

Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups: How best to serve Wisconsin's families who are caring for a family member with dementia or Alzheimer's

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MADISON: Gov. Walker did not fund in his 2017-19 Biennial State Budget sixteen full-time Dementia Care Specialists (DCS) for the ADRCs. The original DCS positions were temporary.

As a result, CWAG is working with the Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Business Alliance to address this issue.

Since these important positions were not included in the Governor's Budget and state government has never conducted a statewide "Alzheimer's & Dementia Needs Assessment" to determine the most cost-effective way to assist families who are caring for those with dementia or Alzheimer's, CWAG and its coalition partners are encouraging members of Joint Finance to take the following actions:

- (1) Add additional funding to the State Budget for an "independent, statewide dementia-Alzheimer's needs assessment study," in order to determine the actual needs of Wisconsin families, coping with dementia and Alzheimer's and how best to serve this important population;
- (2) Conduct a Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) Program and Financial Review of all ADRCs, which CWAG and its coalition partners -including several ADRCs - feel is necessary, if we hope to include the DCS positions in the State Budget at a future time.

Given the budget challenges facing our state lawmakers, a needs assessment and a review of the ADRCs will, in the long run, financially justify and determine if the 16 DCSs positions are in fact needed and if locating them in the ADRCs are most effective; and

(3) Conduct a LAB Compliance and Program Audit for GWAAR, to determine if their programs and services duplicate similar services that the ADRCs are providing, along with other government agencies and nonprofit aging, disability and dementia programs and services.

Since LAB has never conducted a comprehensive program and financial compliance audit of GWAAR, when it was created a decade ago under Governor Doyle's Administration, it is needed to determine if there is "Mission Creep" and that GWAAR is cost-effectively providing non-duplicated programs and services. Historically, CWAG has supported the creation of the ADRCs, Family Care and SeniorCare and will continue supporting these important programs and services that provide assistance and help to Wisconsin's 1.3 million elderly and people with disabilities.

CWAG also intends to support financially and programmatically, a network of Dementia Care Specialists, immediately following the results and recommendations that would come from a "needs assessment". However, CWAG and our coalition partners cannot support funding those positions in the budget at this time.

Thank you for your consideration and in the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,

A.J. Nino Amato

CWAG President/CEO