. The work can be long hours, and emotionally taxing. We pour ourselves into our work because it matters and we love what we do—because lives depend on it. That doesn't make it any less taxing. Home often becomes a pit stop to recover, and work is an all-consuming beast. It's easy to lose sight of anything beyond those two poles. That's why this conference, and spaces like it, are so vital. They remind us of the need for a "third place", in which the opening speaker also spoke of.

Sociologists describe a third place as that sacred space outside of home and work—a refuge where we can unwind, connect, and just be. For many of us in healthcare, finding that third place feels like a luxury we can't afford. But here's the truth: we need it. The WALA conference wasn't just about workshops and keynotes (though those were stellar—kudos to our speakers!). It was a third place in action: a chance to laugh over coffee, swap stories with someone who gets it, and feel part of a community that understands

the grind. Those hallway chats and late-night debriefs? They're not extras—they're medicine for the soul.

Seeing you all there—sharing ideas, asking tough questions, and lifting each other up—reaffirmed why we do what we do. Healthcare isn't just a job; it's a calling that binds us together. But even the most dedicated among us can't run on empty. So, as we head back to our busy lives, let's carry forward that spirit of connection. Seek out your third place, whether it's a quiet park bench, a book club, or next year's conference (mark your calendars!). You deserve it, and your patients deserve a version of you that's whole.

Thank you again for making this year's WALA conference a success. Here's to thriving—not just surviving—in the wild, wonderful world of healthcare.

Warmly,

Jill Kreider

WALA MISSION STATEMENT

The Wisconsin Assisted Living Association (WALA) is the largest trade association in Wisconsin representing the assisted living profession. Our mission is to support assisted living communities, staff, and residents through advocacy, education, and service.

WISCONSIN ASSISTED LIVING ASSOCIATION

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CEO CORNER

By Mike Pochowski, WALA President & CEO

Thank you for everything you are doing to provide outstanding care and services to all of your residents. Please know you are doing an amazing job and we are truly thankful for everything you are doing and continue to do.



I would like to also thank all of the attendees who participated in WALA's Legislative Day on March 18th. We had 52 WALA members attend this year meeting with 61 legislators to advocate for our state budget requests – Continuation of

the Family Care Minimum Fee Schedule and the continuation of the Direct Care Workforce Funding Initiative; and our legislative requests pertaining to consumer transparency and new construction/hallway width requirements.

You can continue to make your voice heard on these important issues. On the state budget requests, you can participate in one of the statewide budget listening sessions or you can submit public comments. All of the information about the listening sessions and submitting a public comment can be found here: [Joint Committee on Finance Public Comment Website](#).



An example of a public comment could include discussing your real-life experiences with the Family Care Program – workforce challenges, labor market wage trends, and cost of inflation, namely what would happen to your assisted living community if the Family Care Minimum Fee Schedule or the Direct Care Workforce Funding Initiative is not continued. It is always very impactful if you can personalize your comments and if you have any questions about the budget listening sessions or submitting a comment, please let us know.

Another way we are pushing the message of needing adequate Family Care funding is through op-eds at local media outlets across the state. So far, the Wisconsin State Journal, Hudson Star Observer,



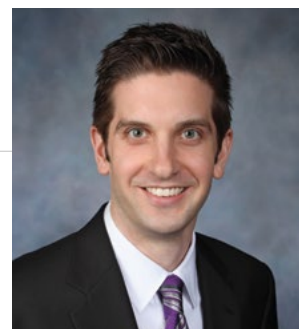
and WisPolitics have run WALA's op-ed stressing the need for a continuation of the Family Care Minimum Fee Schedule and the Direct Care Workforce Funding Initiative.

Also, you can ensure your voice is heard on WALA's Budget and Legislative Requests by participating in your legislators' listening session(s). These sessions take place throughout the year and you can find out more information by signing up for their E-Updates through their website. You can identify your State Senator and State Assembly Representative here: [WSL - Find Your Legislator](#)

Finally, you can also help advocate on your behalf through the WALA-PAC. The WALA-PAC enables us to support elected officials, both Democrats and Republicans, who understand assisted living and who are in a position to support policies that enhance the lives of assisted living residents. No contribution is too small and every dollar helps ensure that critical priorities are addressed. A more robust WALA-PAC will support these efforts. You can provide a personal contribution (corporate contributions are not allowed) at [ewala.org/advocacy](#).



Thank you for your continued support and membership in WALA, we greatly appreciate it.



WALA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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CONGRATULATIONS, 2025 WALA HERO AWARD WINNERS!

Celebrating Excellence in Assisted Living: WALA's 2025 Honorees

Every year, the Wisconsin Assisted Living Association invites its members to nominate individuals who go above and beyond in their commitment to assisted living. These individuals represent the very best of the assisted living industry in Wisconsin, showcasing dedication, compassion, and service.

At the 2025 WALA Annual Conference, four exceptional individuals were honored for their outstanding contributions. Selected from a pool of remarkable nominees, these honorees stand out for their commitment to the well-being of residents they care for.



Caregiver of the Year: Lauren Maglio, Wilson Commons

With over 15 years of dedicated service at Wilson Commons, Lauren Maglio has been an invaluable asset to both residents and staff. Since starting in 2009, she has played a crucial role in training caregivers and fostering a compassionate environment. Inspired by her mother,

who was a lifelong caregiver, Lauren began her journey in healthcare at just 17 years old. Her experience spans nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and home care. Her leadership and expertise have made a lasting impact, ensuring high-quality care and a supportive atmosphere for all.



