senior review

April 2025

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Happy Easter!

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

How Long-Term Care Planning Can Protect the Well Spouse's Financial Future By Hougum Law Firm

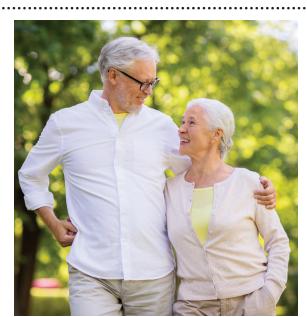
A ave you ever wondered what happens to a spouse's financial stability when their partner needs long-term care? Many families face the challenge of navigating Medicaid rules while trying to protect the financial well-being of the well spouse. Long-term care planning is essential to ensure that one spouse can receive the necessary care while the other maintains financial security.

Understanding how Medicaid impacts the well spouse is crucial. With careful planning, you can avoid financial hardship and secure the care your loved one needs without jeopardizing your future. Here is what you need to know.

Understanding Medicaid protections for the well spouse is important because Medicaid rules are

designed to prevent the well spouse, sometimes called the community spouse, from being left financially destitute. Through spousal impoverishment protections, Medicaid allows the well spouse to retain a certain amount of income and assets while the other spouse receives care. However, without proper planning, these protections might not be fully utilized.

Key steps to protect the well spouse include assessing assets early. Medicaid has strict asset limits, but with early planning, you can



structure your assets to maximize protections for the well spouse. Understanding income allowances is also critical. Medicaid may allow the well spouse to receive part of the institutionalized spouse's income if their income is below a certain threshold. Using legal tools wisely can help as well. Irrevocable trusts and other planning strategies can help protect assets while ensuring Medicaid eligibility.

Waiting until long-term care is needed can lead to unnecessary stress and financial challenges. By planning ahead, you can protect your assets and ensure a smooth transition to care if needed in the future.

We know this article raises more questions

than it answers. At Hougum Law Firm, LLC, we're dedicated to ensuring your estate plan reflects your current goals, protects your loved ones, and complies with the latest legal and financial requirements. As an estate planning and elder law firm, we urge our clients to take advantage of these tools and resources, ensuring comprehensive financial health and security. We want to help you protect your aging relatives. We encourage you to contact us and schedule a meeting with attorney Alan Hougum today.

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Maximizing Social Security Benefits: Strategies for a Secure Retirement

By Cole Bruner, President of Buska Retirement Solutions and Buska Wealth Management

Social Security is a cornerstone of financial security for many Americans during retirement. It provides a steady income stream to those who qualify, but the amount you receive is not fixed. By making informed decisions, you can maximize your Social Security benefits to ensure you get the most out of this program. Here are some strategies that can help you maximize your benefits.

1. Understand the Full Retirement Age (FRA)

Your Full Retirement Age (FRA) is the age

at which you are eligible to receive your full Social Security benefits. FRA varies depending on your birth year, but for most people retiring today, it's between 66 and 67 years old. If you begin collecting benefits before your FRA, your monthly payout will be reduced. Conversely, if you delay taking benefits until after your FRA, your benefits will increase by a certain percentage each year you delay, up to age 70.

2. Delay Benefits for Maximum Payout

One of the most effective ways to maximize your Social Security benefits is to delay claiming until you reach 70. Social Security provides a "delayed retirement credit," which increases your benefits by about 8% per year for each year you wait after your FRA. This means that, by waiting until age 70, you could increase your monthly payment by up to 32% compared to starting at your FRA. This strategy is especially advantageous for individuals who are in good health and expect to live longer lives.

3. Work Longer to Increase Your Average Lifetime Earnings

Social Security benefits are based on your 35 highest-earning years. If you work for fewer than 35 years, the Social Security Administration (SSA) will factor in zero earnings for the missing years, which lowers your average earnings and, in turn, your benefits. By working longer and increasing your lifetime earnings, you can replace lower-earning years with higher ones, which will boost your benefit amount.

4. Consider Spousal Benefits

Married couples can often increase their Social Security benefits by taking advantage of spousal benefits. If one spouse has a higher lifetime earnings record, the other spouse may be eligible for up to 50% of the higher earner's full retirement benefit. This is especially important if one spouse didn't work much or at all during their lifetime. By coordinating when and how each spouse claims their benefits, couples can maximize the amount they receive from Social Security.

