



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 26, 2015

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## **Aging Advocates Urge Removal of All Long-term Care Changes from the Budget**

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*)

(MADISON, WI) The Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network (WAAN) calls on members of the state's Joint Finance Committee (JFC) to remove all changes to Family Care, IRIS and Aging & Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) from the state budget bill. WAAN members believe any new plan for long-term care reform should start with the current system and involve all stakeholders from the beginning.

Consumer experience data and numerous independent evaluations report the programs are working well. The state Department of Health Services indicated in its December 2013 report to JFC that its analysis of long-term care expansion "shows that these programs...provide the capacity to manage the growth of long-term care costs while ensuring that Wisconsin residents have timely access to quality long-term care service." Based on this assessment the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB) further states in LFB Paper #356, "it is unclear whether there are significant costs concerns related to the state's long-term care programs, or the methods by which the proposed changes would address any potential problems."

A 2014 report on all state long-term care programs by AARP, The Commonwealth Fund, and the SCAN Foundation said that Wisconsin had "clearly established a level of performance at a higher tier than other states." Janet Zander, Advocacy & Public Policy Coordinator for the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources (GWAAR) stated, "Wisconsin has a lot to be happy about; long-term care reform efforts are working as planned, consumer satisfaction is high, and the total percentage of Medicaid spending on long-term care is decreasing." The proposed changes will disrupt the lives of 55,000 older adults and people with disabilities who rely on these programs to live independently and would eliminate our current long-term system. "We need to be very thoughtful about any future changes to avoid causing any harm," said Zander, "input from program participants and their family members, service providers, advocates, and other long-term care stakeholders is critical to ensuring the programs ongoing success."

In support of an approach that starts with the current system and includes broad participation of consumers and other long term care stakeholders, WAAN calls on Joint Finance Committee members to remove all changes to Family Care, IRIS and Aging and Disability Resource Centers from the state budget and requests their support for the following Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB) budget alternatives: Alternative #5 in paper #356, Alternatives A4, B4, and C3 in Paper #357, and Alternative #3 in Paper #358 (and include the additional 3.0 Ombudsman positions for the Board on Aging and Long Term Care).

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