Team Member of the Year: Sheena Zerkle, Brookdale Middleton

Born in Germany and raised in the Madison area, Sheena Zerkle's life is centered around family, her love for the Green Bay Packers, and her passion for senior care. Since beginning her assisted living career in 2011, Sheena has brought boundless

empathy and joy to those around her. Whether interacting with residents or collaborating with coworkers, she has a unique ability to brighten any environment. Her presence transforms ordinary days into extraordinary experiences, making her an invaluable part of Brookdale Middleton.



Department Director of the Year: Craig Smith, Inspiration Ministries

Craig Smith's connection to Inspiration Ministries runs deep—both of his parents worked there, and their meeting on the job eventually led to Craig's own journey in the organization. Raised with a strong sense of faith and service, Craig embraced

the role of Life Enrichment Director post-pandemic, taking on the challenge of rebuilding the Activities Department. His unwavering commitment and leadership have revitalized programming for residents, embodying his belief in faith, purpose, and servant leadership. Craig's story serves as an inspiration for others to pursue their calling with dedication and heart.



Executive Director of the Year: Wendi Biever, Songbird Pond Assisted Living

Wendi Biever has dedicated her life to healthcare since 1989, working in nearly every facet of the industry. Known for her humility and kindness, Wendi's impact is immeasurable, though she prefers to remain behind the scenes, quietly making a difference. Her selfless dedication has

touched countless lives at Songbird Pond Assisted Living, where she is a true hero to residents. Beyond her professional achievements, Wendi is a devoted mother and proud grandmother, cherishing her family as much as the residents she serves.

Honoring Dedication and Excellence

The 2025 WALA honorees exemplify the heart and soul of assisted living in Wisconsin. Their commitment, compassion, and leadership serve as an inspiration to their peers and the industry as a whole. WALA is proud to celebrate these individuals and their remarkable contributions, ensuring that assisted living remains a place of dignity, care, and excellence for all.

[Nominate the Next WALA Hero Today](#)

Do you know a person who deserves to be recognized for their outstanding contributions to the assisted living industry in Wisconsin? WALA is now accepting year-round nomination for the WALA Hero Awards. Nominate your Hero today and they could be recognized at the 2026 WALA Annual Conference.

[Please contact WALA](#) for more information or assistance.





THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF SENIOR HOUSING: HOW OPERATORS CAN STAY COMPETITIVE

By Kevin Carey & Connor Emmel, Business Development, Iconica

The senior housing industry is experiencing a period of rapid transformation. Rising demand for quality senior living options, coupled with economic challenges like increased construction costs and interest rates, is forcing operators to rethink their strategies. In this evolving landscape, adapting to new realities is critical for long-term success.

Why New Developments Are Slowing Down

The cost of building new senior housing facilities has escalated due to rising material prices, labor shortages, and high interest rates. Securing financing for new developments has also become increasingly difficult. As a result, fewer new communities are being built, putting additional pressure on existing facilities to meet the growing demand for senior living options.

The Rising Demand for Existing Communities

With fewer new developments, seniors and their families are turning to established communities for housing solutions. This shift has increased occupancy rates, but it has also created challenges for operators who must ensure their facilities remain competitive in a market with evolving expectations. Seniors today are looking for more than just a place to live—they want environments that offer comfort, convenience, and a strong sense of community.

Practical, Scalable Upgrades for Senior Housing Facilities

To meet the needs of today's seniors, operators must prioritize upgrades that enhance both quality of life and operational efficiency while remaining mindful of budget constraints. Investing in practical improvements can improve competitiveness and resident satisfaction. Key areas of focus include:

- **Functional and Inviting Living Spaces:** Open floor plans, adaptable units, and multipurpose common areas foster

social interaction and accommodate varying needs. Simple updates like fresh paint, improved lighting, and durable flooring can create an updated and more welcoming environment.

- **Amenities That Matter:** Practical and engaging features such as walking paths, community gardens, and multipurpose activity rooms encourage wellness and social engagement at a manageable cost.
- **Thoughtfully Selected, Durable Finishes with Longevity in Mind:** Cost-effective, low-maintenance materials such as high-quality vinyl flooring, stain-resistant surfaces, and energy-efficient fixtures provide both durability and aesthetic appeal without excessive costs.
- **Technology Integration for Safety and Convenience:** Simple smart home features, including motion-sensor lighting, emergency call systems, and user-friendly thermostats, enhance security and ease of use for residents.

For operators considering renovations, partnering with an experienced architectural and construction professional is essential. Companies like Iconica specialize in phased renovations, allowing communities to upgrade efficiently without major disruptions. By integrating design and budgeting early in the planning process, operators can achieve cost-effective solutions that enhance both aesthetics and functionality.

How Operators Can Stay Ahead

To navigate these changes successfully, senior housing operators should focus on several key strategies:

1. **Align Plans with Budget:** Invest in upgrades in a phased and practical manner to meet residents' expectations while remaining budget conscious.

2. **Improving Operational Efficiency:** Implement cost-saving measures such as energy-efficient systems and streamlined staffing models without compromising care and service quality.
3. **Maximizing Current Properties:** Make strategic use of available space to accommodate new residents and amenities without the need for expensive expansions.
4. **Adapting to Changing Needs:** Keep up with trends in senior preferences, such as wellness-focused living and technology integration, in a way that aligns with financial constraints.

