senior review

FREE

November 2026

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November is Home Care/ Hospice Care, Alzheimer's and Dementia Care Month



A Senior Magazine for Living a Healthier, Smarter and More Active Life in Wausau

It Really Does Mean Giving Thanks

By Dave Olson, Realtor®, SRES™ RE/MAX EXCEL



November brings cold, gray days, barren trees, stripped of their Fall glory and the in between month before we get the harsh winter weather. For early settlers in what was to become our United States, it meant the end of the harvest season and a time to store away as much harvested crops for the long time between the harvest season and next year's bounty. History books list the first Thanksgiving feast to have occurred in 1621 in the Plymouth settlement. The settlers were here seeking freedom to practice their religion without persecution from the state-run Church of England.

Most of us were taught that the Thanksgiving feast that year was a new tradition thanking God for what he gave them here in this New World. Their puritan beliefs and Old English Saxon traditions included festivals held in the fall going further back in England and Europe. These festivals were held to give thanks for divine provision and were refined to honor God after the English reformation. Pilgrims were more likely to follow traditions and cultural norms they had grown up with, just as we do today.

Regardless of how that first Thanksgiving came to be, presidents George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Franklin Roosevelt all formalized our Thanksgiving Day to make it an annual day to give Thanks and created a national holiday for that sole purpose.

Fast forward to today: We gather our families for a big meal featuring a big Turkey, stuffing, potatoes and gravy, cranberries, marshmallow sweet potatoes and all the fixings. Don't forget about the Pumpkin and Pecan pies, even though most of us are as stuffed as the Turkey by then!

There's always a football game each year and the jolly laughter and conversations that happen when families gather. It's the fun beginning of the "Black Friday" shopping weekend for some, while others like me will be out in the woods hoping for that big buck to show himself.

This year please take some time to think about all that you really have to be thankful for and truly give thanks for your many blessings. Counting your blessings and being grateful have been linked to healthier lives, better mental health and longer lifespans. Our country is extremely blessed, and we have luxuries that Kings never dreamt of in days gone by. We get to take the day off, and our homes are warm and safe, we have so much food we can't eat all of it, and we have the ones we love to share it with. We have the freedom to gather and the privilege to worship God without fear, and the leisure time to watch that game, go out shopping or head into the woods. We can gather our loved ones around us and simply enjoy each other's company. We really do have it made, don't we?

I wish a most BLESSED and Happy Thanksgiving to all of you. I'm grateful and thankful for each of YOU.

balanced living

Tips and ideas for a healthy and balanced life

SMART *and* SWEET

White sugar can raise your risk for heart disease and cause your blood sugar to spike, then crash. But you don't need to go without! Instead, go natural with one of these four options - less fructose and more nutritional benefits.

1. DATE SYRUP Full of fiber, it also offers inflammation-fighting and mood-lifting health perks. Add a dash of it to ease up spicy dishes.

2. MAPLE SYRUP We're talking "100% pure organic" to score essential minerals like thyroid-boosting manganese. Add 1 to 2 tablespoons to balance out any bitterness in a vinegary salad dressing, and sub 3/4 cup for every cup of sugar when baking - just be sure to reduce other liquids by about a quarter too.

3. COCONUT SUGAR Sub in one cup of these caramel-colored crystals for one cup white sugar to whip up baked goods that promote a happy tum, courtesy of the good bacteria from coconut's star fiber, inulin.



4. HONEY It's heart-healthy antioxidant and antibacterial properties (which make it great for soothing soar throats) are destroyed by too much heat, so skip it in baked goods. Instead, use it in drinks and on fruit.

.195 SECOND

That's how long it takes for you to think about whether that chocolate cake is healthy after your first thought, which is always about taste, according to a study in Psychological Science. Researchers say you can overcome your natural gimme impulse by waiting a second longer to weigh the pros and cons of that cake before throwing it down the hatch.



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Roth Conversions: A Retirement Tax Strategy Worth Exploring

By Logan Woller, Private Wealth Advisor and Retirement Plan Consultant at Buska Wealth Management



For many retirees, one of the biggest concerns is not just how much they've saved, but how much they'll actually keep after taxes. While investment performance often gets the spotlight, tax planning can play an equally important role in a successful retirement income strategy.

One strategy that has gained increased attention is the Roth conversion.

A Roth conversion occurs when funds are moved from a traditional IRA or other eligible pre-tax retirement account into a Roth IRA. While taxes are generally due on the amount converted in the year of the conversion, future qualified withdrawals from the Roth IRA are tax-free under current tax law.

