



# Survival Coalition

of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

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*P.O. Box 7222, Madison, Wisconsin 53707*

March 30, 2020

Dear Governor Evers and Secretary Palm;

Survival Coalition writes to share concerns regarding policies other states are implementing that discriminate against people with disabilities and disabling conditions as state's seek to ration life-saving treatment during the COVID-19 health crisis. While we recognize that our own health care system may at some point lack sufficient acute care services and equipment, such as ventilators, to meet the demand of patients with COVID-19 who require intensive treatment, we encourage our state leaders to adopt and promote guidelines and policies that maximize equity and eliminate disability bias.

We support the rationale shared in Disability Rights Wisconsin's March 26<sup>th</sup> open letter found [here](#) that cautions against the implementation of policies that violate federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities. We also support the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Civil Rights bulletin dated March 28, 2020, which commits to "leaving no one behind during an emergency," and its statement that "persons with disabilities...should not be put at the end of the line during health emergencies."

Therefore, we urge the Governor and Department of Health Services to be proactive in establishing an equitable protocol that can guide Wisconsin's health care system in these decisions.

Unfortunately, there is a documented and persistent bias on the part of medical providers against people with disabilities, including grave and inaccurate assumptions about quality of life. These biases must not be the building blocks for life or death decisions.

The State of Wisconsin must be a leader in establishing guidelines that prevent tragedy for Wisconsinites with disabilities and their families. We urge you to act promptly.

Our members are available to provide guidance, support and resources as you issue this policy. We welcome a virtual meeting to discuss.

Sincerely,

Survival Co-Chairs:

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