Planning for the Future

As the senior housing industry continues to evolve, staying proactive is key. By embracing upgrades, improving efficiency, and responding to changing resident expectations, operators can position their communities for long-term success. Working with industry experts who focus on planning and budgeting can provide valuable guidance, ensuring that renovations and improvements align with financial goals and market trends. To support operators in making informed decisions, Iconica offers a complimentary preliminary design and budgeting consultation. This allows communities to explore upgrade

possibilities without financial commitment, ensuring they are well-prepared for the future of senior housing.

By taking a strategic and practical approach, senior housing operators can continue to provide high-quality living environments that meet the needs of today's—and tomorrow's—seniors while staying competitive in the market.

About Iconica

Iconica is an experienced and trusted partner in senior housing design and construction. We specialize in seamless renovations and new facility development. Our multidisciplinary team works under one roof and designs with constructability, clarity, and efficiency in mind. With a strong focus on balancing vision and budget, we provide accurate pricing and phased renovation solutions that maximize value without compromising quality. Our designs render functional and welcoming spaces that enhance well-being and provide a home-like environment.



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INSPIRED COFFEE: BREWING OPPORTUNITIES AND EMPOWERING LIVES

Founded in 1949, [Inspiration Ministries](#) has been a pioneer in caring for individuals with disabilities, believing firmly that everyone is created on purpose for a purpose. Inspiration Ministries goes beyond providing services—they are dedicated to enriching lives and empowering every individual they support. Their offerings include comprehensive services such as nursing care, spiritual guidance, work placement, personalized meal plans, and transportation. They also prioritize community engagement and partner with dental professionals, therapists, and behavioral health specialists to ensure seamless, holistic care for all.

To address the unique challenges faced by people with disabilities, Inspiration Ministries developed an innovative service delivery model designed to ease transitional hurdles and empower individuals to thrive.

[Inspired](#) is not just a coffee shop in Lake Geneva; it is a beacon of hope, purpose, and transformation. It strives to empower adults with disabilities by providing them with the tools, experiences, and confidence they need to thrive in life and the workplace. Through a carefully designed 12-month training program, participants gain both hard and soft skills, ensuring they are ready to transition into meaningful career opportunities. This program not only equips trainees with industry-specific knowledge but also fosters personal growth through skill assessments, performance evaluations, and the achievement of individualized goals.



The mission of Inspired is deeply rooted in creating an environment where each trainee's unique abilities are celebrated. It serves as a launching pad, enabling individuals to reach their potential while contributing to the community in impactful ways. Inspired Coffee works tirelessly to present a job-ready, reliable workforce while promoting independence, self-confidence, and a sense of purpose among adults with disabilities. Each cup of coffee served represents more than a product - it symbolizes determination, progress, and the incredible potential of the human spirit.

One example of Inspired's impact is the story of Jani. Her vibrant personality, positive attitude, and unwavering determination have made her an integral part of the team. Jani's growth throughout the program has not only enriched her own life but also inspired her fellow trainees. Her story is a testament to what is possible when individuals are provided with the right support and opportunities. Check out Jani's story [here](#).

Inspired is more than just a business—it's a movement that challenges stereotypes, builds community, and celebrates how every person is uniquely designed by God. Every visit to Inspired is a chance to support a mission that transforms lives and creates lasting change.

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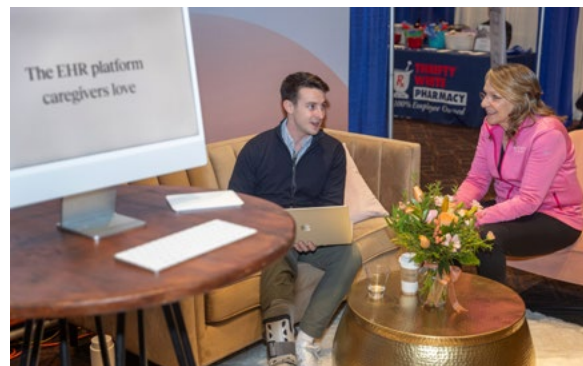
MANAGEMENT ESSENTIALS

[CLICK FOR CLASS DATES AND DETAILS](#)



Possibilities

WALA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2025



WELCOME TO OUR NEW WALA MEMBERS

Tech Pros Wisconsin Rapids
 The Arts of Aging LLC..... Wauwatosa
 Curana Health Austin
 Wear-Tech Hartland
 Mobile Wound Care, S.C..... Milwaukee
 PRN Healthcare..... Appleton
 Springs Haven Homes Madison
 Independence Homecare LLC..... Oshkosh
 ETTAS HELPING HANDS
 ADULT FAMILY HOME..... West Bend
 The New Testament Adult
 Group Home LLC..... Milwaukee
 Alpha Adult Family Home LLC La Crosse
 Wisconsin Positive Healthcare
 Services LLC Sun Prairie
 PROGRSSIVE CARE LLC Madison
 Angelica Touch Adult
 Family Home LLC..... Green Bay
 Odessa Cares Adult Family
 Homes LLC..... Madison
 Just Like Home Residential..... Racine
 Yodka Group Home LLC Madison
 Mahlet Home Care LLC Sun Prairie
 Aries Adult Family Home LLC..... Racine
 Mindstar Residential Community, LLC
 Menomonee Falls
 Beehive Homes of Eau Claire Eau Claire
 Sophia care Inc..... Madison
 Loving Legacy Living..... Green Bay
 Peaceful Living Assistant Inc. Madison
 Guidance Family Homes..... Fitchburg
 Caring Hearts Adult Family Home.... Cedarburg
 Abilities Midwest, Inc..... Watertown
 Appleton Community Living LLC Appleton
 BLESSED HANDS FAMILY
 CARE, LLC..... Kaukauna
 Gentle Hands Family Care LLC..... Germantown
 North Oak Senior Living Northbrook
 SDA ADULT FAMILY HOME LLC Madison
 NuCare Senior Living
 VitaCare Living Mount Horeb Mount Horeb
 VitaCare Cross Plains Cross Plains
 The Cottages of Madison
 Oakwood..... Madison
 Prairie Ridge Assisted Living
 Beaver Dam..... Beaver Dam
 Prairie Ridge Assisted Living
 Mayville Mayville
 R and R Independent Living
 Solutions LLC Stanley
 Newer Beginnings LLC Sheboygan
 Golden Heart Care..... Milwaukee
 Quality Home Care LLC..... Madison
 Destiny Home Care LLC Milwaukee
 House Of Compassionate Care Llc .. Milwaukee
 Brookfield Adorable Homes LLC..... Milwaukee
 Prime Quality Care LLC..... Appleton
 Evan and Joan Wright House
 of Love..... Milwaukee
 Yoyo Quality Care LLC Madison
 MARTIN ADULT FAMILY