For retirees and pre-retirees, there may be periods when taxable income is temporarily lower than it has been during their working years. These windows can create opportunities to evaluate whether converting a portion of retirement assets could make sense as part of a broader tax strategy.

Potential benefits of a Roth conversion may include:

Tax-Free Qualified Withdrawals

Once assets are in a Roth IRA and applicable requirements are met, future qualified distributions are generally not subject to federal income tax.

Greater Control Over Retirement Income

Because Roth IRAs are treated differently for tax purposes, retirees may have additional flexibility when determining which accounts to draw from each year.

Reduced Future Required Distributions

Traditional IRA balances are generally subject to required minimum distribution (RMD) rules. Strategic Roth conversions may reduce future RMD obligations by lowering traditional IRA balances.

Legacy Planning Opportunities

Roth IRAs can also offer potential estate-planning advantages for beneficiaries, depending on individual circumstances and current tax laws.

However, Roth conversions are not appropriate for everyone.

The conversion itself may increase taxable income in the year it occurs, which could affect tax brackets, Medicare premiums, taxation of Social Security benefits, and other financial considerations. For this reason, it's important to evaluate the strategy within the context of a comprehensive retirement plan.

Rather than viewing a Roth conversion as an all-or-nothing decision, many retirees find it beneficial to explore partial conversions spread over multiple years. This approach may help manage the tax impact while working toward long-term tax diversification.

Every retirement situation is unique. Factors such as income needs, existing account balances, future tax expectations, legacy goals, and overall financial objectives should all be considered before making a decision.

A thoughtful retirement strategy goes beyond investments alone. Incorporating tax planning and proactive decision-making may help create greater clarity and confidence about the years ahead.

If you've never evaluated whether a Roth conversion could fit into your retirement plan, now may be a good time to have that conversation and explore your options.

Important Disclosure: This content is for educational purposes only and should not be considered tax, legal, or investment advice. Roth conversions may not be suitable for all individuals. Consult with qualified tax and financial professionals regarding your specific circumstances before making any financial decisions.



STAYING HEALTHY DURING COLD AND FLU SEASON

By Macy Loge, B.S. in Dietetics, UW-Stout Dietetic Intern

As colder weather approaches, now is the time to start putting your health first. Here are some ways to stay healthy during cold and flu season:

- **Physical activity** – Exercise is a great way to boost the immune system, which helps fight infection and decrease your risk of illness.
  - Tip: Aim for 20-30 minutes of mild physical activity each day. Options include cycling, walking, and swimming.

- **Wash your hands** – Make sure you are washing your hands frequently and thoroughly with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds. Avoid touching your nose, face, and mouth with your hands. Use hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.



- **Manage stress** – Lowering stress helps reduce cortisol and adrenaline levels, which can help boost immunity.

- **Monitor your diet** – Focus on meals that are rich in fruits, vegetables, and lean protein options. Fruits and vegetables contain antioxidants that help protect cells from damage and keep the body healthy. Protein helps maintain muscle and bone mass, making adequate protein intake vital for supporting strength, mobility, and quality of life.

STAYING HYDRATED DURING THE COLDER MONTHS

Staying hydrated is important at every age, but older adults are at greater risk of dehydration because the sense of thirst decreases and the body retains less water over time. Certain chronic conditions, such as heart disease and diabetes, can also increase the risk. During the colder months, it is common to feel less thirsty, making it easier to become dehydrated.

Here are some tips to stay hydrated:

- Keep water within easy reach and establish a daily routine, such as drinking a glass of water after each restroom visit or completion of a task.
- You can also boost fluid intake by eating water-rich foods like watermelon, cucumbers, and strawberries, or by enjoying soups and broths.
- For added flavor, try infusing water with fresh fruit, citrus, or herbs.
- A few small changes can help you stay hydrated, healthy, and energized throughout the day.

SEASONAL PRODUCE

As we enter the colder months, here is a list of seasonal produce available in Wisconsin that can be added to your diet and recipes:

Apples, Cranberries, Squash, Sweet potatoes, Root vegetables, Pears Pumpkin, Broccoli, Cauliflower, Cabbage, Brussels sprouts, Kale, Spinach

Recipe Of The Season: Low Sodium Chicken Noodle Soup



Ingredients:

- 1½ teaspoons olive oil
- 1½ teaspoons butter
- 1 to 1½ cups frozen mirepoix (onion, celery, and carrot mix)
- 1 teaspoon jarred minced garlic
- 5 to 6 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 to 2½ cups cooked shredded rotisserie chicken
- 5 ounces wide egg noodles
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley, for garnish (optional)

Directions:

1. Heat the olive oil and butter in a large soup pot over medium heat.
2. Add the frozen mirepoix and cook for 5 to 7 minutes, stirring occasionally, until softened.
3. Stir in the jarred minced garlic and cook for about 30 seconds until fragrant.
4. Pour in the chicken broth. Add the thyme, bay leaf, and black pepper. Bring the soup to a gentle simmer.
5. Stir in the cooked shredded chicken and simmer for 10 minutes to allow the flavors to blend.
6. Add the egg noodles and cook according to the package directions, usually 6 to 8 minutes, until tender.
7. Remove the bay leaf and discard. Taste and adjust seasonings if desired.
8. Ladle the soup into bowls and garnish with dried parsley.

