**Human Services Director’s Report**

**To the Health & Human Services Board**

February 2025

| **Activity** | **Program/**  **Section** | **Brief Description** | **Contact Person** | **Attach-**  **ment** |
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| Caregiver Education | Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) | The ADRC’s Caregiver Education Series is back! This year, sessions will be held on the first Tuesday of each month from March to October, 1:00–2:30 PM, at the Holmen Area Community Center. This series provides education, support, and resource connections for family caregivers. See attachment for topics and registration details. | ADRC Manager  Carissa Pagel-Smith 785-6172  [cpagel@lacrossecounty.org](mailto:cpagel@lacrossecounty.org) | Yes |
| Wisconsin Alzheimer’s & Other Dementias Advocacy Day | Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) | Join the Dementia Friendly Community Coalition, professionals, and caregivers in Madison on Tuesday, March 4, from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Hear from key state policymakers, gain valuable tools, and strengthen your advocacy efforts. Meet with state lawmakers to ensure Alzheimer’s and other dementias remain a legislative priority in Wisconsin. A group will be carpooling to Madison. If interested, contact Becky, ADRC Dementia Care Specialist, at 608-792-3805. | ADRC Manager  Carissa Pagel-Smith 785-6172  [cpagel@lacrossecounty.org](mailto:cpagel@lacrossecounty.org) | No |
| Increased Calls as a Result of Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memo | Economic Support (ES) | WREA has seen a significant increase in calls from customers following the January 27th memo that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued to federal agencies pausing the release of federal funds for a range of programs.  Even after subsequent actions have blocked this directive, customers continue to express concern that they will lose their Food Share and Medicaid benefits.  The Wisconsin Department of Health Services has provided talking points for Consortia staff to assist them to respond to customer concerns.  They have also added the following special messaging to Consortia Call Centers-  *“If you are calling because you’re concerned about your Medicaid or FoodShare benefits and what you may be hearing about federal policy changes, we want you to know that at this time, Medicaid and FoodShare in Wisconsin are continuing to serve people who rely on these critical programs. Keep your doctor’s appointments and watch for your FoodShare benefits in February. To get the latest about your benefits, you don’t need to call—visit our Medicaid and FoodShare member news pages on the Wisconsin Department of Health Services website. We update them regularly with timely information members need to know. Again, Medicaid and FoodShare are continuing to serve members in Wisconsin.”* | ES Manager  Lorie Graff 738-2410  [lgraff@lacrossecounty.org](mailto:lgraff@lacrossecounty.org) | No |
| Department of Children and Families (DCF) Funding Award | Family & Children’s (FC) | In December 2024, the Family & Children’s Section applied for the “Relative Caregiver Support” grant through DCF. This funding opportunity was a competitive application process. Forty-three agencies applied and we were informed on January 2, 2025, that we were one of twenty-one agencies that were awarded funding. Our agency was awarded $8,610.00 which must be spent by September 30, 2025. Our application had to focus on and include activities designed to assist relative and like-kin caregivers in obtaining benefits and services to meet their needs and improve their caregiving. Specifically, our plan is to use this funding to promote our efforts around Kinship Care and Family Find and Engagement activities for youth in out-of-home care. This funding will help with education in the community by creating and printing informative brochures for the Kinship Care program or with services such as transportation or lodging when helping youth connect and build relationships with relatives or like-kin. | FC Manager  Tracy Puent 792-5507  [tpuent@lacrossecounty.org](mailto:tpuent@lacrossecounty.org) | No |
| Pathways Home Case Management | Integrated Support & Recovery Services (ISRS) | We continue to make significant progress in the Case Management branch of the Pathways Home Initiative. Ryan Ross, a current Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) supervisor, will be leading the team consisting of six social workers and three peer support specialists dedicated to this population. The six social worker positions are filled, and the peer support roles are in development. This team's primary focus is to integrate case management services for individuals who are unsheltered. Additionally, we are closely monitoring the rollout of the new Forward Health Medicaid benefit, Housing Support Services (formerly known as 1915i). We are focused on understanding how this new funding stream will either expand or help maintain the financial sustainability of Pathways Home case management services. | ISRS Assistant Manager  Anneliese Skoda  [askoda@lacrossecounty.org](mailto:askoda@lacrossecounty.org) | No |