



Real Possibilities

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New scorecard gives Wisconsin high marks for serving older, disabled residents

More must be done to improve long-term service/supports

MADISON, WISCONSIN – Wisconsin ranks 8th when it comes to meeting the long-term care needs of state residents, but AARP warns more must be done to improve services across the state.

This, according to a new, comprehensive state-by-state *Scorecard* from AARP with support of the nation’s leading organizations behind quality long-term care, The Commonwealth Fund and SCAN Foundation.

Raising Expectations 2014: A State Scorecard on Long-Term Services and Supports for Older Adults, People with Physical Disabilities, and Family Caregivers ranks each state overall and within 26 performance indicators along 5 key dimensions: affordability and access; choice of setting and provider; quality of life and quality of care; support for family caregivers; and, effective transitions.

“The vast majority of older Wisconsinites want to live independently, at home, as they age,” said Sam Wilson, State Director of AARP Wisconsin, which serves about 815,000 members age 50 and older in Wisconsin.

“Even facing tight budgets following the recession, Wisconsin is making progress to help our older residents achieve that goal. However, this *Scorecard* shows we have more to do.”

Today, unpaid family caregivers provide the bulk of care for older Wisconsinites, in part because the cost of long-term care remains unaffordable for most middle income families.

In Wisconsin, more than 524,000 residents help their aging parents, spouses and other loved ones stay at home by providing assistance with bathing and dressing,

transportation, finances, medical tasks like wound care and injections, and more. The value of this unpaid care totals about \$5.8 billion.

“When it comes to helping older Wisconsinites live in the setting of their choice, this silent army of family caregivers assumes the lion’s share of responsibility,” Wilson said. “Many juggle full-time jobs with their caregiving duties; others provide 24/7 care for their loved ones. With every task they undertake, family caregivers save the state money by keeping their loved ones out of costly nursing homes – most often paid for by Medicaid. They have earned our support.”

AARP Wisconsin continues to advocate for legislation that helps lessen the burden on family caregivers. One way to accomplish this goal is through Family Care – a unique Wisconsin program that gives frail elderly and people with disabilities the opportunity to receive long-term care services in their homes rather than in costly institutions, which is where they’d rather be anyway.

Family Care closely tailors long-term care services to the needs of the individual, which not only saves tens of thousands of dollars per person by keeping seniors out of costly institutions, but leads to better health care outcomes.

“We fought hard to expand Family Care into northeastern Wisconsin and eventually we’d like to see it in all 72 counties,” Wilson said.

Family Care is just one way Wisconsin serves its older residents, those with disabilities, and family caregivers. The *Scorecard* shows how well the state is doing in these areas and where the focus needs to sharpen to better assist hardworking residents.

The full state *Scorecard*, along with an interactive map of state rankings and information, is available at www.longtermscorecard.org.

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About AARP: AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse. We advocate for individuals in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services. Learn more at www.aarp.org.