

WAAN: Training Bill to help guardians advances in the Assembly

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MADISON, WI- Last night, state Assembly members unanimously passed the Guardian Training bill (AB 786) that provides free training for proposed volunteer and family guardians. The training outlined in the bill includes the duties and responsibilities of a guardian under the law, alternatives to guardianship, rights retained by a ward, resources and technical support for guardians, and other important features of Wisconsin's guardianship law. Under the bill, training would be required before someone is appointed as a guardian.

"Too often family members find themselves stepping into this role with little advance planning or training," said Robert Kellerman, Executive Director of the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources and Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN) Chair, "many family members who become guardians do not fully understand the extent of their role, responsibilities, and administrative duties under Wisconsin law. Family members and community volunteers willing to serve in this important role deserve our support. Providing training and resource information to potential guardians will help them feel more prepared and less overwhelmed and isolated."

WAAN extends our appreciation to Rep. Zimmerman (R-River Falls) and Rep. B. Meyers (D-Bayfield) for their leadership on this bill, and thanks all the Assembly co-sponsors for their support of this bipartisan legislation. Assembly co-sponsors who supported this bill include: Representatives 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.

We appreciate the interest in and efforts of policymakers to address growing concerns related to the impact of guardianships on older adults and people with disabilities and look forward to working with Senate members on passage of this legislation. WAAN supports continued work with state policymakers to make implementation of this important training and support for guardians and wards a reality in Wisconsin.