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Recognizing the Signs: When Is Memory Care the Right Choice?

By Cambridge Senior Living

Occasional forgetfulness can be a normal part of aging. Misplacing keys, forgetting a name, or walking into a room and wondering why you went there can happen to anyone as we age. But when changes in memory, judgment, or behavior begin interfering with everyday life, they may signal something more significant.



Understanding the warning signs—and knowing what memory care provides—can help families make informed decisions before a crisis occurs.

What Is Memory Care?
Memory care is specialized residential care designed for people living with Alzheimer's disease, dementia, and other conditions affecting memory and cognitive function. While memory care communities provide many of the same services as assisted living, they typically offer additional structure, security, supervision, and caregivers trained to support individuals experiencing cognitive decline.

The goal is to create an environment where residents can maintain as much independence, purpose, and quality of life as possible while receiving the support they need.

Warning Signs to Watch For
Memory loss alone does not necessarily mean someone needs memory care. Instead, consider how cognitive changes are affecting the person's safety and ability to manage everyday life.

One important warning sign is **increasing difficulty with daily tasks.** Someone who previously managed medications, prepared meals, paid bills, or kept appointments may begin making frequent mistakes or forgetting these responsibilities.

Safety concerns are particularly important. Leaving the stove on, becoming lost while driving or walking, forgetting to lock doors, or wandering away from home can indicate that independent living is becoming unsafe.

Changes in **personal care** can also be significant. A person may begin wearing the same clothing repeatedly, neglecting bathing or grooming, forgetting to eat, or struggling to maintain their home.

Families should also watch for **changes in behavior or personality.** Increased confusion, anxiety, agitation, suspicion, withdrawal, or changes in sleep patterns may accompany dementia.

Another consideration is the impact on family caregivers. When a spouse or adult child must provide nearly constant supervision, frequently miss work, or remain awake at night because of safety concerns, it may be time to consider additional support.

Starting the Conversation Early
Families do not need to wait for an emergency to explore memory care. If you notice concerning changes, consider beginning with a medical evaluation. Memory problems can have many causes, and some may be treatable.

It can also be helpful to tour memory care communities before a move becomes necessary. Ask about caregiver training, safety measures, activities, dining, healthcare coordination, and how care changes as a resident's needs progress.

Choosing memory care is a significant decision, but it does not have to mean giving up independence. At the right time, the right environment can provide something equally important: **safety, meaningful engagement, companionship, and greater peace of mind for the entire family.**



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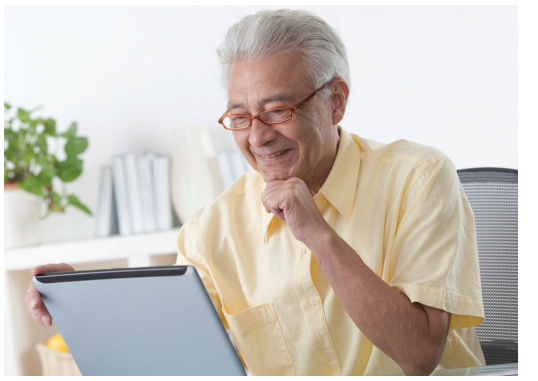


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Technology Resources *By the GWAAR Legal Services Team*



Technology is useful when it works and you know how to use it. Learning to use technology can take some time and be frustrating. There are many organizations that offer free help with technology issues. Many public benefits, medical providers, and social programs use technology to allow access to a broader audience. Understanding how to use technology can ease anxiety around its use and allow you to stay connected. Below are a few places to go for help when you're trying to use technology that isn't cooperating.

Public Libraries
Many of the public libraries in Wisconsin have not only technology available for you to use, but may offer classes or one-on-one tech support. They may have classes available to help you learn how to use the internet, a laptop, or even your smartphone. Some even offer time slots to meet with someone to walk through technology issues. If you don't have internet or a computer, you can use theirs for free. Call or visit your local library to see what technology support they offer.

