



of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

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**SURVIVAL COALITION IDENTIFIES CONCERNS FOR PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES IN BUDGET PROPOSAL**

Governor Walker's 2015-2017 Biennial Budget request outlines big reforms and changes to supports that Wisconsinites with disabilities rely upon to stay healthy, live and work in their communities. Disability advocates are reviewing these changes for any consequences for people with disabilities.

Initial reviews of the budget proposal highlight various areas of support and concern.

- Survival supports the investment in Medicaid that includes cost-to-continue for vital programs. As the Governor notes in his request, Medicaid is the main source of health care coverage for many people with significant disabilities and individuals in need of long-term care.
- We are encouraged by plans to expand Family Care supports statewide, with the promise of eliminating waiting lists and for the first time providing equity in access no matter where a person lives in the state.
- Survival supports the Governor's proposal to increase access to pediatric and adult emergency dental services by creating a pilot program for increased Medicaid reimbursement rates in Brown, Polk and Racine counties.
- Survival also supports new increases in transportation to include a 4% increase in transit funds and a 1% increase in specialized transportation to support people with disabilities and seniors.

"Transportation is critical to the participation of people with disabilities in their communities," says Beth Swedeen, Co-Chair. "Without transportation people cannot get to work, access medical care or participate in any other aspect of community life."

Survival has questions about a series of proposals in the budget request where the long-term consequences are unclear for people with disabilities, specifically:

- How will the plan to move oversight of Family Care to the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance change how community supports are delivered, including ensuring access and quality?
- Will the elimination of the self-directed long term care program, IRIS and replacing it with a self-directed option within Family Care allow for strong, quality self-direction?

- How does reducing access to and funding for critical personal care services that allow people to stay out of costly institutional settings improve sustainability of Wisconsin's long-term care system?
- The budget does not include college and workforce readiness investments or increases in special education funding for students with disabilities. How can we work together to close the achievement gap and improve outcomes for these students? How will transfer of the Family Support Program to a Community Options Program preserve the necessary flexibility of supports that families need to meet diverse challenges while raising a child with significant disabilities?
- How will changes in the law regarding the emergency detention process be implemented appropriately without significant expansion of community based mental health crisis assessment resources?

“Survival was disappointed that Governor Walker’s budget request did not continue public investments in the Better Bottom Line employment initiative,” says Kit Kerschensteiner, Co-Chair. “At a time when Medicaid sustainability is dependent upon increasing the financial independence of people with disabilities and reducing reliance on public programs, ongoing employment investments are imperative.”

Survival Coalition supports an outcomes-based approach to public investments that demonstrate increased employment, independence and choice in the supports that allow for a meaningful life in the community.

“Our members look forward to working with the Department of Health Services and the Legislature to improve outcomes and quality of life for all people with disabilities in Wisconsin,” says Maureen Ryan, Co-Chair.

Survival Coalition is comprised of more than 30 statewide disability organizations that advocate and support policies and practices that lead to the full inclusion, participation, and contribution of people living with disability.

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

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