

BPDD: Assembly passes bill to provide free training for Guardians

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(MADISON) — Yesterday the state Assembly passed AB 786, a bill that will provide 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.

“People with disabilities and aging adults who may need support deserve to have guardians and other supporters in their lives who fully understand their roles and responsibilities,” said Beth Swedeen, Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities Executive Director. “As families plan for the future, consider what support their loved ones want or need with decisions, or find themselves unexpectedly stepping into a new role, it's critical we support family members and volunteers willing to serve as guardians.”

The bill outlines required training topics including alternatives to guardianship, statutory roles/responsibilities/requirements of guardians, rights of wards, and where to go for resources and technical support.

“We hear from parents, siblings, friends, and extended family across the state—many of whom never expected to become a legal guardian for an adult—who are overwhelmed and unsure what the role and scope of responsibilities are involved in guardianship,” said Swedeen. “This bill is important and needed, especially as caregivers, existing guardians, and our state's population age, and more of us may find ourselves in a position of becoming a guardian or needing one.”

The bill provides free plain-language training accessible online for potential and current guardians and others—including teachers, medical staff, aging and disability resource centers, direct service providers, people with disabilities or older adults, and family members— seeking standardized and accurate information about guardianship and alternatives to guardianship

BPDD thanks Rep. Zimmerman (R-River Falls) and Rep. Meyers (D-Bayfield) for their leadership on this bill, and the long bi-partisan list of Assembly co-sponsors who supported this bill including: Reps. Rohrkaste, Anderson, Bowen, Dittrich, Edming, Emerson, Fields, Knodl, Kulp, Murphy, Neubauer, Novak, Ohnstad, Pope, Rodriguez, Schraa, Shankland, Sinicki, Spiros, Spreitzer, Stubbs, C. Taylor, Vruwink, Doyle, Goyke and Skowronski.

BPDD is pleased to work with legislators and constituents who work on bills like AB 786 that improves the lives of people with disabilities and help solve challenges that real people face every day across our state.