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Wisconsin Family and Caregiver Support Alliance Urges Celebration and Support for Family Caregivers in November and Year-Long

Madison, WI - Members of the Wisconsin Family and Caregiver Support Alliance are urging everyone in the state to take time out this November to recognize the contributions of family caregivers, not only to their loved ones, but to their communities and the economy. Wisconsin’s 580,000 family caregivers provide an estimated $6.9 billion worth of care annually.

The Governor has proclaimed November as Family Caregiver Month, recognizing that family caregivers do a variety of complex, often medical tasks daily while struggling to balance their own personal needs and sometimes outside employment. Here are some key facts:

- Six out of 10 caregivers are employed, with 70% of working caregivers suffering work-related difficulties.
- More than 7,000 children in Wisconsin are being raised by a relative when birth parents are unable to safely care for them
- 11% of caregivers live more than an hour away from the loved ones they are caring for
- In Wisconsin currently 64% of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities live with family and 25% of these family caregivers (typically parents) are over 60 years old.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the struggles of family caregivers, many have gone months without a break,” says Lisa Schneider, WFACSA Steering Committee member and Executive Director of Respite Care Association of Wisconsin. “There is no better time to thank them.”

WFACSA is celebrating the month with four theme weeks, focusing on the contributions of different members of the caregiver population: Each week we will focus on different segments of caregiving:

Week 1: Kinship Care/Relatives as Parents Program
Week 2: Employed Family Caregivers
Week 3: Caregivers Across the Lifespan: From teenagers to seniors in their 80’s & 90’s
Week 4: Long Distance Family Caregivers

Wisconsin's Family Caregiver Support Program’s Facebook page will feature these events with daily challenges and prize drawings.

“Members of WFACSA encourage everyone to do what they can to celebrate and thank a caregiver, especially this month,” says Jane Mahoney WFACSA Steering Committee member and Caregiver Support Specialist. “A ‘thank you’ can be sending a note, offering to do a chore, picking up groceries or simply checking in. The important thing is for this work to not go unnoticed.”

The mission of the Wisconsin Family and Caregiver Support Alliance is to raise awareness of family and caregiver support needs and increase the availability of and access to services and supports - both paid and unpaid - which will keep people across the lifespan engaged in their community as long as they desire. For information about the Alliance and to find resources to support families and provide care for a loved one, visit http://wisconsincaregiver.org/alliance.