



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 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*)

Wisconsin Tribal Aging Unit Association

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July 7, 2021

Governor Tony Evers  
Wisconsin State Capitol  
P.O. Box 7863  
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Governor Evers,

As you prepare your response to the 2021-2023 state budget as presented by the Legislature, the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN) requests your consideration of the following recommendations:

**Consider using your line-item veto authority to remove the 50% funding cut to Tier A mass transit funding levels.**

Transportation is vital to supporting the health, well-being, financial security, and community engagement of older Wisconsinites and other non-drivers. Reliable, accessible, and affordable transportation is a frequent concern of older adults across the state. Wisconsin's progress advancing home and community-based care, reducing loneliness, improving health and nutrition, and promoting employment across the lifespan is limited without access to transportation that meets the needs and recognizes the choices of its citizens. As recovery from the pandemic continues, Wisconsinites are beginning to reconnect with their families and communities; many rely on public transit systems to do so, making continued support of these systems critical at all levels.

**Support funding increases for Dementia Care Specialist (DCS) services, Alzheimer's Family and Caregiver Support Program (AFCSP), and Medicaid provider rates**

The WAAN is pleased the final budget passed by the Legislature contains funding for many programs and services initially included for funding increases in the Executive Budget, including funding to expand DCS services statewide and to provide increased support available through the AFCSP. Additionally, the WAAN supports the efforts to strengthen the direct care workforce by increasing the Medicaid rates for Family Care managed care organizations, nursing homes, home health services, personal care services, and funding for the Family Care Direct Care Worker fund. The WAAN also supports the Medicaid rate increases for outpatient mental health and substance abuse services and dental services.

## **Consider use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to support items not included in the 2021-2023 State Budget**

Aging advocates are disappointed to see the final budget passed by the Legislature **does not include** many items important to older adults and family caregivers, including full funding for Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) and expansion of many of the critical ADRC services needed across the state (with the exception of DCS services which received increased funding), any of the family caregiver support recommendations from the Governor's Task Force on Caregiving, funding for falls prevention efforts or guardian training, or many of the housing, transportation, or broadband supports for low-income older adults. While it is not possible to insert these items into the final budget, the WAAN requests you to consider using ARPA funding (where appropriate) to support these priorities. The pandemic has taken a toll on older adults, people with disabilities, and health and long-term care providers. We are glad this budget provides support for some of the health and long-term care workers but note COVID-19 has also been especially hard for family caregivers, many of whom were already challenged. COVID-19 took away many of the formal and informal sources of support for caregivers, leaving them without additional services or social supports. If we are to sustain this critical resource, we must pay attention to the personal and financial costs of caregiving and find ways to provide needed education and resources to better support family caregivers.

*WAAN is a collaborative group of 10 statewide associations and numerous individuals working with and for Wisconsin's older adults to shape public policy to improve their quality of life.*

Sincerely,



Robert J. Kellerman

WAAN Chair