



WISCONSIN BOARD FOR PEOPLE
WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Vital Role and Stresses of Caregiving Recognized with WI Family Caregiver Month Family

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(MADISON) -- The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD) recognizes the critical role family caregivers make in keeping people with significant disabilities healthy, safe, and able to live at home instead of in care facilities as part of National and Wisconsin Family Caregiver Month.

BPDD is a member of the Wisconsin Family and Caregiver Support Alliance that organized a press event today at the Capitol that drew a packed room of caregivers from across the state. The Governor's office has issued a formal proclamation for the month of November recognizing the unique contributions of family caregivers. Statewide each year, family caregivers provide nearly 588 million hours of unpaid care, valued at \$6 billion.

A recent statewide survey of caregivers of people with disabilities found 98% report some level of stress; 50% are very or extremely stressed. 92% of caregivers reported that caregiving responsibilities affected their employment and 52% giving up on outside employment completely.

A Survival Coalition survey found that 85% of Wisconsin residents who rely on paid caregivers indicate they cannot find staff to meet their daily needs. 91% of personal care agencies statewide report they have had to turn away clients because of lack of workers.

Family caregivers and supporters are invited to join the Wisconsin Family and Caregiver Support Alliance (WFACSA) in celebrating caregivers all month long through a "You Might Be a Caregiver If..." campaign. WFACSA is asking caregivers to contact their legislators this month to share their caregiver experience and ask for statewide action, including higher direct care wages and a state hearing to examine ways to support direct caregivers.

Caregivers can also get involved by sharing their stories at: <http://wisconsincaregiver.org/family-caregiver-month>