

WHCA/WiCAL: JFC budget supports long-term care providers Committee approves additional funding for long-term care reimbursement

Posted on Wednesday, Jun 5, 2019

>> **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.](#)**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Allison Cramer, (608) 257-0125

MADISON – The Wisconsin Health Care Association and Wisconsin Center for Assisted Living (WHCA/WiCAL) today thanked the Joint Finance Committee for approving budget proposals to support long-term care in Wisconsin.

“Joint Finance Committee members demonstrated true leadership by working to address Wisconsin’s long-term caregiver workforce crisis through budget motions increasing funding for nursing home reimbursement and Family Care,” said John Vander Meer, WHCA/WiCAL President & CEO. “The Medicaid budget approved by JFC will help providers fill needed caregiver positions and increase care access for Wisconsin’s frail elderly and disabled residents.”

The committee approved on an 11-4 party-line vote a 6% increase in nursing home reimbursement rates for the first year of the biennium, and a 1% acuity rate increase as part of the Medicaid cost-to-continue, amounting to a total 7% increase in the first year, and a 1 percent increase in the second year of 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. This amounts to a 225 percent increase in base funds for Family Care’s Direct Care Workforce Funding.

These critical funding increases come on the heels of significant underfunding of

Wisconsin's skilled nursing Medicaid reimbursement system. Inadequate reimbursement has led to a caregiver workforce crisis, where 1 in 5 caregiver positions remains vacant in Wisconsin. Since 2016, 30 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 for vulnerable citizens in every corner of our state.

"Today's vote to increase skilled nursing reimbursement and Family Care funding will deliver real, tangible benefits to Wisconsin's long-term care providers and the frail elderly and residents with disabilities they serve every day," Vander Meer said. "Wisconsin's care providers thank the Republican members of the Joint Finance Committee who supported these motions and have demonstrated their continued commitment to long-term care."