United Way
United Way offers a program called Techquity that focuses on developing digital skills, tech support, and connecting individuals with technology and the internet. They have navigators available to help one-on-one with technology issues like setting up the internet. They can troubleshoot technology issues and help walk you through issues. They also help connect people with low-cost internet access and laptop computers. Find a navigator near you at https://www.techquitywi.org/digital-navigator or look up more information about this program at https://www.techquitywi.org/.

Cell Phone Providers
If you have issues with your cell phone, you should call or visit your cell phone provider. They are there to help with technical issues and to answer your questions. They can walk you through issues and help solve problems related to your cell phone or cell phone service.

AARP
AARP offers free online classes on a variety of topics. They offer classes about technology. You can learn about online safety, online scams, cell phones, and artificial intelligence, or AI. Once you learn more about technology and get comfortable with it, you can take other online classes like a stretch class or join an online discussion on aging. You can find a class on SeniorPlanet at https://seniorplanet.org/classes?page=1.

Cyber-Seniors
Cyber-Seniors is an online nonprofit organization that offers technology support and online classes. This organization offers one-on-one technology support phone calls. They also provide online classes to help update technology skills. To learn more about this organization go to https://cyberseniors.org/.

Utilize these free technology resources to solve technology issues and build your technology skills. Understanding technology will help you stay connected and ensure that you use technology safely. Build confidence using technology to utilize telehealth appointments, request prescription refills online, sign up and manage health benefits on your cell phone, pay bills online, learn something new in an online class, and connect with loved ones or new friends online.



When the Holidays Reveal Mom Needs a Little Help



She had been looking forward to coming home for Christmas for months.

Her mother's house was always the gathering place—the same kitchen where cookies were baked, family recipes were passed down and grandchildren gathered around the table. But this year, when her daughter walked through the front door, something felt different.

Mom seemed slower getting up from her chair. The refrigerator wasn't as full as it usually was. A stack of unopened mail sat on the counter. There were dust and clutter in places her daughter didn't remember seeing them before.

And then there was the moment Mom reached for something on a high shelf and lost her balance.

Her daughter wanted to say something. She just didn't know how.

For many families, the holidays can bring an unexpected realization: An aging parent may need more help at home.

Adult children who live several hours away may not see the gradual changes that occur throughout the year. A holiday visit can make those changes more noticeable. Maybe Mom has stopped cooking regularly. Dad isn't driving as much. The house isn't as tidy. Medications are being forgotten, or everyday tasks seem to take much longer.

These observations can be difficult—and emotional—for everyone involved.

Start with a conversation, not a confrontation

The goal isn't to tell Mom or Dad what they can no longer do. It is to understand what they are experiencing.

Choose a quiet moment rather than bringing up concerns during a busy family gathering. Start with something simple:

"I've noticed a few things that seem harder for you lately. How are you doing?"

Then listen.

Your loved one may have explanations for the changes—or may admit that some things have become difficult. Either way, listening can help keep the conversation from becoming an argument.

Focus on independence

For many older adults, the words "home care" can sound like the beginning of the end of their independence. It can help to explain that accepting assistance doesn't necessarily mean giving up control.

Home care can provide help with meals, housekeeping, errands, transportation, personal care and other daily activities. Even a few hours of assistance each week may make it easier for someone to remain safely in the home they love.

It can also give family caregivers peace of mind.

Don't try to solve everything at Christmas

One conversation doesn't have to result in a decision.

If Mom isn't ready to accept help, don't turn the holidays into a battle. Let her know you care and that you want to keep talking. Consider starting with something small—a weekly housekeeping visit, help with grocery shopping or someone checking in regularly.

