



of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

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February 10, 2014

Senator Leah Vukmir, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
131 South, State Capitol
Madison, WI

Dear Senator Vukmir:

The Survival Coalition of more than 30 disability organizations requests that you hold a public hearing on Senate Bill 503, which expands Family Care to Northeast Wisconsin, so that the residents of these seven counties can be a part of the on-going conversation regarding the future of long-term care in Wisconsin.

While Northeast Wisconsin taxpayers help fund the Family Care program, they are unable to access the services it provides. Currently, over 900 Northeast Wisconsin residents are on waiting lists to receive long-term care. Senate Bill 503 would end the waiting lists and allow these 900 individuals to receive long-term care supports in their own homes and communities as opposed to expensive institutional settings.

As you know, Governor Tommy Thompson started Family Care as a pilot program in 1999, making Wisconsin a leader in the area of long-term care reform. Survival Coalition supports statewide expansion of Family Care, and has been working with the legislature and Joint Finance Committee members to ensure that all people with disabilities and elderly citizens have access to the same community-based supports regardless of where they live.

The legislature has spent considerable time studying the sustainability of Family Care expansion over the past few years, and a recent report by the Department of Health Services found once again that statewide expansion of Family Care would reduce the burden on Wisconsin taxpayers by saving the state \$34.7 million over the next 10 years. As the legislature considers the next steps of long-term care reform, we believe it is important to hear from long-term care consumers and other individuals who will be directly impacted by these decisions.

Survival Coalition appreciates your continued leadership in the area of long-term care reform and respectfully requests that Senate Bill 503 be given a public hearing.

We thank you for your consideration and look forward to hearing from you.

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.

Sincerely,

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Survival Coalition Issue Teams: education, employment, housing, long term care for Adults, long term care for children, mental health, transportation, workforce, voting, Medicaid and health care.

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