5. Factor in Taxes

Social Security benefits may be taxable depending on your total income. For example, if your combined income (including Social Security benefits, pensions, investment income, etc.) exceeds a certain threshold, you could be required to pay federal income tax on up to 85% of your Social Security benefits. Being aware of the tax implications and managing your other income sources can help reduce the amount of taxes you owe and, ultimately, increase the amount of your benefits.

6. Know the Impact of Working While Collecting Benefits

If you choose to start receiving Social Security benefits before your FRA and continue working, your benefits may be temporarily reduced. The SSA will deduct a certain amount from your benefits if your



earnings exceed a specific annual threshold. However, once you reach your FRA, your benefits will be adjusted to make up for the reductions.

7. Use the Social Security Calculator

The SSA provides an online tool called the Social Security Retirement Estimator, which can help you estimate your benefits based on your earnings history and the age at which you plan to claim. This calculator can give you a clearer picture of how your timing decisions will impact your benefits, allowing you to make more informed choices.

Maximizing your Social Security benefits requires careful planning, but by understanding key strategies—such as delaying benefits, working longer, and coordinating spousal benefits-you can significantly increase the amount of money you receive. These benefits are crucial for ensuring financial security during retirement, so it's important to take the time to make the best decisions for your situation. Advisory services are offered through Buska Wealth Management, LLC, an SEC Investment Advisor. Insurance products and services are offered through Buska Retirement Solutions, Inc., an affiliated company. We are not affiliated with, or endorsed by, the Social Security Administration or any other government agency.



In some instances, waiting until 70 to file for Social Security may increase your monthly benefit and may result in a higher lifetime benefit.¹

Social Security Can Be Confusing

You have many choices available to you when it comes to filing for Social Security benefits — more than you may be aware of. Before you file, you'll want to factor in all these options so that you can identify a Social Security strategy that meets your specific needs.

Social Security Maximization

Our Social Security Maximization Report analyzes possible filing strategies, examines multiple opportunities, and helps determine an optimal solution. It provides a retirement roadmap with dates and instructions to help optimize your Social Security income.



¹https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/1943-delay.html

Schedule a complimentary consultation today. 715.355.4445 | RetireWithBuska.com



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Planning ahead is one of the most meaningful gifts you can give your family.

A funeral service is meant to honor your life, but just as important, it also becomes a vital part of a healthy grieving process for the family and friends who will begin to learn to live without you.





Helke: 302 Spruce Street, Wausau, WI - 715.842.3993 Brainard: 522 Adams Street, Wausau, WI 5712 Memorial Court, Weston, WI - 715.845.5525

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April Recipe: Low Sodium Chicken **Vegetable Soup**

Recipe from Davita.com

Ingredients:

- 1 lb chicken breast, boneless, skinless, cooked
- 1 tablespoon onion
- 4 celery stalks
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley
- 1 cup fresh carrots
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 7-1/2 cups water
- 5 cups low sodium chicken broth
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper

Directions

- 1. Dice chicken and set aside. Chop onion, celery and parsley: slice carrots $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick.
- 2. Sauté butter and onion in a 4 quart pot for 5 minutes, until tender.
- 3. Add water and chicken broth and bring to a boil.
- 4. Add chicken, celery, parsley and pepper, then cover and simmer for 30 minutes.
- 5. Add carrots, cover and simmer for 20 minutes.
- 6. Add frozen vegetables, cover and simmer 20 minutes longer.

Total Time: Prep and Cook: 1 hour and 30 minutes. Yield: 8 Servings.



At The Woodson YMCA 707 N. 3rd St. Wausau, WI 54403

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Preventing Medicare Fraud

SMPs are grant-funded projects of the federal U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL).