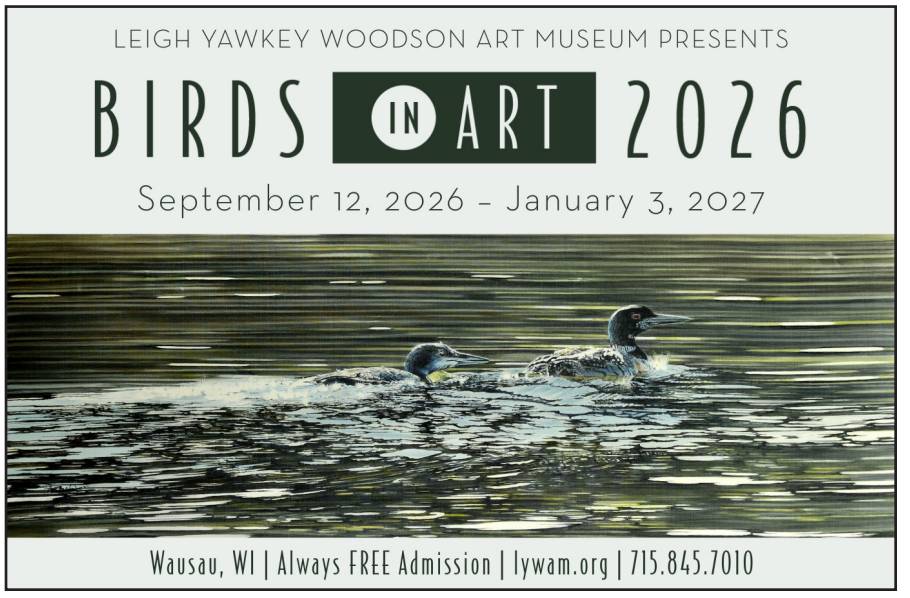
If there are immediate safety concerns, however, don't wait. Falls, medication problems, inability to prepare food or significant changes in memory or behavior may require prompt attention from a health care professional.

Most importantly, remember why the conversation is happening.

The daughter who noticed the changes in her mother's home wasn't trying to take away her independence. She was trying to protect the woman who had spent a lifetime taking care of everyone else.

Sometimes, the greatest gift a family can give during the holidays isn't another present under the tree. It's the willingness to notice, listen and gently ask, **"How can we help?"**





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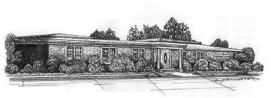
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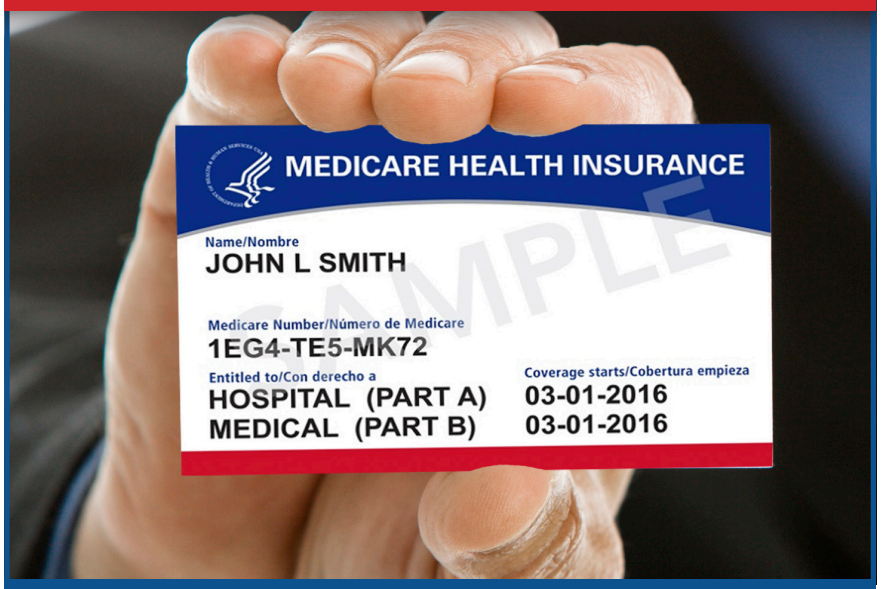
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Planning Ahead Can Make Home Care Easier

For many families, the conversation about home care begins only after something happens. A parent falls, comes home from the hospital, or suddenly has difficulty managing everyday tasks. In the middle of a crisis, families are then left trying to figure out what kind of help is needed, who will provide it and how everyone will share the responsibility.



Planning ahead can make that conversation much easier.

Home care can mean different things depending on a person's needs. Some older adults may need help with meals, errands, housekeeping or transportation. Others may need assistance with bathing, dressing, toileting or mobility. More complex situations may require skilled nursing or other specialized care.

The first step is talking with your loved one before a crisis occurs. Ask what they would want if they eventually needed assistance at home. Would they prefer to remain in their current home? What kinds of help would they be comfortable accepting? Having these conversations while everyone is healthy enough to participate can help prevent disagreements later.

It is also important for families to decide who will handle different responsibilities. One family member might help with medical appointments, while another handles finances or home maintenance. Another may be available for transportation or regular check-ins. Dividing responsibilities early can prevent one person from unexpectedly becoming the primary caregiver.

Pay attention to changes in your loved one's physical, mental and emotional well-being. A single forgetful day does not necessarily signal a serious problem. Instead, look for patterns. Changes in personality, mobility, hygiene, eating habits or the ability to manage normal household responsibilities may indicate that additional support is needed.

