

# The Arc: Supports task force on caregiving recommendations

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**Madison, WI** – The Arc Wisconsin is pleased to support the recommendations shared with the Governor this week by the [Task Force on Caregiving](#). The Arc Wisconsin's Executive Director Lisa Pugh was appointed as co-chair of the Task Force and led the group over the past year in deliberations on the final 16 proposals included in [the report](#).

“Wisconsin was facing a concerning direct care workforce and family caregiving crisis prior to the COVID-19 outbreak which has put people with disabilities at greater risk,” says Pugh. “Family members of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities tell us they are under incredible stress. These recommendations must move forward now.”

Key recommendations included in the report will increase rates for providers of direct care services so they can pay higher wages to workers; ensure that workers can afford health care or access public benefit supports that will allow them to work more hours; and supports for family caregivers that ensure they can get a break through respite care, more easily find help through a new registry or get financial support through a tax credit.

“These essential workers are not making enough to support their own families or afford health insurance,” says Pugh. “The Task Force recommendations that focus on increasing rates and worker wages, improving training and connecting workers with people seeking care will go a long way to valuing this critical workforce. We need these workers now more than ever.”

Family caregivers are the backbone of Wisconsin's caregiving industry, providing 80% of all care. In a recent survey from The Arc, 92% of caregivers reported that caregiving impacted their employment negatively - sometimes causing them to quit a job. 97% of all respondents reported difficulty finding direct care workers and 98% of families had trouble finding respite to get a break from providing care.

An estimated 580,000 informal caregivers provide more than 490 million unpaid hours of care annually to individuals with disabilities and older adults in Wisconsin.

The paid direct care workforce that people with disabilities rely on for daily supports like bathing, dressing and eating, is also facing challenges. Estimates show an average annual turnover rate of 45 percent and an average wage of \$10.72 an hour.

"The Task Force recommendations were drafted over the last year, building upon strong evidence and success in other states. Many are calculated to save the state money over time and keep people out of crisis. We must work together to ensure each recommendation gets implemented," says Pugh.

The 16 recommendations include:

### **Family Caregiving**

1. Caregiver Assessment: Tailored Caregiver Assessment and Referral Proposal
2. Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC): Reinvestment/Caregiver Support
3. Family Medical Leave Act Amendments
4. The Wisconsin Credit for Caring Act
5. The Care Act

### **Direct Care Workforce Proposals: Rates**

6. Rates Band Proposal
7. Nursing Home and Personal Care Payment Reform
8. Medical Loss Ratio for Family Care Managed Care Organizations

9. Direct Care Worker Fund

**Direct Care Workforce Proposals: Benefits**

- 10. Medicaid Expansion
- 11. Earnings Disregard for Direct Care Workers

**Direct Care Workforce Proposals: Untapped Workers**

- 12. State-Wide Direct Support Professional Training
- 13. Recognition and Recruitment of Direct Support Professionals
- 14. Background Check Policies
- 15. Medicaid Provider Regulatory Oversight

**Home Care Provider Registry**

- 16. Home Care Provider Registry Pilot

You can find the Task Force's complete report [here](https://arcwi.org/content/uploads/sites/17/2020/09/WI-Task-Force-on-Caregiving-Report-2020_compressed.pdf) on The Arc Wisconsin's website: [https://arcwi.org/content/uploads/sites/17/2020/09/WI-Task-Force-on-Caregiving-Report-2020\\_compressed.pdf](https://arcwi.org/content/uploads/sites/17/2020/09/WI-Task-Force-on-Caregiving-Report-2020_compressed.pdf)