

# Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities: Inserting political process into Medicaid hurts people with disabilities

Posted on Wednesday, Dec 5, 2018

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

**Media Inquiries:** Beth Swedeen (608) 266-1166

The State Senate and Assembly have passed SB 886/AB 1072 which will add significant bureaucratic requirements into the Department of Health Services' routine work and inserts a political process into the health and long-term care programs that serve 1.2 million Wisconsin citizens

"All Medicaid waiver programs have been singled out as needing special permission from the legislature to operate and evolve," said Beth Swedeen, Executive Director for the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities. "This bill creates real consequences for all Medicaid participants in the state."

Wisconsin's Medicaid waivers include programs children and adults with disabilities use, like Family Care, IRIS, Children's Long-Term Supports, Medicaid Assistance Purchase Plan, BadgerCare, autism services and more.

The bill prevents the Department of Health Services from applying for a change to the Medicaid program without getting first legislative approval.

Changes to Medicaid waivers are routine, and the federal Center for Medicaid Services already requires states to renew and update their waivers at least every five years. Many waiver changes are designed to make the programs more cost effective, reward providers that are implementing best practices and achieving

desired outcomes, and ensure that people can access the services and supports that keep them healthy and in their homes rather than expensive institutions.

“SB886/AB 1072 makes it more difficult and time consuming to make technical changes, adjust programs to make them more responsive to state needs, make improvements to programs, and make sure they follow federal requirements that are often tied to increased funding for states,” said Swedeen.

The legislature already has broad ability to direct the actions of the Department of Health Services and exercise oversight over Medicaid waivers.

The bill awaits signature into law by the Governor.

“We hear from people across the state how critical Medicaid waiver programs are for them and their families. We also hear ideas on ways to improve our systems in ways that will meaningfully improve people’s lives, including their ability to work and contribute to their communities,” said Swedeen. “The Board urges the Governor—who has been a champion for people with disabilities—to consider the long-term negative consequences this bill will have on people with disabilities who are using Medicaid services and supports to stay healthy, work, and be as independent as possible.”

Read BPPD’s testimony on SB886/AB 1072 here: [https://wi-bpdd.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/BPDD\\_ExtrodinarySession\\_120318.pdf](https://wi-bpdd.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/BPDD_ExtrodinarySession_120318.pdf)