Families should also gather important information before it becomes difficult to access. Keep a list of doctors, medications, insurance information, emergency contacts and financial resources. Discuss important legal documents, including a Medical Power of Attorney and an advance directive. These documents can help ensure that your loved one's wishes are understood and respected if they are unable to make decisions for themselves.

Finally, remember that a home-care plan is not a one-time decision. Needs can change after an illness, injury or hospitalization. A person who needs only occasional assistance today may require more support later.

Planning does not mean giving up independence. In many cases, it can help an older adult remain safely at home for as long as possible while giving family members greater peace of mind.

The best time to talk about future care is usually before you need it. Starting the conversation now gives everyone a chance to be heard, make informed decisions and prepare for whatever comes next.

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Why It Helps to Call Hospice Sooner *by Beloit Regional Hospice*



Many people have the wrong idea about hospice. Some think it's only for the last few days of life. Others believe choosing hospice means "giving up," or that hospice will take away medicines, treatments, or the ability to make your own choices. None of this is true. Because so many people believe these ideas, families often don't call until a crisis, when little time is left to benefit from hospice care.

Hospice is about helping people live as fully and comfortably as possible while they face a serious illness that can't be cured. The sooner hospice gets involved, the more time the team has to learn what matters most to the patient and family, get ahead of pain and other symptoms, answer questions, and support everyone involved.

Hospice can ease pain, trouble breathing, worry, upset stomach, weakness, and other symptoms, wherever the patient feels most at home. Nurses, aides, social workers, chaplains, and volunteers work together, offering emotional, spiritual, and everyday support to patients and caregivers. No one should do this alone.

"Choosing hospice earlier isn't about giving up—it's about gaining support," Melissa Salaam, MSN, RN, Director of Hospice and Transitional Care at Beloit Regional Hospice said. "Hospice provides much more than care in the final days of life. Being on hospice care sooner allows patients and families to benefit from expert symptom management, nursing support, social work, spiritual care, aide services, medication and equipment coordination, caregiver education, and emotional support throughout the journey."

Starting earlier gives families time to learn what to expect, prepare for changes, and plan before an emergency happens. Knowing who to call eases fear and uncertainty, and it may help avoid unwanted emergency room trips or hospital stays.

"The goal isn't simply more time on hospice—it's more meaningful time," Salaam said. "When patients have the opportunity to receive hospice support earlier, we can focus on comfort, relationships, symptom management, caregiver support, and quality of life rather than waiting until a crisis occurs."

Asking about hospice or meeting with the team does not mean you have to sign up. A visit is a chance to ask questions, learn what hospice offers, and decide whether and when it is right for you. You stay in charge, with no pressure and no commitment.

Reaching out early gives patients something important: time. Time to understand their choices, decide what they want, get extra help, and spend time with the people they love.

If you or someone you love is living with a serious illness, you don't need all the answers right now. Sometimes the most important first step is simply starting the conversation.

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A Lasting Tribute: Honoring Veterans Through Memorialization

by Helke Funeral Home / Brainard Funeral Home



When her father died, Mary found a small wooden box tucked away in the back of his closet. Inside was a collection of things she had seen before but never fully understood—a faded photograph of him in uniform, a few military medals, his discharge papers and a letter he had written home decades earlier.

Her father rarely talked about his service. Like many veterans, he simply considered it something he had done and moved on with his life.

But as Mary read through the keepsakes, she began to see another side of the young man who had become her dad. She realized that these pieces of his military history were more than possessions. They were part of his story.

Today, many veterans are taking the opportunity to tell that story while they can—and to think about how they would like their service remembered after they are gone.

Planning a funeral or memorial in advance isn't simply about making arrangements. For veterans, it can be an opportunity to preserve their military history, honor their service and give family members a meaningful way to remember them.

Three ways veterans can help preserve their legacy

- **Share your military story.**
  Families don't always know where a veteran served, what branch they belonged to, what their job was or what experiences shaped their lives. Write down important details, gather photographs and identify medals, awards and other military memorabilia. Even a few pages of memories can become a treasured family history.
- **Plan how you want to be honored.**
  Veterans may want to discuss their wishes for funeral or memorial services with their families. Depending on eligibility and circumstances, veterans may also have access to military funeral honors. Families can benefit from knowing what the veteran wants before they are faced with difficult decisions. Advance planning can also provide an opportunity to discuss cemetery arrangements, memorial services and other details.
- **Consider a lasting monument or memorial.**
  A headstone, plaque, memorial marker or other monument can provide a permanent place where future generations can learn about a veteran's service. A monument doesn't have to tell an entire life story. A name, branch of service, dates of service or a meaningful inscription can be enough to connect future family members with the person who came before them.

