

**For immediate release**

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**Disability Rights Wisconsin Reacts to Family Care 2.0 Concept Paper Released Today**

Upon initial review, Disability Rights Wisconsin believes the Wisconsin Department of Health Services is on the right track in many areas of the redesign of Family Care/IRIS - the state's long-term care system for older adults and people with disabilities.

Today DHS released its draft [Family Care/IRIS 2.0 Concept paper](#) which will be the subject of public hearings on March 7th in Eau Claire and Madison and will then be presented by April 1<sup>st</sup> to the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee for consideration and an up or down vote.

"Elements of the plan clearly reflect that DHS has listened to the concerns of people with disabilities and advocates," says Daniel Idzikowski, Executive Director. "We are especially pleased to see a commitment to a strong contracting process, quality measures, and pay for performance requirements for the new Integrated Health Agencies who will be doing business in Wisconsin."

Other parts of the plan are less clear and subject to interpretation. We will continue to seek clarification on how the new system will be experienced by participants, including:

- how behavioral health services will be integrated and measured in the new system;
- how people will access an independent, external ombudsman to exercise their rights;
- how adequate provider networks will be assessed; and
- how individuals with complex needs will avoid long-term institutional living.

Of optimal concern for many advocates is how self-direction continues under the new system to meet the legislature's promise of replication of the current IRIS program. The new concept plan does not explain how budget authority will work for participants choosing self-direction, the role of the ADRCs and the independence of the budget setting process, or the preservation of an independent appeal right.

Advocates had also requested that the new system focus on investing in home and community-based services and avoiding costly institutional care, as well as the use of national standards to assess outcomes for individuals in key areas including: employment, rights, community inclusion and choice. All of these elements are reflected in the concept plan.

"Disability Rights Wisconsin appreciates the ongoing dialogue we have been able to have with the Department as they design the new system. We hope to be part of a permanent stakeholder feedback process as the system moves forward," added Idzikowski.

*Disability Rights Wisconsin is the federally designated Protection and Advocacy System in the State, charged with protecting the legal and human rights of individuals with disabilities. We believe all persons with disabilities and their families shall be empowered to exercise and enjoy the full extent of their rights and to pursue the greatest possible quality of life. DRW challenges systems and society to achieve positive changes in the lives of people with disabilities and their families.*

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