Discover the Amazing Resources of the ADRC

By Dave Olson, Realtor®, RE/MAX EXCEL

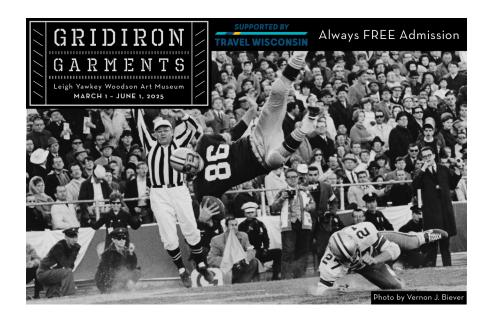
ost of you know by now that I'm **W**a Seniors Real Estate Specialist, focusing on helping Seniors with their unique Real Estate needs. With my specialization, I meet many other professionals that also serve the needs of Seniors.

This morning, I met with Kari Krause, the Resource Specialist with the ADRC or "Aging and Disabilities Resource Center" here in Wausau. This was a fabulous opportunity to learn more about all the ADRC does and what they have to offer and their mission and services. Many of

you have probably heard about one of their services, "Meals on wheels". The ADRC is so much more than that.

The ADRC is an agency of the counties it serves, so it is a public resource designed as the "preferred choice for initial contact and early access to information and resources that prevent, delay and lessen the impacts of aging and disabilities in the lives of adults." Our ADRC serves Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, and Wood counties.

For us, that means the first point of contact for ALL the things that involve our Senior benefits like Social security and Medicare, but





the list of resources is so much more comprehensive than I even imagined.

ADRC is the liaison to hundreds of benefits and services available like housing programs, home maintenance, apartment options, financial counseling, food and nutrition services, medical equipment and home modifications, dementia services, respite care, transportation, veterans services, exercise and fitness, hospice, long term care, prescription medications and so much more.

The list of services and resources is so extensive they have published a 127-page 2025 Resource Directory to outline just how extensive and comprehensive those resources, benefits, and services are. They also have a user-friendly website.

I was so excited after today's enlightening meeting that I decided to write this article to help spread the word. ADRC truly can be the first point of contact in nearly EVERY situation involving aging or disabilities that impact our lives or others. The ADRC is staffed with caring professionals that know all the resource and benefit options available to Seniors through a very broad network of government and other local and regional resources. ADRC professionals know how to access the right ones at the right time and have a simple process that helps quantify which applications fit which needs.

The "Resource Center" is exactly that, a central place to access a myriad of resources and services that is guided by hands on professionals knowledgeable in them. It is NOT exclusively for low-income needs, but it truly can benefit nearly anyone who has encountered just about any situation involving themselves, a family member, or a friend who has been impacted by aging or a disability. The ADRC can either help you directly or steer you efficiently to the best resource.

Our ADRC can be found online at adrc-cw.org or type in a search for "Aging and Disability Resource Center of Central Wisconsin". Their toll-free number is 1-888-486-9545.

DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE AGE 55 OR OLDER IN NEED OF EXTRA INCOME?

Our Senior Training and Employment Program is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and offers paid, on-the-job training. No experience necessary. Positions are part-time with subsidized wages at minimum wage and may last up to four years. Interests and skills will be matched to a position in a Wausau area government or non-profit agency. Currently seeking to fill light office/reception roles. Applicants must meet federal income guidelines. For more information and to determine eligibility, call 920-593-3557.





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Boosting Brain Health: More Than Just a Trend

By Amber Pender-Assistant Director of The Landing at the Woodson YMCA

Brain health is a hot topic on social media, with countless home remedies, quick fixes, and supplements claiming to enhance memory and mental clarity. While some may offer shortterm benefits, there's no guarantee of long-term results. The most effective way to support memory, clarity, and overall brain health is to exercise your brain.

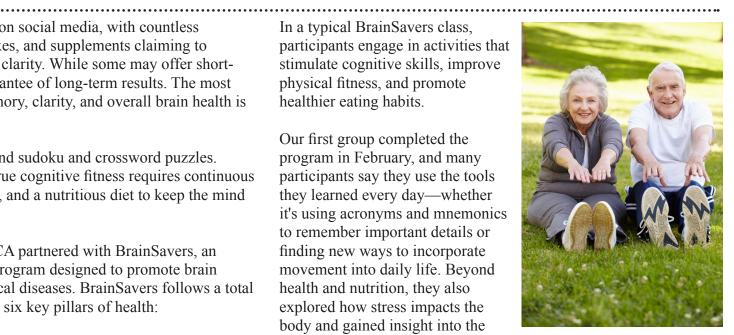
But brain exercise goes beyond sudoku and crossword puzzles. While those activities help, true cognitive fitness requires continuous learning, physical movement, and a nutritious diet to keep the mind sharp and growing.

