

## Looking Forward to Each Day

After several years out of state, Brad and Nancy Dehmlow were happy to move back to Park Falls. That happiness faded, however, when they found that their son Robby, who has a developmental disability, would have to be on a waiting list for county services for up to seven years.

"It was kind of discouraging to hear," said Brad. "Robby had been in a supportive employment program in Minnesota and it made such a difference in his life."

The Dehmlow's got some good news after the state's Family Care program started in northwest Wisconsin last year. Robby was able to come off the wait list and join NorthernBridges.

"Robby's biggest goal was to get out of the house and have his own independent life and feel like he is accomplishing something," said Brad.

To achieve his goal, NorthernBridges helped arrange for transportation and some home supportive care.

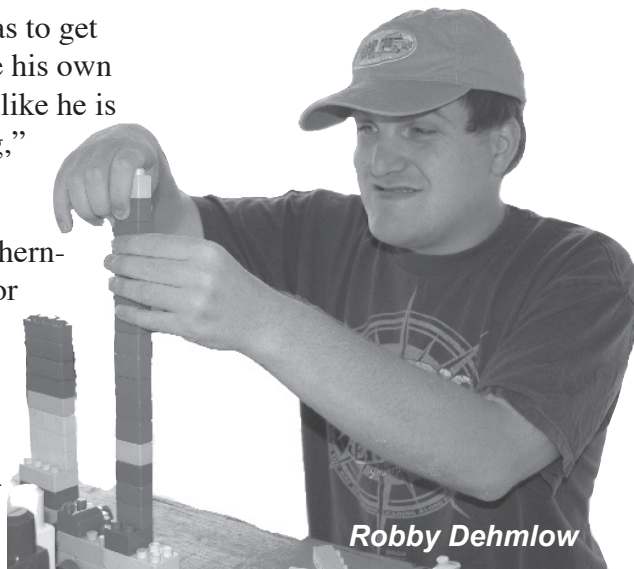
Robby now attends the Counseling and Development Center in Phillips

five days a week. The center offers a structured environment where members can do piece work for different businesses in the area.

"With Rob's handicap, if he goes into depression, behavioral issues come up," said Nancy. "Since he started working at the development center, the change has been dramatic. He gets up in the morning and is excited for the day to come."

The change was just as dramatic for the family.

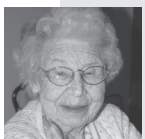
"Financially, we can both work now," said Brad. "Physically, we could not continue to do this by ourselves. This extends what we could do for Robby and brings him to a level we could not help him reach on our own."



**Robby Dehmlow**

### *Inside:*

- Financial news from the state
- Satisfaction survey results
- A Family Care success story
- Behavioral health a big part of Family Care



### **NorthernBridges' Mission**

***Providing our members the best life possible.***

*Come for a visit!*

*On the web...*

[www.northernbridges.com](http://www.northernbridges.com)

*At our board meetings...*

Our Board of Directors meet monthly. Check our website for dates and times.

#### **CONTACT US:**

For general questions, please call toll free 1-866-306-6499.

For newsletter questions:  
[jjoyce@northernbridges.com](mailto:jjoyce@northernbridges.com)

## Administrator's Update

The following is by Susan Crowley, Administrator of the Division of Long-Term Care for the Division of Health Services (DHS), and reprinted from the July DHS Provider E-News.

Through the first quarter of CY 2010, Family Care was a \$900+million annualized program. The program experienced 32% growth in capitation payments, and a 24% increase in member months, from the same time span, one- year earlier.

While rapid growth in membership caused stress in the MCO's collective financial health through 2009, the finances for many MCOs have begun to stabilize in 2010. On program revenues totaling \$225 million, MCOs achieved a modest \$1.1 million surplus, or 0.5% through the first quarter of 2010, following a collective loss of \$18 million in 2009.

This turnaround was anticipated, as the MCO Business Plans had projected a healthier and more stable year in 2010. The Office of the Commission of Insurance (OCI), continues to monitor each MCO's financial performance and status.

## State Survey Shows Majority of Members Satisfied with Family Care

Reprinted from the July Division of Health Services Provider E-News

Member Satisfaction Survey satisfaction levels among members served by Family Care and Family Care Partnership and PACE Programs increased, a 2009 survey shows, with a large majority reporting they were "always satisfied" with their care.

"It is very gratifying to see that the individuals receiving services through Family Care report that they are very happy with that care," said Karen Timberlake, Department of Health Services Secretary.

