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The Arc Wisconsin's Lisa Pugh to Co-Chair Governor's New Task Force on Caregiving

Madison, WI – Lisa Pugh, Executive Director of The Arc Wisconsin, has been named co-chair of Governor Tony Evers' new Task Force on Caregiving. Pugh will co-lead, with Todd Costello the Executive Director of Community Living Alliance, the panel made up of disability and older adult advocates as it tackles issues impacting more than a half a million family caregivers in Wisconsin.

“Family caregivers provide nearly 80 percent of all care to their loved ones with disabilities and older adult family members. When they cannot find paid help, respite or other supports, the impact on families and beyond is huge. And as caregivers age, they need guidance on and options in planning for the future with their loved one with a disability. I’m honored to be named co-chair of this effort, and I’m ready to work with my fellow panel members to find ways to better support Wisconsin families and people with disabilities,” said Pugh.

The Governor’s Executive Order creating this panel outlines key areas the Task Force will address, including:

- Strategies to attract and retain a strong direct care workforce;
- Supports for families providing care;
- The need for a registry of home care providers and services that help match people to workers who can help them; and
- Attention to wages and health benefits for workers to strengthen the workforce.

In Wisconsin, 60 percent of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (of a total of 54,202) live with their family. The Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Organizations has found that more than 85 percent of Wisconsinites who rely on paid direct care workers for some or all their support needs cannot find enough help to meet their needs. A [recent survey](#) by the Wisconsin Family and Caregiver Support Alliance found that nearly three-quarters of employers said that caregiving increases stress in the workplace, including lost work time.

“We know that individuals with disabilities and families are stressed and need more options. And the ripple effects on the quality of life of people with disabilities and caregiver health, and the impact on employers make this crisis one that we must tackle in Wisconsin. I’m hopeful we can find ways to improve the situation across the state,” says Pugh.

Lisa Pugh is the Executive Director of The Arc Wisconsin and is also a former Kennedy Foundation Fellow who worked as a disability policy advisor in the United States Congress and the U.S. Department of Education. She was appointed by President Obama to the President’s Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities. Since joining The Arc Wisconsin in 2017, Pugh has promoted evidence-based future planning for families, creating a statewide network of planners. She founded and co-chairs the Wisconsin Family and Caregiver Support Alliance, which is a collaboration of disability and aging groups focused on bringing awareness to the caregiver crisis. She also co-chairs the state’s Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Organizations. She was a leader along with other organizations in the passage of Wisconsin’s Supported Decision-Making law and other legislation and policies to improve quality of life for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. She is the parent to an adult daughter with I/DD.

The Arc Wisconsin advocates for and serves people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD), including Down syndrome, autism, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, cerebral palsy and other diagnoses. The Arc Wisconsin has 15 local chapters and is connected to a network of more than 650 chapters across the country promoting and protecting the human rights of people with I/DD and actively supporting their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes and without regard to diagnosis.

Editor’s Note: The Arc is not an acronym; always refer to us as The Arc, not The ARC and never ARC. The Arc should be considered as a title or a phrase.