



For Immediate Release

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The Arc Wisconsin and People with Disabilities in Wisconsin Express Relief after Failed Healthcare Vote

Madison, WI – Wisconsin residents with disabilities and their families are breathing a sigh of relief this morning following the late-night U.S. Senate vote that defeated a healthcare reform bill that had included drastic changes and cuts to Medicaid. More than 1 million Wisconsin residents depend on Medicaid for their health insurance and funding for essential community based care. Two-thirds of Medicaid funding goes to support people with disabilities and older adults.

“It never made sense to overhaul a popular and effective 50-year program that people with disabilities, elderly and children rely on without holding a single hearing and wrapping it up with the repeal of the Affordable Care Act,” says Lisa Pugh, Executive Director of The Arc Wisconsin. “That is why you saw so many people with disabilities and their family members making daily calls and sending emails and letters to Washington on this issue. We wake up this morning knowing that our stories did matter.”

Wisconsin currently receives a 60% funding match from the federal government for all its Medicaid programming which includes Family Care, IRIS and the Children’s Long-Term Supports waivers that allow individuals and families with disabilities to get supports in the community that help them to be healthy, allow them to live in their own homes and keep them out of institutions. Various versions of the House and Senate bills were predicted to reduce Medicaid funding to states by billions. Wisconsin would have faced particularly steep future funding reductions as compared to other states since the state operates Medicaid programs more efficiently and proposals would have capped funding at current levels.

“We know threats to Medicaid still exist, despite this vote. Members of The Arc Wisconsin stand ready to provide ideas on how to improve Medicaid programs and make them work better, be more cost-effective and improve quality,” says Pugh. “Any future efforts to change these important programs must include real discussion with and input from people with disabilities and their families.”

The Arc Wisconsin advocates for and serves people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD), including Down syndrome, autism, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, cerebral palsy and other diagnoses. The Arc Wisconsin has 15 local chapters and is connected to a network of more than 650 chapters across the country promoting and protecting the human rights of people with I/DD and actively supporting their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes and without regard to diagnosis.

Editor’s Note: The Arc is not an acronym; always refer to us as The Arc, not The ARC and never ARC. The Arc should be considered as a title or a phrase.