

# WHCA/WiCAL: Biennial state budget supports long-term care providers

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**MADISON** – The Wisconsin Health Care Association and Wisconsin Center for Assisted Living (WHCA/WiCAL) today thanked legislators for advancing a state budget which includes critical investments in long-term care in Wisconsin.

“The State Assembly and State Senate have shown their strong commitment to long-term care providers, their staff, and the residents they have the privilege to serve by passing a state budget that includes \$154 million (all funds) in new money for skilled nursing Medicaid reimbursement increases and additional Family Care funding,” said John Vander Meer, WHCA/WiCAL President & CEO. “This budget will help providers fill needed caregiver positions and increase care access for Wisconsin’s frail elderly and disabled residents, and it is imperative that these investments in long-term care be signed into law.”

The 2019-2021 Biennial Budget which passed the Legislature included \$30 million in GPR funding and \$87.5 million all funds for nursing home reimbursement increases for the biennium. In the Family Care program, providers received a \$27 million increase in GPR funding for Direct Care Workforce funding. With federal matching funds, this amounts to a \$66.5 million increase in Family Care workforce funding.

These crucial funding increases are essential to supporting Wisconsin’s long-term care providers, who have faced significant reimbursement and workforce issues in recent years. Inadequate funding has led to a caregiver workforce crisis, where 1 in 5 caregiver positions remains vacant in Wisconsin. Since 2016, 31 skilled nursing facilities have closed their doors – including a staggering 11 facilities announcing their closure this year alone and another 27 currently in receivership. Workforce

challenges and facility closures raise concerns of access issues in every corner of our state for vulnerable citizens.

“The budget passed by the legislature is strongly supported by the long-term care provider community because it will help providers continue to provide high quality care to their frail elderly and disabled residents who deserve and expect excellent care,” Vander Meer said. “Wisconsin’s care providers thank the Legislature for advancing these important funding increases to help providers care for Wisconsin’s most vulnerable citizens. We thank Gov. Evers for his own efforts to advance LTC funding and urge him to support the additional funding included in the version of the budget passed by the Legislature.”