



Survival Coalition

of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

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Survival Coalition Applauds Proposed Mental Health Investments

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The Survival Coalition of more than 25 statewide Wisconsin Disability Organizations is gratified to see Governor Evers' proposal to expand BadgerCare and to invest over \$150 million to strengthen mental health and behavioral health services.

“Medicaid expansion was one of the recommendations from the Governor’s Task Force on Caregiving”, said Survival Co-chair, Lisa Pugh. “It provides an opportunity to address the workforce crisis, by providing more direct support workers and unpaid family caregivers with access to health insurance.”

Survival Coalition is encouraged to see investments to support youth, including \$50 million dollars for student mental health programs, and funding for statewide expansion of the Child Psychiatry Consultation Program. “During the pandemic, there has been an increase in the number of students and youth with significant mental health needs,” said Kit, Kerschensteiner, Survival Co-chair. These proposals would move Wisconsin forward by expanding capacity and increasing access.”

“Survival Coalition survey results from more than 300 Wisconsinites living with disability showed that more than half say they have lasting increases in mental health conditions and need support,” said Beth Swedeen, Survival Co-Chair. “The pandemic has only intensified the need for the investments in mental health services that Governor Evers is proposing in this package.”

The budget proposal includes other initiatives that would increase timely access to mental health supports, including the following:

- Regional Crisis Centers which will allow the person in crisis to be assessed and supported closer to their home and to their natural supports.
- A new behavioral health treatment program to ensure folks who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind have access to accessible mental health services.
- Ensuring that folks with private insurance have access to telehealth services, including telepsychiatry, by adopting a telehealth parity law.
- Peer run respite center crisis phone line.

Survival Coalition members looking forward to working closely with the Governor and members of the legislature to support these investments in the lives of people with disabilities and their families.

Real Lives, Real Work, Real Smart, Wisconsin
Investing in People with Disabilities