HOME LLC..... Madison
 Love With A Purpose
 Residential Homes Milwaukee
 Live To Serve Oak Creek
 Bilan Quality Care Madison
 Christian Care LLC Milwaukee
 Priority Living..... Eau Claire
 Denhaven AFH..... La Crosse
 E & A Adult Family Home
 Milky Way LLC..... Madison
 ANS Creative Behavioral Solutions... Racine
 Loving Haven Group Home LLC..... Milwaukee
 Absolute Living LLC Madison
 CREATIVE CARE FOR AFH LLC..... Madison
 Horton's Haven LLC Two Rivers
 Graceful Living Family Home LLC Fitchburg
 Trinity Adult Family Home Madison
 L & L Anchorage Homes LLC..... Milwaukee
 Comfort Living Care..... Madison
 Mouton's Adult Family Home LLC.... Milwaukee
 Compassion Ilc..... Madison
 Jean-Owen Adult Family
 Home, LLC South Milwaukee
 Nami Care Homes INC..... Appleton
 AMERICAN FAMILY HOME
 CARE INC..... Madison
 Asli care path..... Janesville
 Brighter Day AFH LLC..... Racine
 Safe and Sound Comfort Care, LLC . Milwaukee
 Love Thy Niighbor AFH LLC..... Milwaukee
 Home Wellness LLC..... Middleton
 Victory Homes WI LLC Appleton
 Redd's Helping Hands, LLC Green Bay
 A Different Living Adult
 Family Home LLC..... West Bend
 AllianceCare LLC..... Madison
 Country Life Adult Family Home Hatley
 Demant Family..... Franksville
 Grace Haven Adult Family Home..... Madison
 Living Hope Homes LLC..... Madison
 Rise Option LLC..... Madison
 Deh Adult family home..... Monona
 Trading Places Adult
 Family Home LLC..... Milwaukee
 Major Quality Care, LLC..... Milwaukee
 careshare living Brookfield
 C&E In-Home Care Services Monona
 Goralski AFH West Bend
 Bailey Rose Adult family home LLC.. Mount Pleasant
 Unlimited home care services Ilc Kenosha
 Dorothy's Place of Living LLC..... Milwaukee
 Unity Senior Living LLC..... Milwaukee
 Valley care LLC..... Appleton
 Brandes Adult Family Home..... Silver Lake
 Care Haus..... Roberts
 Peaceful Place Care Madison
 Rosies Homes LLC New Berlin
 MERCY AND GRACE
 ADULT FAMILY HOME..... Racine

MANSA Home Health Care LLC..... Janesville
 Brighter Beginnings AFH Milwaukee
 Ebenezer Family Home Ilc..... Madison
 St Croix Serenity Home LLC Hudson
 Bah Family Care LLC..... Madison
 Destined Homes LLC..... Milwaukee
 Trusted Care..... Milwaukee
 Garden House..... Fort Atkinson
 Bonding Love AFH..... Milwaukee
 Marinette County Group
 Home Association Marinette
 Sunshine Care Center Madison
 Serenity on Osborne..... Racine
 James and Julie Werth AFH New London
 Sharon Ward AFH Milwaukee
 Gardencare LLC Madison
 Carehound Heaven Madison
 Bluff View AFH Camp Douglas
 Kim Navidad Adult Family Home Sheboygan
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 Comfort Home Health Care LLC Madison
 Gifted Hands Assisted Living..... Milwaukee
 Serenity Place LLC..... De pere
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 Divine Care..... Milwaukee
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 Majestic quality care LLC Madison
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 Star Haven LLC..... Milwaukee
 Care choice Madison
 Avalola Home Care, LLC..... Madison
 Jacqueline Byrd-Harris AFH..... Milwaukee
 Thrive Assisted Homecare Appleton
 Bethel Home Care Madison
 Sunrise Home Care Ilc..... Madison



HIGHLIGHTING THE INAUGURAL STUDENT MEMBERS OF WALA FROM THE UW EAU CLAIRE CHAASE PROGRAM

We are excited to announce a groundbreaking milestone for the Wisconsin Assisted Living Association (WALA): the inaugural class of 13 student members from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire's CHAASE (Community Health, Aging, and Social Services Education) program. These students represent the future of assisted living in Wisconsin, and their involvement marks an essential step in addressing the growing needs of the industry as the baby boomer generation continues to retire.

