

**OPEN MEETING MINUTES**

Instructions: [F-01922A](#)

Name of Governmental Body: Governor's Task Force on Caregiving		Attending: Jason Endres, Helen Marks Dicks, Anne Rabin, Sen. Patti Schachtner, Rep. Chuck Wichgers, Laverne Jaros, Mo Thao-Lee, Jane Bushnell, Beth Swedeen, Jane Mahoney, Rep. Deb Kolste, Lisa Schneider, Todd Costello, Mike Pochowski, Irma Perez; John Sauer, Bill Crowley, Susan Rosa, Lisa Pugh, Stephanie Birmingham, Adien Igoni, Elsa Diaz Bautista, Delores Sallis, Sen. Kathleen Brenier, Margie Steinhoff Absent: Michael Lauer; Ted Behnke; Carol Bogda State Staff: Carrie Molke, DHS; Lynn Gall, DHS; Faith Russell, DHS; Andrew Evenson, DWW Guests: Adriane, Alex, Lisa Davidson, Margie R., Ashley Gill, Sarah Barry, Beth E. Fields, Carrie Gartzke, Amy, Jolene Plautz, Kimberly McDonald, Kathy Johnson, Tony Wedgeworth, Jim, Erik Kanter, Jennifer Ellis, Sean Kirby, J.K., Forbes McIntosh, Erin Fabrizius, Jennifer Houston, Spencer Johnson, John Zordani, Rick, Ann Gryphan, Claire Zautke, Jill Monroe, Mindy Ochs McMillian, Nicole, Janet Zander, Liz Gilbertson, Laura Rose, K. White
Date: 10/30/2020	Time Started: 10:30 a.m.  Time Ended: 12:30 pm	
Location: Virtual meeting via Zoom		Presiding Officer: Todd Costello and Lisa Pugh

**Minutes**

**Governor’s Task Force on Caregiving  
Meeting Minutes  
October 30, 2020**

- I.** Welcome & Agenda Overview
  - Governor Evers will be joining today’s meeting at 11:15 a.m.
  - The Governor’s Task Force on Caregiving final report is being translated into Spanish and will be available by Nov. 22.
- II.** Approved minutes from previous meeting
  - John Sauer made motion to approve, and Stephanie Birmingham seconded.  
Passed unanimously
- III.** Discussion of Next Steps: What happens now with the Task Force on Caregiving Report?  
<https://gtfc.wisconsin.gov/gtfcfiles/docs/gtfc-report.pdf>

Comments:

- Jane Bushnell was proud to share the final Task Force report with individuals and groups. It was succinct and yet thorough. Thanks to everyone at DHS and BPDD who worked on it. The final product was better than she ever expected.
- Senator Schachtner said that the end product is proof that collaboration works.
- Jason Endres: This was a bipartisan Task Force, so he hopes that if any of the recommendations get into the governor’s budget after working on this for an entire year, he hopes that the recommendations receive the same attention on the floors of both the State Assembly and the State Senate.

