



BAYFIELD COUNTY
Department of Human Services

117 East Fifth Street
P.O. Box 100
Washburn, Wisconsin 54891-0100

(715) 373-6144 Voice/TDD
(715) 373-6130 Fax
baycodhs@bayfieldcounty.org
<http://www.bayfieldcounty.org>

Date: May 15, 2007
For Immediate Release

Contact: *Elizabeth Skulan, Bayfield County Department of Human Services*

**State Long-term Care Reform
Aims to Bring Services to More in the Northwest**

(Washburn, WI) – Thousands of Wisconsin's frail elderly and people with physical and developmental disabilities receive publicly funded long-term care services that allow them to maintain their independence and live either at home or in an assisted living setting. Long-term care services might include services such as: assistance with bathing or eating; home visits from a nurse; home-delivered meals; home modifications; and/or nursing home care.

However, over 11,000 people statewide are currently on waiting lists for long-term care services because community-based waiver programs like the Community Options Program (COP) and Community Integration Program (CIP) are not adequately funded to serve everyone who is financially and functionally eligible for long-term care services. At the same time, nursing home care is provided to anyone who is determined to need a more profound level of care.

Because care provided in the community can be more proactive, less costly, and more satisfying to the individual, the state is trying something new. When the state's long-term care reform is fully implemented, it will eliminate waiting lists and integrate long-term care services into a single plan of care designed to maximize the ability of individuals, and their families, to maintain or improve their health and independence.

This system change is particularly important now because the demographics of the state's population are changing as the baby boom ages and reaches retirement age. The number of seniors needing services will almost certainly increase. The delivery system, then, must adapt to serve the additional numbers of individuals who become eligible for services.

Beyond eliminating waiting lists, the main goals of a reformed long-term care system are to provide high-quality care to everyone regardless of where they live, encourage consumer choice of care and life goals, and to build a cost-effective long-term care system that will be sustainable into the future. The cost efficiency of the new system will make it possible to serve more people and, potentially, offer even more services.

To accomplish this major initiative in Northwestern Wisconsin, a consortium of counties and organizations was formed and has been working together for the past year-and-a-half. The group is comprised of Ashland, Bayfield, Barron, Burnett,

Douglas, Iron, Polk, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, and Washburn counties, Disability Rights Wisconsin, North Country Independent Living, Northern Area Agency on Aging, private partners Community Health Partnership, Group Health Cooperative-Eau Claire, The Management Group, and a consumer advocate. Together, they are the Northwest Wisconsin Long-Term Care Options (NW-LTCO) consortium. The consortium has received grants from the State of Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services to plan how a reformed long-term managed care system would look in the area.

Under a reformed long-term managed care system, an individual's care plan would be coordinated and managed by an interdisciplinary team that would, at a minimum, include the person receiving services, a care manager, and a registered nurse.

The team then works together with the consumer to develop a service plan. The plan might include services such as: personal care; supportive home care; day services; rehabilitation services; vocational services; supported apartments; Adult Family Homes; Community Based Residential Facilities; and nursing homes if needed.

Long-term care services will affect just about everyone at some time in their life. You or someone you care about—a parent, spouse, child, friend, or neighbor—will need the services that are available. If you are interested in learning more about the NW-LTCO or long-term care reform, please go online to <http://www.nw-ltco.org/> or call Carrie Linder, Aging and Disability Services Manager or Elizabeth Skulan, Director of Bayfield County Department of Human Services at (715)373-6144.

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