As the demand for skilled workers in assisted living grows, it is crucial to provide students with exposure to the diverse and rewarding career paths that the field offers. By engaging students early in their academic journey, WALA is not only helping to cultivate the next generation of leaders in assisted living but is also helping to address the significant workforce challenges the industry will face in the coming years. As Wisconsin's population ages and the demand for assisted living services increases, we must ensure that a robust and well-trained workforce is ready to meet these demands.

A VALUABLE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

The 13 students from UW Eau Claire had the unique opportunity to attend a pre-conference session designed to explore key strategies for the acquisition, development, and retention of talent in the assisted living field. This session was led by industry experts and provided students with a thorough understanding of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for the industry. They also had the chance to hear from influential leaders, including the State Medicaid Director and the Wisconsin Administrator, State Agency Director, Division of Quality Assurance, who shared valuable insights about the future of assisted living in Wisconsin.

In addition to the pre-conference session, the students were able to attend any conference session that piqued their interest. This hands-on learning experience allowed them to explore a variety of topics and gain a deeper understanding of the many facets of the assisted living industry, from policy and regulations to best practices for care delivery.

The evening networking events also proved to be an invaluable opportunity for the students to connect with industry professionals, including administrators, providers, and other leaders within the field. These interactions helped the students establish relationships and gain a firsthand understanding of what it's like to work in the assisted living industry.



THE GROWING NEED FOR SKILLED WORKERS

As the baby boomer generation continues to age, the demand for assisted living services in Wisconsin is expected to increase dramatically. According to recent projections, the state's senior population will continue to grow, which will place additional strain on existing facilities and services. As such, recruiting and retaining skilled workers in assisted living has never been more important.

By offering students the chance to engage with the industry early on, WALA is ensuring that there is a pipeline of passionate, well-trained individuals ready to step into roles across the sector. The industry needs diverse talent, ranging from healthcare providers to administrative professionals, to meet the complex and growing needs of Wisconsin's aging population.

WALA'S COMMITMENT TO STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

WALA is committed to continuing its recruitment efforts to engage students from across the state. Our focus is on building a robust network of future leaders in assisted living, supporting students throughout their academic journeys, and providing them with the resources and mentorship they need to succeed in this critical field.

Through initiatives like our student membership program, WALA aims to ensure that the next generation of workers has the support and exposure they need to thrive in this rapidly growing and rewarding industry. We look forward to continuing to expand our reach and offer more students the opportunity to engage with the assisted living community in Wisconsin.

As the demand for workers in assisted living grows, WALA is proud to play a key role in preparing the next wave of talent to meet the needs of Wisconsin's aging population. We are excited to see how the students from UW Eau Claire will contribute to the future of the industry, and we look forward to welcoming many more students into the WALA community in the years to come.

Let's work together to ensure that the future of assisted living in Wisconsin is in capable, passionate hands!

UPCOMING WALA EVENTS

APRIL 8 TO APRIL 23

83.15 CBRF Administrator Course - April 2025

APRIL 29

Teaming for Success

10:00 AM - 1:30 PM CDT

MAY 1

Navigation. Workplace Stress + Emotional Intelligence

10:00 AM - 1:30 PM CDT

MAY 7

Survey Readiness Training

10:00 AM - 1:30 PM CDT

JUNE 3 TO JUNE 19

83.15 CBRF Administrator Course - June 2025

JUNE 5

Creative Connections: Empowering Care Through Art

10:00 AM - 1:30 PM CDT

JULY 31

Navigation. Blind Spots + Boundaries

10:00 AM - 1:30 PM CDT

AUGUST 27

2025 Autumn Golf Classic

9:00 AM - 6:00 PM CDT

SEPTEMBER 23

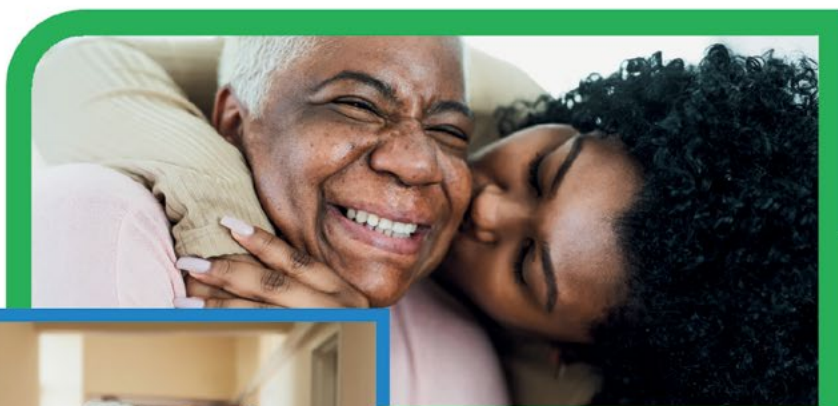
Workplace Symposium

OCTOBER 7 TO OCTOBER 23

83.15 CBRF Administrator Course - October 2025



[Keep up with WALA events on our website here!](#)



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WALA CONNECTION: BECAUSE CONNECTION MATTERS IN ASSISTED LIVING



Meet Rose: 17 Years of Caregiving Excellence at Brookdale Onalaska Assisted Living

Ask Rose Miller what her job entails as a resident assistant at Brookdale Onalaska Assisted Living and she'll likely say, "pretty much everything." And she says it with a heartfelt smile. As Rose puts it, "it's my passion, not just my job."