- Lisa Pugh: She and Todd Costello agreed to share and promote the Task Force report with the Governor's new health equity council on Oct. 21<sup>st</sup>. The co-chairs will highlight the equity issues the Task Force addressed and suggest experts at PHI to help continue discussion with an equity lens. The Wisconsin State Journal, Wisconsin Health News, a couple radio stations in the Fox Valley and others ran stories, and the co-chairs hosted a webinar with the Wisconsin Family and Caregiver Support Alliance in September. They will also be presenting to the Wisconsin Personal Services Association at their annual conference. The co-chairs are open to doing similar presentations for other groups in Task Force members' networks.
- Jane Mahoney: The National Alliance on Caregiving is paying attention to Wisconsin's Task Force and are very impressed with the final report. Six to eight other states are doing similar work, and they appreciated the detail in our report.
- Sue Rosa: Serves on Human Services Board of Bayfield County, and they are interested in her reporting back on the final recommendations next month. She is also writing a piece for the AARP Bulletin as part of National Family Caregiver Month during November, and AARP will be sponsoring a tele-town hall with Lisa Pugh to talk about the Task Force recommendations.
- Stephanie Birmingham suggested sending the final report to the Wisconsin Counties Association and the federal Administration for Community Living (ACL) to share among their networks. The report can be a resource for other states looking to do similar things. Stephanie would be willing to reach out to ACL. Some Task Force members said they have reached out to ACL through advancing states and other contacts, but there are a lot of different people at ACL known by many of the members who are worth contacting directly.
- It was recommended that Wisconsin's report should be shared during the public comment section of the next national RAISE Family Caregiving Advisory Council meeting, including providing a link to the report in chat comments. The [advisory council meeting](#) will be a Town Hall format. Stephanie is happy to either submit formal comments in advance or talk about the report during open comment time.
- Urban Milwaukee and McKnights have also run stories about the Task Force's final report and recommendations.
- Lisa Schneider will be sharing the report with the ARCH Respite National Advisory Committee.
- Lisa Pugh agreed that it is important to reach out to the Wisconsin Counties Association since counties would play a role in implementing some of the recommendations. Lisa will reach out to Sarah Dietrick.
- John Sauer: Being a member of this Task Force was a good experience. The issues became so much more real in terms of the stakes during COVID as we saw the struggles caregivers are going through and what happens when a system is not adequately staffed. There are people who need post-acute care who can't get it, and people are starting to realize what happens when a pandemic is forced upon an already frail system. John recently took part in a webinar with his national association at the University of Massachusetts in Boston where he touted the work of the Task Force. The Associated Press is looking at a possible news story and may be in touch with co-chairs.
- Delores Sallis: Although she was absent at times, she did enjoy the times she was able to participate. She is a family caregiver living with her son's changing condition, so she understands people living with what she's been going through. It was wonderful to work with others to seriously consider what can be done in Milwaukee.
- Lisa Pugh acknowledged Delores' efforts given that her son was very ill and in the hospital. Even so, she tried to take part, even from the hospital. Others on the Task Force lost loved ones over the year that the group met. She is extremely appreciative of everyone.
- Representative Chuck Wichgers thanked the Task Force for putting so many issues on the table. There was a lot of consensus on many things to move forward. He looks forward to discussing with them in the next legislative session if he is re-elected. Some items of concern that deserve further consideration:
  - There are a lot of different stakeholders, and some don't have as many employees or clients and don't have as big of a voice or lobby position.
  - Skilled nursing is not as big in Wisconsin as it is in other states.
  - Medicaid rates have not been revised for over a decade, and Wisconsin has among the lowest rates in the nation. RNs working in home health settings make less, and reimbursement levels not increasing make it difficult to retain an adequate workforce to serve Wisconsin's patients. He will urge his fellow legislators and Governor Evers to make this a priority in the next budget.
  - If the state were able to manage provider audits in a timely fashion and reduce the recoupment amounts, businesses would be able to be more self-sufficient. We also need to reduce documentation. He would like to work on these items in the next phase of the Task Force, if there is one.

**Question: What roles do members want to have in a possible Phase II?**

The Task Force co-chairs plan to request a follow-up meeting with the Governor. They need confirmation from the Governor on the status of the Task Force now that the report has been submitted. Will the Task Force be authorized to continue as a formal government body?

If there is a Phase II, it is not expected to require the type of intense timeline that Phase I required.

Poll Questions

1. Do you support the idea of having a Phase II

One “no” response from Helen Marks Dicks and one undecided.

All other members responded “yes.”

2. Would you be interested and available to participate in a Phase II?

Anne Rabin responded “no”, Sue Rosa is undecided.

Everyone else responded “yes.”

It was suggested that ideas the Task Force did not address or set aside during Phase I could be reconsidered in Phase II. The more concrete members can be about what the focus of Phase II would be will help Todd and Lisa follow-up with the Governor to explain what the Task Force believes it can accomplish. It is unknown if DHS will be able to commit the same level of staff support in Phase II, so members need to make a strong case for what the Task Force plans to do.

Ideas that received a significant number of votes but were not included in the final report include:

1. Caregiver innovation grants
2. Expand the definition of respite to include home chores and related items
3. Establishing a 1-800 number and a caregiver clearinghouse
4. Recruiting untapped workers
5. Promoting the creation of a caregiving office in DHS with staff support and structure

Laverne Jaros remembers a lot of “low-hanging fruit” identified at the beginning of discussion that could improve various aspects of caregiving. She is not sure if the Task Force has the time or ability to get through all of those, but perhaps some of those items could be requested of state staff. Could DHS request a waiver for the use of some OOA Title III-E (NFCSP) dollars to do some of the things we want to do? She also feels that there are a lot of other people who could contribute to making ideas more robust and should be called upon in an advisory capacity.

