



Dear Senator Darling and Representative Nygren,

The Wisconsin Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition, a group of Wisconsin organizations that advocate on behalf of individuals with Down syndrome and their families thank the Wisconsin legislature for hearing our concerns about plans to change the state's long-term care programs that so many people depend upon. There are 8000 people with Down syndrome in Wisconsin and many rely on employment, transportation and other essential supports to live their daily lives in their communities.

Last Thursday's announcement that changes to Family Care, IRIS and ADRCs would be removed from the budget is welcome news. We look forward to working with the legislature as stakeholders in the important process that comes next: to outline the sustainable future of our long-term care system.

In that regard, we share the concerns of other disability organizations that indicate some important questions are yet to be answered before the final vote: specifically about whether our state system would be well-run by for-profit insurance entities and what is at stake if we do not preserve the state's unique self-directed program, IRIS. The attached letter which is signed by national Down syndrome organizations and other experts does a good job of outlining the concerns that we share. We hope you will read it.

We urge you to proceed slowly and with great care in these next few weeks. Stakeholders like our organizations can add value to the process and we hope you will take a step back in framing the solution before families like ours are officially at the table as respected experts who live these programs day to day.

Respectfully,

The Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition

Dawn Nuoffer, Executive Director – Down Syndrome Association of Wisconsin

Mike Hahn, President-Madison Area Down Syndrome Society

Robbin Thomas Lyons, President-Wisconsin Upside Down

Cc: WI Senate Members
WI Assembly Members