For families, these conversations can be emotional. Talking about death isn't easy, particularly when the person sitting across the table is a beloved parent, grandparent or spouse.

But planning ahead can also be an act of love.

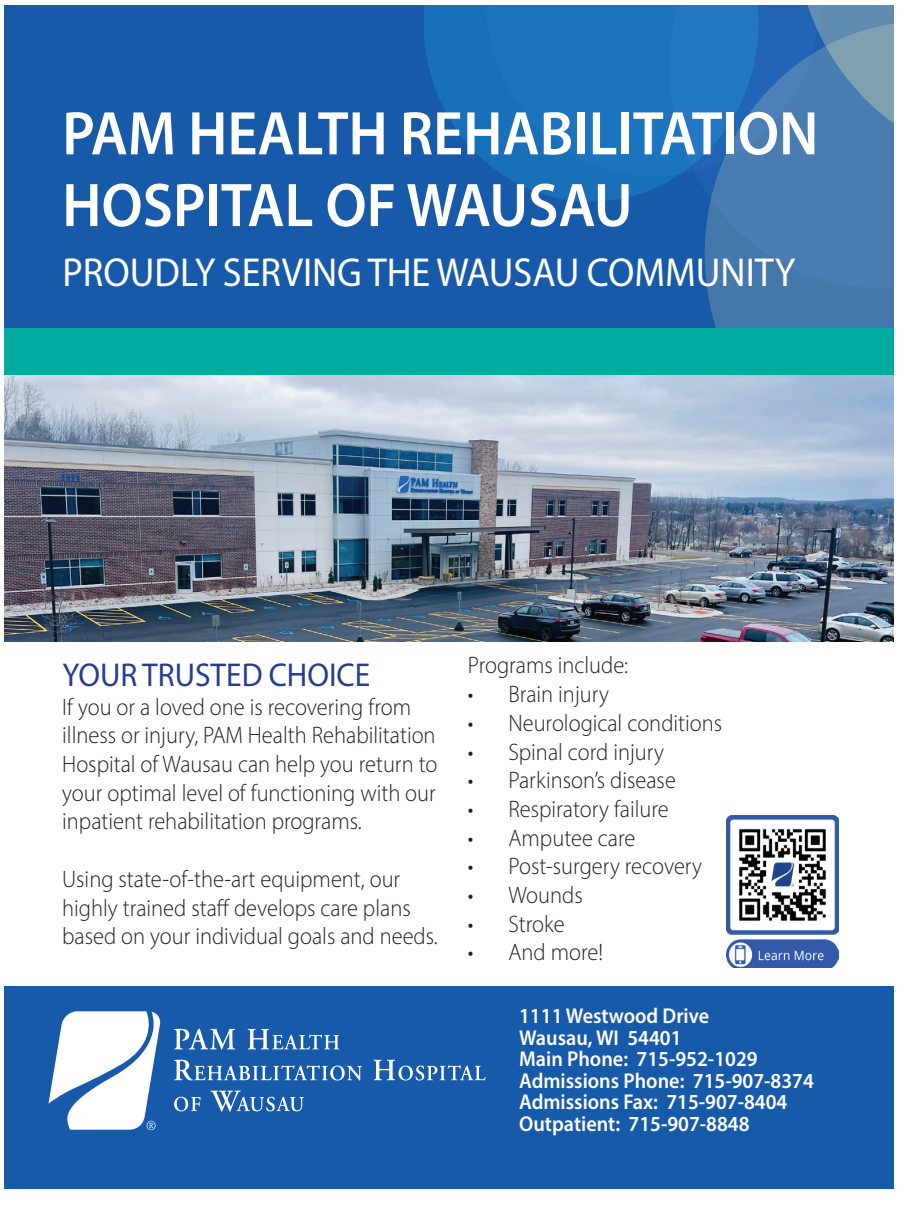
It allows veterans to have a voice in how their service and life will be remembered. It gives families the information they need and can prevent them from having to make difficult decisions without knowing their loved one's wishes.

Most importantly, memorialization reminds us that a veteran's story does not end with military service. It becomes part of the story of a family, a community and the generations that follow.

Years from now, someone may stand before a grave, monument or memorial and wonder about the person whose name is engraved there.

Because someone took the time to preserve the story, they will know.