Sue Rosa: How do we convince as many people as possible that this needs to be a priority?

Sen. Schactner: We need to use time between now and budget development to show that these items are state priorities, and to clearly explain what happens if we don’t do them. Not funding caregiver supports and strengthening our paid workforce is going to reflect on us as a state and how we take care of our most vulnerable.

Stephanie Birmingham: For many of us, these are not a new issues. For a lot of folks caregiving will be a new issue because the reality is that not everyone is recovering the same way from COVID-19, and some will have ongoing health issues. We don’t know for how long. There’s part of me as a person with a disability that thinks we’ve been asking for these things forever. Is anyone finally ready to step up and do something about it? Is there a way to get people who never saw these things as important before to see them as important? Perhaps we can use COVID to our advantage to say that these issues matter because everyone is impacted by COVID. Caregiving is not just an aging or disability issue, so everyone needs to get on the bandwagon. Everyone is going to need care. It’s not about “other people.” It is about all of us. Every one of us could all be just one COVID diagnosis away from needing a caregiver. Health care and hospitals overwhelmed. We need to find ways we can work with health systems to find solutions.

Lisa Pugh asked about DHS’s ability to engage in messaging and awareness building now that the report is out. Or can DHS only be involved in public policy proposal development?

Response - Carrie Molke: DHS does this kind of work with about 10 state councils, so we have provided that kind of support. However, DHS does have a bandwidth and capacity issue. It is clear that DHS staff will not be able to do what we have done in the past, but she’s not closing the door. She asked Task Force members to think about what their vision would be going forward, and DHS will see what it can do. There is nothing preventing Task Force members from engaging in messaging and awareness building on their own.

Adien Igoni asked legislative members on the Task Force to advise on the likelihood of getting legislative support for the preventative measures included.

Jane Bushnell suggested that items from Phase I that didn't pass should be reconsidered in Phase II to see if members can move those forward.

Todd Costello: It is important to keep this moving forward. We within WPSA are hearing from members that they are receiving notifications of rate reductions from HMOs and MCOs. Our work really is important because things are moving in the wrong direction. It really concerns me. I know that it is a challenging time to recruit workers, and during the pandemic it's becoming even more difficult. We are now seeing providers having to choose whether to reduce pay or take other austerity measures, which raises a lot of concern that in the middle of all this providers are experiencing rate reductions.

Sue Rosa: Between now and February is an important time to lobby for these priorities, not after February.

Beth Swedeen: More work needs to be done to disseminate the report. We haven't had press conferences. We haven't had discussions with key organizations. She would like to see dissemination of what was submitted to the Governor as a next step.

Lisa Pugh isn't sure how the Governor views TaskForce members' roles at this time. Members could move forward in an awareness role, not in a lobbying role. It would be helpful if DHS could help get Task Force members on other groups' agendas to find additional supporters. Should Phase II work be part of a sub-committee on a standing council, such as the LTC Advisory Council? Caregiving is within the charge of the LTC Advisory Council, but there is no sub-committee now. Creating one would provide an official way to continue meeting and keep structure.

John Sauer recommended:

- 1.) Co-chairs and a few others meet directly with Noah Roberts and others working on the budget. Have a direct conversation about the recommendations and bring stories. Everyone is starting to line-up for budget discussions so we need to schedule appointments with people drafting the budget now.
- 2.) Hold a press conference, not a political one, but one to bring-in others to have a forum about workforce issues and focus on care during a pandemic.
- 3.) Advocacy is not a formal part of the Governor's Task Force on Caregiving's job. We can't expect the state/DHS to support us in that.
- 4.) Next steps would be beyond what is in the Phase I final report. We don't have enough paid caregivers, and we need to go beyond what is in the report about how we attract people to TC careers. We should look at how to streamline state training programs and immigration.
- 5.) Given that unemployment is higher now than it was before the pandemic, we need to do a better job of promoting jobs in long term care.

Mo Thao-Lee would like to bring back proposals that didn't get included in the final report. Between now and February, the Task Force's focus should be on promoting what we put forward to make sure it does move forward.

Lisa Pugh asked if DHS could help arrange a press conference.

