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### **The Arc Wisconsin Shares Concerns about Unintended Consequences of Bills that will Impact Programs for People with Disabilities**

Madison, WI -- Members of The Arc Wisconsin who include people with intellectual/developmental disabilities and their families are asking legislators to slow down the process of approving a bill that would significantly alter how changes are made to programs people with disabilities rely upon. One bill, Assembly Bill 1072, would inhibit the Department of Health Services' (DHS) authority to address changing public health needs.

"It is important for DHS to retain flexibility to make expedient and essential changes to rates and other policies to address situations that impact people's daily lives," says Lisa Pugh, Executive Director.

In Wisconsin an estimated 1.2 million people use Medicaid programs; 22% of program participants are people with disabilities and older adults. People with disabilities use Medicaid for daily needs including bathing, dressing, meals, going to work and participating in their communities. The bills under discussion would increase the legislature's role in making or rejecting changes to programs like Family Care, IRIS, Children's Long-Term Supports, Badgercare, Katie Beckett, intensive autism services and more. Currently the Department of Health Services is required by the federal government to execute a defined public input process and alter their proposals to respond to public feedback.

Several chapters of The Arc Wisconsin provide Medicaid-funded services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families, relying on Medicaid for up to 85% of their operating budgets.

"A bill that would allow the Legislature to step in and change programs that impact tens of thousands of people and small businesses requires robust stakeholder input and discussion," says Pugh.

*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.*