



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 SE 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*)

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Ageing Advocates Express Mixed Reactions to JFC Long-Term Care Actions

(MADISON, WI) In what has been described as a mixed bag for older people, aging advocates reacted with both appreciation and disappointment over Wednesday's Joint Finance Committee vote on key issues critical to older people in the state. The vote on Aging & Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) and last week's action on SeniorCare (Wisconsin's prescription drug assistance program) left both programs untouched by proposed changes – a win for Wisconsin seniors. In addition, one-time funding for 12 grants to support Dementia Care Specialist positions was approved along with a new appropriation to support evidence-based healthy aging programs. "We are grateful for Joint Finance Committee action maintaining the local structure and consumer board requirements for ADRCs, protecting SeniorCare, and providing some of the requested funding to support Dementia Care Specialists and evidence-based health promotion programs," says Janet Zander, Advocacy & Public Policy Coordinator at the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources. "We know how critical these programs and services are to the fabric of their communities and the older people who were so vocal about them, so we thank the members of the Joint Finance Committee for listening and responding to those requests. While the requested long-term care ombudsman program positions were not addressed in the motion, we hope there is still time to take up that issue."

Advocates, however, voiced major concerns over details of a plan to overhaul the current long-term care system despite no evidence of cost-savings or improved care. The new plan requires consumers to receive both long-term and acute care services through new "integrated health agencies (IHAs)." According to Zander, this is a huge shift in the way services are provided and could have serious unintended consequences. "At this point, it is unclear how these new IHAs would be composed and operated and how much input consumers would have into the process of determining how they work," says Zander. "We're concerned about the net impact this might have on people already in the system as well as those who will need the services in the future. We want to be sure that older adults and their family members, advocates, small community businesses, and other stakeholders are heard as changes are implemented."

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