



For Immediate Release  
January 10, 2017

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### **The Arc Wisconsin Supports Governor Walker's Focus on People with Disabilities in the Workforce and Maintaining High Quality Medicaid Programs**

**Madison, WI** – Governor Walker's State of the State address includes many things for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their family members to look forward to in 2017. Specifically, the Governor's determination to focus on including everyone - including people with disabilities - in the workforce is encouraging.

"People with intellectual and developmental disabilities want to be part of their communities. Being seen a member of the workforce is key to that," says Lisa Pugh, the new Director of The Arc Wisconsin, an organization supporting people with I/DD that has 15 local chapters statewide. "Project SEARCH has been a great success in many areas of Wisconsin and we are glad to see the Governor commit to expanding it further to support more youth."

The Arc Wisconsin also celebrates the Governor's commitment to new funding for public education, as a majority of students with I/DD rely on special education support through their neighborhood schools.

In addition, the Governor mentioned his investments in Medicaid programs. Arc members rely on a variety of Medicaid-funded supports, including programs like Family Care, IRIS, Children's Long-Term Supports, basic health care and other essential daily supports like personal care.

"Arc chapters are hopeful that part of the Wisconsin Medicaid surplus the Governor mentioned can be reinvested to address the significant direct care workforce crisis that is impacting many people with I/DD," says Pugh. Chapters report they simply cannot fill direct care worker jobs, which means people are at risk of going without necessary care.

Governor Walker did not reference possible significant changes to Medicaid, including block granting, that has been discussed by House Speaker Paul Ryan and others at the federal level. Block grants are designed to slow growth of the federal Medicaid budget.

"Arc Wisconsin chapters definitely want to be part of future Medicaid block grant conversations to make sure we maintain essential supports," says Pugh. "It is extremely important for people with I/DD and their family members to be at the table as any changes to this lifeline program are proposed."

*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.