Caring For An Elderly Veteran Requires Attention Not Only To Physical Health



Caring for an elderly veteran requires attention not only to physical health, but also to the psychological and emotional dimensions shaped by military service. Many older veterans carry experiences from combat, deployment, or military culture that can resurface later in life—particularly as aging, illness, or cognitive decline reduce coping reserves. A comprehensive care plan must integrate geriatric principles with trauma-informed mental health support.

Recognize Late-Life Mental Health Risks
Older veterans are at increased risk for depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and social isolation. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, PTSD does not always resolve with age; in some cases, symptoms intensify during retirement, bereavement, or medical decline. Cognitive disorders such as dementia can also amplify past trauma, leading to agitation, nightmares, or paranoia.

Caregivers should monitor for warning signs: withdrawal from activities, changes in sleep or appetite, irritability, increased alcohol use, expressions of hopelessness, or confusion that seems trauma-linked. Any mention of self-harm warrants immediate professional evaluation.

Use Trauma-Informed Communication
Military culture often emphasizes stoicism and self-reliance. Elderly veterans may minimize distress or resist help. Approach conversations with respect for autonomy and service history. Avoid sudden loud noises or unexpected physical contact, which may trigger hypervigilance. When discussing care decisions, frame support as a strategy to preserve independence rather than remove it.

Open-ended questions—"How have you been sleeping?" or "What's been weighing on you lately?"—are more effective than direct confrontation. Listening without judgment builds trust and encourages disclosure.

Coordinate Professional Support
Primary care providers should routinely screen for depression and PTSD in older veterans. The Veterans Health Administration offers geriatric mental health services, telehealth counseling, and specialty clinics for aging veterans. Evidence-based therapies, such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and medication management, can significantly reduce symptoms even in advanced age.

In crisis situations, caregivers can contact the Veterans Crisis Line by calling 988 and pressing 1 for immediate support.

Address Social Isolation and Purpose
Retirement, mobility limitations, and the loss of peers can intensify loneliness. Structured social engagement is protective. Encourage participation in veteran groups, faith communities, or local senior programming. Some communities host veteran-specific gatherings through organizations such as the American Legion, which can provide camaraderie and identity continuity.
Daily routines are equally important. Consistent sleep schedules, regular meals, light physical activity, and meaningful tasks—such as mentoring younger family members or volunteering—support emotional stability.

Manage Cognitive Decline with Sensitivity
If dementia is present, trauma memories may surface unpredictably. Maintain calm, clear communication and avoid arguing about perceived threats. Redirect attention gently and ensure the environment feels secure. Good lighting, minimized clutter, and reduced background noise can lower agitation.

Support the Caregiver
Caring for an elderly veteran with mental health needs can be demanding. Family caregivers should seek respite services, counseling, or caregiver support programs offered through the VA or community agencies. Sustaining the caregiver's well-being directly affects the veteran's quality of care.

Ultimately, effective care for an elderly veteran integrates medical oversight, psychological awareness, structured routine, and social connection. With trauma-informed practices and coordinated support, families can help aging veterans maintain dignity, emotional stability, and a meaningful quality of life.

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What to Look for When Choosing the Perfect Nursing Home

By Hougum Law Firm

Choosing the right nursing home for yourself or a loved one is one of the most important decisions you'll ever make. The right choice can bring comfort, safety, and peace of mind for the resident and the whole family.

Here are some key factors to consider when selecting a nursing home:

Quality of Care: Research the facility's reputation for providing high-quality care. Check reviews, ask for recommendations from healthcare professionals, and inquire about staffing levels. A higher staff-to-resident ratio generally leads to more personalized care and attention.

Location and Accessibility: Consider how close the nursing home is to family and friends. A location that's easy to visit helps maintain important emotional connections and makes it easier to stay involved in your loved one's care.

Facility Cleanliness and Safety: A clean, well-maintained environment is essential for health and comfort. During your visit, observe the condition of rooms, hallways, and common areas. Ask about safety features such as handrails, call systems, and emergency procedures.

Activities and Social Engagement: Look for a community that offers a variety of activities and social opportunities. From exercise programs to arts and crafts to group outings, engagement helps residents stay active, connected, and fulfilled.



Cost and Payment Options: Understand the costs upfront and explore payment options, including long-term care insurance, Medicaid, or private pay. Make sure the facility fits your financial plan while meeting your loved one's needs.
By taking time to evaluate these factors, you can make an informed decision that ensures both quality care and peace of mind for your family

Planning Ahead Makes All the Difference
Choosing the right nursing home is just one piece of the puzzle. Protecting your life savings while ensuring quality care is another. At Hougum Law Firm, LLC, we help families across Wisconsin plan smart, protect assets, and find peace of mind through thoughtful long-term care and estate planning.

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