

WI Board for People with Developmental Disabilities: Supports disability agenda in governor's State of the State

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MADISON, WI — The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD)

supports the focus on improving the lives of Wisconsin's residents with disabilities in Governor Walker's 2018 State of the State address, including a commitment to end wait lists in long-term care programs for adults and children and a focus on employment programs that equip people with disabilities to find and keep jobs.

"The Board is comprised of people with developmental disabilities and their family members who use these supports to live, work, and participate in their communities," said Beth Swedeen, BPDD executive director. "Our board prioritizes an end to wait lists and improved employment outcomes. Wisconsin is a leader among states in ending wait lists across the lifespan. Our board also is eager for the Employment First bill currently in the legislature to be signed into law."

BPDD also hopes that the coming year will focus on improvements and funding for innovative transportation efforts and special education funding to better prepare students with disabilities for employment and adult life.

"Transportation is repeatedly the top issue statewide facing the disability

community and barring people with disabilities who truly want to work from being able to find and keep employment,” Swedeen said. “Our board strongly supports the idea of piloting innovations that can work in both urban and rural areas to get people with disabilities and their caregivers where they need to go.”

Swedeen also said special education funding has been flat for a decade, yet is a key investment in ensuring students with disabilities are ready and able to work and live as independently as possible. “The research is clear that paid work experiences while still in high school strongly correlate with lifelong employment success,” she said. “Yet, our public schools continue to have to do more with less as special education funding does not increase while the costs to educate students continue to rise.”

Swedeen said BPDD looks forward to bipartisan collaboration with the Governor and Legislature in the months ahead.