For the past 17 years, Rose has done everything from serving as cook, to helping administer medications, to serving meals and helping residents with personal hygiene. She even spends time helping some residents maintain a garden on the facility's property, which includes chasing away the occasional invading squirrel or two.

As a smaller community with a "home-like feel," staff at Brookdale Onalaska presents opportunities for staff members to take on a number of different responsibilities, said Cheryl Krage, the facility's executive director.

Rose has embraced the opportunities, being accountable, consistent, always friendly, and being able to move effortlessly from one task to another. "There's a peacefulness she brings to the job," Cheryl said.

Rose immigrated from the Philippines in 1987 with her husband and very quickly found fulfillment in her work upon starting at Brookdale Onalaska. "I like interacting with all of our residents, I'm a people person," she said, comparing the Brookdale community to her own household. "We're all a big family. I know all of their personalities and preferences."

The dedication Rose brings to her job has some families specifically seeking her care. Cheryl describes one recent example in which Rose developed a close relationship with a former resident and then several years later the same family utilized Brookdale for the care of another elder family member. "They view Rose as an exceptional caregiver and someone who provides stability," Cheryl said. Rose is a wonderful example of how personalized care can spark genuine connection between caregivers and their residents.

Thank you for all you do, Rose!



Do you have something good to share? WALA wants to hear about it! Send us your WALA Connection story by scanning the QR code or [contact us](#) for more information. You can also use the hashtag #WALACONNECTION on your social media posts.

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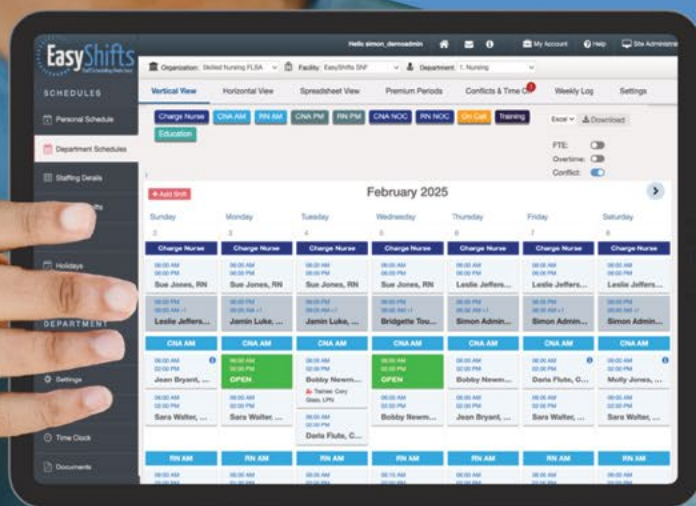


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MAXIMIZE YOUR WALA MEMBERSHIP: EXCITING BENEFITS AND UPDATES

Hello, I'm Kayla Goodall, the Manager of Membership Operations at WALA. I'm here to help you make the most of your WALA membership. As we continue to grow and evolve, I wanted to share some exciting updates and remind you of the valuable benefits available to you as a member.

Introducing Wanda: Your 24/7 Regulatory Assistant

We're thrilled to announce a brand-new member benefit, developed in partnership with WiseOx. Meet Wanda, our virtual mascot, who's available around the clock to assist you with any regulatory questions you may have. Wanda is accessible through the WALA website once you log in, and she's ready to provide support whenever you need it.

Don't forget—every staff member within your organization can have their own login to access all of our members-only benefits, including Wanda's expertise!

Member Benefits You Can Rely On

In addition to Wanda, WALA offers a range of exclusive benefits to help you and your organization thrive. Some of the key perks include:

- **Special Discounts:** Enjoy exclusive members-only discounts on event registrations and WALA Store products.
- **Job Board Access:** Post job openings to reach qualified candidates across the WALA community.
- **Personalized Support:** Get direct assistance from our dedicated WALA staff to help you navigate challenges and optimize your membership experience.
- **Visibility & Referrals:** Your organization will gain visibility on the WALA website, with referrals from our staff to help you connect with other members and partners.
- **Regulatory Updates:** Stay informed with the latest assisted living-specific news and communications.
- **Advocacy Opportunities:** Support our advocacy efforts, such as participating in Legislative Day and contributing to the WALA PAC.
- **Diamond Program Participation:** Join our quality improvement program, designed to help your organization reach new levels of excellence.

Exclusive Discounts Through WALA Partnerships

We've also partnered with several industry leaders to offer additional savings and services exclusively for WALA members. Take advantage of these valuable discounts:

- **CBRF Training Discount:** Save 20% on training with Davis Clinical Consulting.
- **Crisis Communications Services:** Receive up to 2 hours of free crisis communications support from Mueller Communications.
- **Directory Listing:** Customize your complimentary listing on the WALA website as part of your membership.
- **Herzing University Tuition Discount:** Enjoy 20% off tuition for Herzing University programs.
- **M3 Insurance:** Access affordable liability insurance through our partnership with M3 Insurance.
- **M3 Insurance & SFM Workers' Compensation Insurance:** Take advantage of competitive rates for workers' compensation coverage.
- **WALA Reinhart Legal Line:** Get a free 15-minute consultation each month with a WALA-recommended attorney.

We're Here to Support You

At WALA, our mission is to help you succeed by providing the resources, connections, and support you need to excel in the assisted living industry. Whether it's through our new tools like Wanda, the exclusive discounts we offer, or the personalized support from our team, we are committed to ensuring you make the most of your membership.

If you have any questions or need help accessing any of these benefits, don't hesitate to reach out. We're here to help!