This year, the Woodson YMCA partnered with BrainSavers, an innovative, evidence-based program designed to promote brain health and prevent neurological diseases. BrainSavers follows a total fitness approach, focusing on six key pillars of health:

- ✓ Stress Management
- ✔ Healthy Sleep
- ✓ Physical Exercise
- ✔ Healthy Nutrition
- ✓ Cognitive Fitness
- ✔ Social Engagement

In a typical BrainSavers class, participants engage in activities that stimulate cognitive skills, improve physical fitness, and promote healthier eating habits.

Our first group completed the program in February, and many participants say they use the tools they learned every day-whether it's using acronyms and mnemonics to remember important details or finding new ways to incorporate movement into daily life. Beyond health and nutrition, they also explored how stress impacts the body and gained insight into the



different lobes of the brain and their functions.

We're excited to launch our second session of BrainSavers this fall! Our current group will continue their journey, and we'll be welcoming a brand-new class as well. Stay tuned for upcoming session dates-we can't wait to help more people take charge of their brain health!



Plan and Protect; Today and for Tomorrow

By Anna Zoromski-Linde, Certified Pre-Planning Consultant, Peterson/Kraemer Funeral Homes and Crematory

Recently, my son turned sixteen which made me reflect on the years gone by so quickly. As a parent it is my duty to take care of my family to the best of my ability. Putting things in order is my job as a mother and care taker of my children. We have insurance for our lives, home, car, and in case of injury. We don't plan on using the insurance, but if something were to ever happen to my husband or myself, we have the peace of mind knowing that we are covered...but more importantly that my family and children are taken care of.



The same goes for planning a funeral. We can all agree that death is not an easy subject to talk about. We may bring it up casually with a friend or family member but how often do these wishes get written down? In the first few days after the death of a loved one there are many details to attend to which could be handled by pre-planning.

A few things that to consider when you decide to plan your funeral:

-Choose a licensed funeral director that has been in business for several years, and has a good reputation within the community. Are you comfortable with the funeral home? Are they empathetic, professional and have attention to detail?

-If you pre-fund, ask where the funds will be placed? How will they be protected? What type of growth rate will your funds be earning? Is it irrevocable? Are there any guarantees for the funds invested? Are there ways to secure today's prices to protect against inflation?



-Keep a copy of the agreements and make sure to let others know where you are storing the information. Your family should also have copies as well as your executor or person responsible for your affairs after death.

At Peterson/Kraemer Funeral Homes and Crematory we have over 110 years of our family serving other families, and no one understands the importance of family more than us. We encourage you to talk with your family about stories that are important,

lessons learned and how you want to be remembered-this could be of great comfort to a loved one during their grieving process.

Please see our ad on this page for more information on our upcoming seminars, April 2nd or 3rd, 2025 at convenient locations and times, 10am, 2pm or 6pm for a complimentary refreshments and discussion about the options available at Peterson/Kraemer Funeral Homes. Presentation topics will include, How to start the conversation about funeral planning; Choosing the right funeral options that are most meaningful to you and your family; What does funeral pre-funding mean and how does it protect your assets.

As funeral and cremation experts, we'll also be happy to answer your questions about these and any other topics important to you. For more information or to reserve your seat, please call (715) 845-6900 or email, info@petersonkraemer.com.



Peterson/Kraemer 300 Walnut St., Marathon, 54448 Thursday April 3rd, 2025 Refreshments & Program: 10 am, 6 pm

Peterson/Kraemer 312 Caroline St., Athens, 54426 Thursday April 3rd, 2025 Refreshments & Program: 10 am, 6 pm

SEATING is LIMITED! To guarantee reservation, *please call 715-845-6900 by March 28th*

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were cared for as their needs changed. Still run by family, Rennes believes we all have the desire to feel respected. We are your trusted partners in the continuum of care for senior living and are committed to the Rennes difference.

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