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Board for People with Developmental Disabilities: Governor highlights disability issues in State of the State

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The Governor's State of the State highlighted important disability issues Wednesday night including support for increased special education and public transportation funding and the bi-partisan legislation signed into law that helps people with disabilities exercise their right to vote.

BPDD is pleased to work with dedicated professionals on the Governor's team and in the Legislature who work on agency policy, budget investments, and legislation that improve the lives of people with disabilities and help solve real challenges that real people face every day across our state.

We appreciate the significant efforts and investments made on addressing Wisconsin's caregiver crisis, ending waiting lists for children who need long term care, dental care access, improving our Medicaid and long term care system, public and specialized transportation, and helping people with disabilities contribute to Wisconsin's workforce in jobs in their communities.

Disability issues are bi-partisan issues. As the legislature continues its work this session, we urge consideration of the following bi-partisan proposals that will help people with disabilities and their families.

• Guardian Training (AB 786), which provides free online training to family and volunteer guardians about the role, responsibilities, and other important features of Wisconsin's guardianship law before they are appointed.

• PROMISE Family Navigators (SB 344/AB 375), which continues the proven Family

Navigator approach to get both youth and family members employed and change their trajectory out of poverty.

• Community employment grant program (LRB-0888 and LRB-5241) which, creates a competitive grant program for employment and day services providers to help them increase the community-based services that teach work skills to people with disabilities and get them jobs.

• Seclusion and Restraint (SB 527/AB 585), which makes common-sense changes to Wisconsin's existing seclusion and restraint law.

• Dental Therapy (SB 89/AB 81), which expands the pool of professionals that can provide basic dental care. Many people with disabilities can only visit a dentist when something is wrong or causing pain/other health impacts, and often they may have to wait weeks or months for an appointment even in these situations.

• ABLE (LRB 3165/LRB 5380), which directs Wisconsin to either run its own ABLE program or contract with another state's ABLE program so that Wisconsin families can easily set up tax-exempt ABLE accounts for people with disabilities.

• Improving safety and response to abuse (forthcoming introduction), which would establish a Council on Effective Abuse Prevention and Response for People with Disabilities to be a mechanism to develop recommendations for policy-makers and state agencies to stop abuse before it happens and respond in ways that ensure it doesn't happen again.