Started in 1998, the program provides cost-effective, comprehensive and flexible long-term care that fosters independence and quality of life for people with physical disabilities, developmental disabilities and frail elders.

More than 10,000 member satisfaction surveys were distributed by the program's 11 managed care organizations (MCOs), with a

40% return rate. Satisfaction levels increased for nine of the 10 core questions, with statistically significant increases for six questions. The surveys were conducted during a year of significant expansion for the MCOs and increased provider participation in the program.

Questions covered members' satisfaction with their care team, participation in planning and decision-making about services, and communication quality. In responding to the surveys, members often added personal comments about their favorite aspects of the program.

One member noted, "...the excellent care, the ability to live in my own apartment...knowing I don't have to give up my dog or not be able to care for her and myself. If it was not for Family Care helping me, I would not be able to take the medications I need and would not be able to stay in my apartment."

\* To see the entire 2009 Member Satisfaction Survey online, go to <http://lists.wi.gov/t/467388/421197/1284/0/>

## NorthernBridges Members by Gender

Total Members: 1871

1143

Female

728

Male

## “What Family Care Is All About”

“She’s a real success story,” says Joe Stearns, a NorthernBridges Social Services Care Manager. He’s talking about Avis Working, a 98-years-young member who continues to live in her own home with the help of NorthernBridges, friends, and family.

“She represents what Family Care is all about,” said Joe. “Her main goal is to live in her home and we help her do that, but we can’t be there all the time. She has wonderful informal supports, which is a term we use that means family and friends who are able to help out.”

fresh vegetables from the garden and helps with the yard work.

NorthernBridges arranges for transportation services for Avis so she is able to do her own shopping. She also receives housekeeping services every two weeks.



**Member Avis Working and her Care Manager Joe Stearns.**

Avis, a life-long Weyerhaeuser resident, built the house she lives in now with her husband when they retired from farming in 1973.

Though out of town, her two sons and daughter are very supportive.

“When I first met with her family, they didn’t know about Family Care and NorthernBridges and the services available for Avis,” said Joe. “They thought their only option might be a nursing home.”

Her niece lives next door and often brings over meals and

It means a lot for Avis to continue to live in this house and to celebrate her 98th birthday there. “This is my home,” she said.

## Behavioral Health Important Part of Family Care

NorthernBridges members who are elderly or have disabilities often have to overcome many physical barriers to remain in their homes and communities.

But 50 to 60 percent of Family Care members also have behavioral problems or some type of mental health issue or disorder.

Mental health disorders include major depression, generalized anxiety disorder, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder.

“Some of our members have behavioral or mental health problems that put them at risk of losing the freedom and indepen-

dence they have worked so hard to achieve,” said Gayle Frambs, NorthernBridges Behavioral Health Specialist.

When a member’s care team identifies a behavioral problem that makes it difficult for the member to maintain the quality of the life they want, Gayle will consult with the team.

“We recently worked with an elderly woman who had been seeing a psychiatrist for years, on antidepressants, and suffering from some dementia,” said Frambs. “We moved her from a larger institutional type care facility to a 2-bed adult family home. This home had



**Gayle Frambs, Behavioral Health Specialist**

a wonderful family atmosphere and included the member into their family. This was such a success, that the member no longer needs outpatient counseling. She is really doing well.”

Achieving the goals of Family Care, as Gayle puts it, “is not only to help members live independently *within* their communities, but to help them be a *part* of those communities.”



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Toll Free 866-994-7484

**Ashland** /Ashland &  
Bayfield Counties  
400 3rd Avenue W.  
Ashland, WI 54806  
715-682-1024  
Toll Free 877-434-1025

**Hayward** / Sawyer Co.  
15735 US Hwy. 63  
Hayward, WI 54843  
715-934-2282  
Toll Free 877-934-2282

**Spoooner** / Washburn  
& Burnett Counties  
514 Service Road  
Spoooner, WI 54801  
715-635-3122  
Toll Free 877-635-3122

**Centuria** / Polk &  
Burnett Counties  
1001 State Hwy. 35  
Centuria, WI 54824  
715-646-1477  
Toll Free 866-751-3147

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& Iron Counties  
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to Hear  
From You**

*If members, family, or friends would like to share stories, healthy recipes, caregiving tips, poems, or any other thoughts, please drop us a line. We will post in this newsletter or on our website in the "Members" section.*