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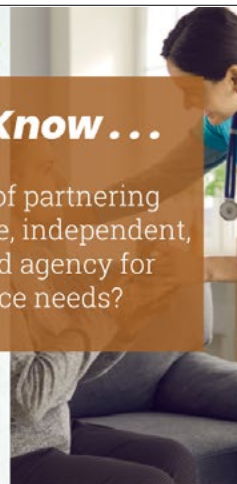
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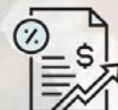
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LEGISLATIVE UPDATES FOR WALA MEMBERS

What Impact, If Any, Do Recent Executive Orders on Deportation have on Assisted Living Communities.

The following should not be considered as legal advice and we encourage you to review in comparison to current policies and procedures and with legal counsel as potential considerations pertaining to any interactions with ICE and other law enforcement as applicable. Argentum's outside counsel has reviewed the following information.

Argentum has been closely following the Trump Administration's executive orders, particularly ones related to addressing illegal immigration and understand the concern and anxiety some of your team members and even residents may be experiencing. Current investigations and actions being undertaken by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) appear to be primarily focused on the detention and/or deportation of illegal immigrants, undocumented workers and aliens with criminal records. We expect investigation and enforcement actions to be fluid and Argentum will continue to keep you informed as developments occur.

We are not observing or have to date received any information that ICE will focus on assisted living as part of their enforcement actions. We believe required state background investigations along with participation in the E-Verify program significantly limit the likelihood of undocumented workers in assisted living settings.

IF ICE COMES TO YOUR COMMUNITY

- Consult and follow current policies and practices on interactions with law enforcement which should include a unified approach whether it's local law enforcement, ICE, or another federal agency.
- Treat ICE and other law enforcement on such visits with courtesy and professionalism.
- Notify legal counsel and other key contacts as soon as practical per policies and procedures.
- Consult and follow internal communication plans to control the flow of information and lessen any disruption to resident care in these situations.
- A designated representative (e.g. executive director, administrator) should serve as the point of contact until legal counsel is contacted, and employees should be trained to notify the authorized representative when law enforcement, including ICE agents, are present, including off-hours.

- Staff who are not the designated representative should say that they do not have the authority to answer any of the agent's questions and refer them to the designated representative. This will avoid any action on the part of your employees that could be interpreted as consent.
- Consider holding practice drills just as you do fire drills for law enforcement entry into your community. Your team will be more prepared and confident if they know what to say and do.

POSSIBLE LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE UNLIKELY EVENT THAT ICE VISITS YOUR SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY

- Assisted living operators should contact their legal team as soon as possible to advise on the situation and the next steps.
- ICE and other law enforcement must still go through a judicial process to access a resident or their Personal Health Information (PHI), and there is no affirmative legal obligation to collect or report information about a resident's immigration status.
- Assisted living operators may balance respecting the confidentiality of undocumented immigrants as if they were any other resident or employee while maintaining a good rapport with ICE.
- If ICE does not present a warrant, your staff members do not have to answer an ICE agent's questions or hand over their or a resident's identification documents. While maintaining a respectful and professional demeanor, staff members should tell the agent that they are not authorized to provide the agent with information or access to non-public areas, but that, following protocol, a designated representative has been alerted. The employee should then direct the ICE agent to an office or conference room away from the lobby or reception area where their presence might be disruptive and cause concern among residents, staff, and visitors.
- If ICE presents a warrant, an authorized representative should review the document to ensure it is valid, signed by a judge or magistrate, bears the address of the premises to be searched, provides a time period in which the warrant may be executed, and describes the scope of a search.
- A judicial warrant, signed by a judge or magistrate, allows ICE to conduct any search as authorized in the warrant, including employee files.

- A subpoena issued by a judge or magistrate may be challenged in court by the employer. If the employer does not intend to challenge, then they should comply with the subpoena.
- An ICE agent may state that their action is required to avoid imminent harm or risk. The facility may decide to cooperate even without a warrant.
- Unless required by law, facilities do not need to ask a resident about their immigration status, or list immigration status in resident and billing records.

REASSURING RESIDENTS AND STAFF

- Assisted living employers and community leadership should be mindful of potential anxiety residents and staff may experience as a result of recent events, especially those who are foreign-born.
- Poised, approachable leadership, particularly at the community level, will have a stabilizing impact in most cases for employees experiencing stress and anxiety.
- We encourage assisted living employers and leadership to clearly communicate with team members regarding the resources available to them should they experience stress, anxiety or have questions as a result of recent events.
- Consider having community leadership review company policies and procedures related to law enforcement interactions with team members.
- Educate and reassure residents that the law protects their healthcare information. When moving residents and their families to private areas, communicate to them that they are safe.
- Educate assisted living staff that your company is committed to protecting their personal information in compliance with all applicable laws.
- Assisted living staff should remain calm and professional throughout any interactions. Employees should not run from or be confrontational with ICE agents.

ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENTS OF INTEREST

- Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem confirmed yesterday that she has rescinded an 18-month extension of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Venezuela that President Joe Biden made days before leaving the White House. We anticipate judicial challenges to this rescission. TPS is a federal program that

shields people from countries in turmoil from deportation and grants them work permits. There were 505,400 TPS approved recipients from Venezuela as of December 2024, according to the Congressional Research Service. Argentum will continue to follow developments.

- A new executive order was issued that freezes funding for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO). This will likely affect organizations such as the Tent Partnership for Refugees (TENT), an organization that Argentum, Argentum members and other private sector employers have worked with in support of refugees. We will continue to monitor this executive order and keep you informed of impacts on the assisted living sector.

