

# Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network: Aging Advocacy Day draws more than 300 Wisconsinites

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Madison, WI— Members of the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN) and citizens from around the state gathered today in Madison to support the fourth annual

Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Day (#WIAgingAdvocacyDay and #WIAAD). The event provided an opportunity for more than 300 advocates to discuss with their lawmakers

some of the important issues facing Wisconsin's older adults and caregivers.

"The state budget has a significant impact on issues affecting the daily lives of older adults and caregivers across Wisconsin," said Robert Kellerman, WAAN Chair and Executive Director of the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources.

"Constituents shared personal experiences to help legislators understand how key investment decisions affect them."

After opening remarks from former Governor Tommy Thompson, the morning was spent in advocacy training and education. In the afternoon advocates met with legislators to discuss the key issues identified by WAAN and asked for their support on the following:

- Expand the Dementia Care Specialist (DCS) program to all aging and disability resource centers (ADRCs) in the state (adding 27 ADRC DCSs and 3 tribal DCSs).

- Increase funding for Specialized Transportation and Transit to ensure needed systems and services are available to meet our transportation needs as we age.
- Increase Medicaid provider reimbursements to raise direct care worker wages to an average of \$15/hour to ensure sufficient quality staff to meet our long-term care needs.
- Increase the investment in Healthy Aging Grants to broaden the reach and impact of proven programs. Investments are for healthy aging grants to counties/tribes, YMCAs, and other community-based organizations and to support a statewide clearinghouse and support center.
- Create a Caregiver Tax Credit (Credit for Caring Act) to provide financial relief to caregivers, enable older adults to remain at home with support from family members, and save money for both individuals and the state.
- Increase state funding for the Elder Benefit Specialist (EBS) program to ensure access to legal advocacy services for individuals 60 and older, Wisconsin's fastest growing population.

More details and WAAN's State Issue Briefs can be found online at <https://gwaar.org/waan-issues-and-initiatives>