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Governor's budget foreshadows critical investments to support caregivers, people with disabilities

The Wisconsin Board with People with Disabilities (BPDD) is pleased with the Governor's proposed investments in caregiving and long-term care.

"Many family caregivers have been pushed to the brink by the pandemic, but the unfortunate reality is that these stressors are not new," said Beth Swedeen. "Family caregivers are struggling to fill care gaps and balance their own careers because there are too few workers."

Allowing family caregivers to use Family Medical Leave for a wider set of family members better reflects the network of family members providing support. Helping family caregivers understand care needs before family members are discharged from the hospital and increasing support for family caregivers managing chronic or degenerative conditions are important steps.

BPDD is pleased to see the Governor's budget reflect the many of recommendations from the Governor's Taskforce on Caregiving.

People with disabilities rely on family caregivers and quality home health and personal care workers to live independently. Workers need to be paid more and need job benefits--health care, paid sick leave, retirement, childcare, commuter benefits--to compensate and recognize their essential work.

"The need for quality professionals who can afford to stay in the field is great," said Beth Swedeen. "Caregivers are a critical part of Wisconsin's economy. And their work ensures family caregivers and people with disabilities can also stay in the workforce."

Prioritizing in the services and supports provided by Family Care, IRIS, and CLTS long term care programs to keep people in their homes, help individuals reach their full potential, and help the state avoid costly increases in Medicaid costs paid to institutional settings.

"People with disabilities want to live in their own homes, not nursing homes," said Beth Swedeen. "Fully funding the Children's Long Term Support program so no child with disabilities should have to wait for needed services and supports is an important step so every child can reach their full potential."

Advocates also support developing disability resource centers for families of children with disabilities, much like ADRCs support adults with disabilities and older adults.

Likewise, investments in personal and direct care services reflect Wisconsin's active commitment to help people with disabilities fully participate and have equal opportunity to succeed.

BPDD appreciates inclusion and funding for a family and guardian training program. BPDD and stakeholders have previously worked on bi-partisan legislation to 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. We are pleased that the Governor will be including this important need in his biennial budget proposal.

BPDD looks forward to working with the Governor and the Legislature throughout the budget process.

Read [BPDD's full budget and legislative platform](#).