



of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

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

## **Survival Coalition Applauds Governor's Announcement on Mental Health Funding**

Maureen Ryan, Wisconsin Coalition of Independent Living Centers, Inc.; [moryan@charter.net](mailto:moryan@charter.net)  
Beth Swedeen, Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities; [beth.swedeen@wisconsin.gov](mailto:beth.swedeen@wisconsin.gov)  
Tom Masseur, Disability Rights Wisconsin; [tom.masseur@drwi.org](mailto:tom.masseur@drwi.org)

Feb. 6, 2013

(Madison) – Survival Coalition of more than 30 statewide disability organizations supports Governor Scott Walker's announcement today to invest nearly \$30 million in mental health services. The budget proposal, which provides supports for both children and adults, will have a very positive impact on Wisconsin's mental health system.

"Increased supports for critical community-based mental health supports is priority of Survival's budget recommendations, and this announcement takes historic positive steps in several areas," says Maureen Ryan, Survival co-chair and director of Wisconsin's Coalition of Independent Living Centers.

"The Governor's emphasis on the State paying its share of Medicaid match for Comprehensive Community Services has the broadest potential impact on adults and children with different levels of service need. This will help provide a more equitable "floor" on service availability across Wisconsin," says Tom Masseur, Survival co-chair and executive director of Disability Rights Wisconsin.

"Providing \$3.7 million for coordinated service team (CST) expansion will greatly benefit families," says Beth Swedeen, Survival co-chair and executive director of the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities. CST funding has been a catalyst to developing the children's mental health services system and reduces spending for out of home care."

Providing \$1.3 M to develop support community based Peer-Run Respite Centers will improve outcomes of individuals in crisis or individuals having difficulty coping with mental illness through services such as peer supports, 24/7 hotlines, wellness activities, respite, and hospital diversion. Peer run respite services cost less than a quarter the cost of psychiatric hospitals.

The three co-chairs underscored that the focus on expanding community-based mental health services will decrease reliance on costly crisis and emergency room care, while maximizing individuals' ability to participate and stay in their communities as contributing members. The new investment will also provide support to parents and keep children with their families instead of out-of-home placements.

Advocates have long recognized the lack of resources in Wisconsin's mental health system, resulting in a fragmented, crisis-driven system that differed from county to county and often only responded when people were in crisis.

Survival Coalition co-chairs say they are gratified that the key points from the Survival Budget Priority Issues on Mental Health Services are addressed by the Governor's budget announcement Wednesday, saying the focus on community-based services will provide the maximum impact for the dollars invested.

Survival Coalition is comprised of more than 30 statewide disability organizations that advocate and support policies and practices that lead to the full inclusion, participation, and contribution of people living with disability.

Real Lives, Real Work, Real Smart, Wisconsin  
Investing in People with Disabilities