Faith Russell responded that she would have to check. DHS would need to know more about what the purpose of the press conference would be in order to ask if state staff could be involved.

Todd Costello believes that the TaskForce should focus on moving Phase I policies forward using advocacy or other means. He also supported joining a standing committee that would keep the Task Force's recommendations in the forefront and dig deeper into health disparities.

#### **FOLLOW-UP ITEMS**

- Faith Russell will check into possibility of a public forum or press conference with DHS
- Co-chairs will schedule a meeting and keep in touch with the Governor's Office
- Find out what other boards, councils and groups could be conduits to disseminate Task Force report.
- Determine if there is a way state representatives and senators on the TaskForce could sponsor an informal hearing or informational session to share TaskForce recommendations. Informal hearings are a good way to give legislators

an inside look as to what is being discussed and recommended.  
(Hold before February)

Other Possibilities:

- Find ways to advance items that do not get included in the state budget.
- Consider if there are there new things from post COVID-19 that the Task Force wants to address.
- Address health equity – The Task Force was not able to dig deep enough related to the final recommendations.
- Focus on advocacy between now and when the budget is released. Advocacy can be done individually by members or organizations, but it would help to have core advocacy materials that can be shared and by everyone.

#### IV. Governor's Address

This Task Force was created long before we knew about COVID-19, which makes the work you're doing more critical than ever. Caregivers should be recognized and celebrated for their good work, but that's not enough. We need to back that up by making sure they are mentally, emotionally and financially backed-up. I'm proud of the work this Task Force has done over the last year in bringing people together to develop solutions to the problems we collectively face. Thank you for your dedication. We have a lot of task forces going on, and it has been a challenge for each and every one of them. I don't think any of them have accomplished what you have. I'm certain our state will be better for it.

We are prepared to move the state in the right direction on this issue. I share your commitment to supporting caregivers and improving the quality of care. I have declared November Family Caregiver Month across the State of Wisconsin to recognize caregivers' numerous sacrifices in support their family and friends. I hope you all stay healthy and safe as you go forward. Thank you again. The time you put in will bear fruit.

#### V. Noah Roberts, a member of Governor Evers' policy team that is in the process of reviewing the Task Force report and policy recommendations, was available to answer questions.

- Adien Igoni: What competing priorities are going up against the Task Force recommendations? What should be our realistic expectations?  
Noah: The budget includes a broad range of issues and areas. Caregiving is part of that. Budgets are based on finite resources, so we will continue to examine what competing priorities exist. The Governor created the Task Force to advance the conversation around caregiving.
- Mo Thao-Lee: What are the chances for recommendations that don't require funding? And what will be the process for moving those forward?  
Noah: This will be better known when state revenues become clearer in November and once we see all of the priorities advanced to our office. Some priorities are non-fiscal, and we will discuss what can be done to advance priorities through the budget, legislative process or administrative action. One key element is a partnership with the Legislature, and we will continue to work with the senators and representatives on this Task Force to move these forward.
- John Sauer: We are all in the middle of a crisis. Various elements of what we call the continuum of care are, frankly, on the verge of collapse. The message can't be lost that we speak with you today with a real air of desperation. As you go through budget priority setting, we ask that you keep your eye on the people who need care and the people who are providing care.  
Noah: Executive Order 11 addressed these issues, and I look forward to partnering with John and others as we move forward.

The Governor's budget proposal won't be available until after Valentine's Day.  
The next Task Force on Caregiving meeting will be in February.

#### VI. Public Comment

- Jolene Plautz, Home Care Association of America
  - If there is going to be a Phase II, she requests the opportunity to add a member of her organization to the Task Force. Also she doesn't think a hearing in the Capitol is possible at the moment. It is closed to everyone but legislators and staff. It would likely have to be done virtually.

#### VII. Conclusion

- Phase II should focus on:
  - Implementing the Task Force reports recommendations

- Getting a seat on the LTC Advisory Council or another state council
- Holding a press conference and/or advocacy by individuals and organizations
- Scheduling a focused meeting about the Task Force summary
- Co-chairs meet with the Governor's Office and report back to Task Force members

**VIII.** Adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Prepared by: Lynn Gall, DHS Office on Aging on 11/12/2020.

These minutes are in draft form. They will be presented for approval by the governmental body on: 2/25/2020