



of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

131 West Wilson Street, Suite 700, Madison, Wisconsin 53703
(608) 267-0214 voice/tty • (608) 267-0368 fax

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From: Survival Coalition Co-Chairs:

Maureen Ryan, Wisconsin Coalition of Independent Living Centers, Inc.; 608-444-3842;
moryan@charter.net

Beth Swedeen, Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities; 608-266-1166; Beth.Swedeen@wisconsin.gov

Call-In Days Mobilizes Statewide Action to Lift Caps on Long-Term Care

(Madison) Marilee Adamski-Smith of Plover in Portage County and Cindy Bentley from Milwaukee are traveling to the Capitol Wednesday, Feb. 8, with a strong message about the importance of lifting the caps on Wisconsin's long-term care programs, including Family Care and IRIS.

Their visits to legislators coincide with statewide "Call-In Days" Feb. 7-9 sponsored by disability and aging coalitions to pass Assembly Bill 477 and Senate Bill 380. These two bills would lift the statewide caps on the Family Care/IRIS programs and provide people with disabilities and aging adults with long-term care needs with a statewide system of support to live full and productive lives in the community.

Call-In Days is being organized by the Survival Coalition of more than 40 disability groups and AARP. Hundreds of individuals in the aging and disability communities have pledged to call their legislators during Call-In Days

Both Marilee and Cindy have powerful stories to tell that echo thousands of similar stories regarding the importance of long-term care in supporting people with disabilities and aging adults to live full and productive lives.

Marilee was born with a rare syndrome and has no arms or legs. But she says that has never stopped her. She has a degree in graphic design from UW-Whitewater, runs her own graphic design business out of her home, and is married to husband Joseph. Marilee says she doesn't know what she would do without Family Care, which provides attendants who help her with personal cares such as going to the bathroom, showering, dressing, and cooking meals. Family Care support also allows her to go grocery shopping once a week and run errands for her business.

"My disability does not define me," Marilee says. "With Family Care's help, I am able to be a wife and business woman. Not only do I contribute back to the community, I volunteer as the website administrator at my church. Family Care gives me the independence to live my life."

Cindy Bentley's story is just as powerful. Cindy, who is an IRIS participant in Milwaukee, spent years in a state institution and was the victim of childhood abuse. When she began in IRIS, she needed 40 hours a week of job supports from the program. Now, she is down to 8 hours per **month** and is also starting her own small business as a public speaker.

“With IRIS, I make my own choices about who I hire, what supports I need, and where I want to go in the community,” Cindy says. “I can work, go to church and sporting events, speak at schools, and live in my own place because of the supports I get through IRIS.”

For more information or to schedule an interview with a Family Care/IRIS participant from your part of the state, contact Maureen Ryan at moryan@charter.net or Beth Swedeen at beth.swedeen@wisconsin.gov

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