



Survival Coalition

of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

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(SURVIVAL DISABILITY COALITION RESPONDS TO GOVERNOR'S BUDGET

MADISON) – (MADISON) – The Governor's proposed state budget has many impacts on Wisconsin's disability community. The Survival Coalition of Disability Organizations commends the budget's strong support for Wisconsin's innovative and flexible community based Medicaid programs which are key to the independence of children and adults with disabilities. Survival provides analysis on the following disability-related issues:

- **Children's Long Term Supports:** Survival enthusiastically supports the Governor's proposal for \$39M to eliminate the wait lists and serve 2200 children with physical, developmental or emotional disabilities eligible for long-term supports and services. Currently 43% of children eligible for long-term supports are waiting, while wait lists for adults with similar needs will soon be eliminated. The Governor's budget is a critical investment in Wisconsin families who care for their children with significant developmental, physical or emotional disabilities. Long-term support programs allow families to continue to work, be a part of their communities and support their children's health and well-being.
- **Public Education:** Survival supports significant overall per pupil increases that will benefit student with disabilities who are educated in the general education classroom with their peers and over \$14 million for greater access for school mental health services and youth transition grants to improve employment outcomes for student with disabilities. Survival will continue to advocate for increases in special education categorical aid which has remained flat over the last eight years.
- **Direct Care Workforce:** Survival is pleased that Governor Walker's budget acknowledges Wisconsin's community-based direct care workforce crisis. The demand for personal care, which provides cost-effective supports to people with disabilities and older adults in home or community-based settings, is expected to grow dramatically in the coming years and people are already struggling to find workers. The personal care rate has only increased by \$0.24 over the past 14 years, and the Governor's proposal is an important first step in addressing the direct care workforce crisis.
- **Long-Term Care:** Survival Coalition is pleased that the Board of Aging and Long Term Care can provide Ombudsman services for people over 60 interested or participating in the IRIS program.

- **Transportation:** Survival Coalition likes the increase to Seniors and Disabilities Transportation Aids but are concerned it is not sufficient to meet the increased need, especially with the continued decreased Transit aids.

- **Mental Health:** The budget expands peer run respite in Wisconsin, by providing \$450,000 in fiscal year 2018-19 to develop a Peer-Run Respite Center for Veterans in the Milwaukee area to improve outcomes of veterans in crisis and those having difficulty coping with mental illness. In addition, the budget includes positive investments to support inmates with mental health needs, including expansion of the Opening Avenues to Reentry Success (OARS) program to five additional counties. OARS supports reentry to the community for prison inmates with a mental illness, through access to case management, housing, psychiatric treatment, medication, and other assistance.

- **Medicaid:** Survival supports updates to the Medicaid Assistance Purchase Plan (MAPP) work incentives program are a promising start to addressing the limits placed on people who want to work and earn more but who need to be able to afford their health insurance. The Governor has worked with advocates over the last year to propose various reforms to MAPP and Survival members will be analyzing these changes to ensure they work well for all individuals with disabilities currently in the program.

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.

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Investing in People with Disabilities