



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Robert Kellerman

Bob.Kellerman@gwaar.org

March 1, 2019

608-243-5672

Governor's Budget Addresses Key Aging Network Priorities

The **Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network** is a collaborative group of individuals and associations working with and for Wisconsin's older adults to shape public policy to improve their quality of life.

Core member organizations:

Aging and Disability Professionals Association of Wisconsin (*ADPAW*)

Alzheimer's Association SE Wisconsin Chapter

Wisconsin Adult Day Services Association (*WADSA*)

Wisconsin Association of Area Agencies on Aging (*W4A*)

Wisconsin Association of Benefit Specialists (*WABS*)

Wisconsin Association of Nutrition Directors (*WAND*)

Wisconsin Association of Senior Centers (*WASC*)

Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (*WIHA*)

Wisconsin Senior Corps Association (*WISCA*)

(MADISON, WI) The 2019-2021 Executive Budget proposal introduced last night by Governor Evers' includes priorities positively affecting older Wisconsinites.

The Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN) is extremely pleased with Governor Evers' announcement to include a 20 percent increase in funding in his budget for the County Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance program. This investment of an additional \$3 million in each year of the budget for specialized transportation services will provide critical support for older adults and people with disabilities to remain connected to their communities, support for family caregivers, drive economic growth, and help keep people healthy. Additionally, the budget increases funding by 10 percent in each year of the budget for the Tribal Transportation for Elders program to further enhance transportation services for tribal elders and increases transit funding by 10 percent above the 2019 program levels.

In addition, WAAN appreciates the Governor's inclusion of an expansion of the successful Dementia Care Specialist (DCS) program to all Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs). The addition of 27 new Dementia Care Specialists (DCSs) in the ADRCs and 3 new tribal DCSs ensures critical DCS programs and services are accessible statewide.

WAAN is very pleased that Governor Evers recognizes the importance of investing in prevention by creating grants in healthy aging to expand proven health promotion programs. This is a great start and we look forward to working with the Legislature to expand the provision to achieve statewide growth.

The Governor's budget begins to address the direct care workforce shortage by providing an additional \$14.8 million in each year for direct care and services provided in long-term care by managed care organizations, a 1.5 percent rate increase in each year to support direct care staff that provide medical services through personal care programs (\$16.7 million over the biennium), and a 1.5 percent increase targeted to the direct care workforce in nursing homes. WAAN members look forward to working with the Legislature and members of the Governor's Taskforce on Caregiving on additional strategies to further strengthen the direct care workforce and improve support to families providing care for loved ones.

WAAN also supports the additional positions approved in the budget for the Department of Health Services' Division of Quality Assurance and the Board on Aging and Long-Term Care to address the increasing numbers of assisted living facilities and to better serve an increasing caseload of older adult consumers in the state's long-term care programs.

Contact WAAN

1414 MacArthur Rd., Suite A
Madison, WI 53714
(608) 243-5670
gwaar.org/waan

According to Robert Kellerman, Executive Director of the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources and WAAN spokesperson, "As proposed, the Governor's budget recognizes and addresses some of the top priorities of our aging population. It will help keep older adults in counties and tribes across Wisconsin as healthy and independent as possible."

We look forward to working with the Governor and the Legislature to support and build on these aging network priorities throughout the budget process.

###