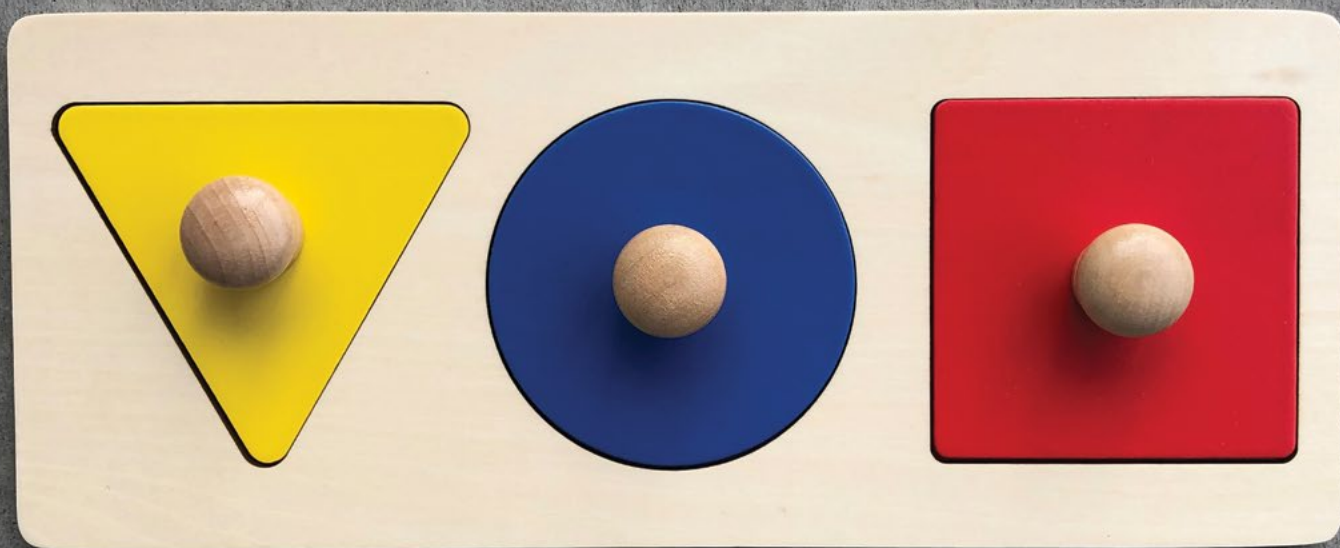
NOTE: Argentum remains very active at the national level in supporting measures for foreign-born workers to have the opportunity to work in assisted living communities and continues to aggressively advocate for immigration reform to ensure the millions of seniors who will count on assisted living will have the staff to provide the care they need.

Argentum's outside counsel, Littler, has prepared a checklist and Q&A document. We will share more information and resources as this issue develops.

EEOC and DOJ Issue Technical Assistance on DEI

Recently, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), issued two "technical assistance" documents "focused on educating the public about unlawful discrimination related to 'diversity, equity, and inclusion' (DEI) in the workplace." Unlike guidance documents, which must be approved by a majority vote of the Commission, a technical assistance document can be issued unilaterally by the agency's head.

The documents do not adopt new policy, but apply existing policy to different sets of facts. The first document, ["What To Do If You Experience Discrimination Related to DEI at Work,"](#) was issued jointly by the EEOC and the DOJ. A second, longer document, ["What You Should Know About DEI-Related Discrimination at Work,"](#) is presented in a question-and-answer format and was released by the EEOC.



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CANDID CARE: ADDRESSING CLICAL LOSS TRENDS

In this episode of Candid Care, M3's [Sara Kekula](#) and [Talía Pletcher](#) discuss clinical loss trends with Lauren Davis, CEO of [Davis Clinical Consulting](#), to unpack the evolving trends in assisted living and skilled care.

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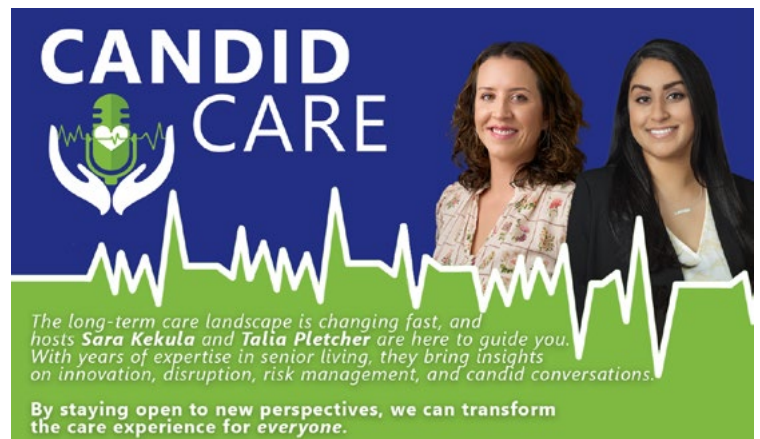
About Davis Clinical Consulting:

Lauren Davis is owner and CEO of Davis Clinical Consulting, a Wisconsin-based Nursing Consulting agency established in 2017 that believes in the care and benefit of their patients with quality care and highly trained nursing placement for assisted living and skilled nursing facilities.

Davis Clinical Consulting's goal is to create a standard of care and proficiency for their assisted living clients that makes sure the patient is getting the highest quality care and treatment plans possible.

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