

Tell policymakers state COVID-19 legislation must address needs of people with disabilities

State lawmakers may take up legislation **as soon as Tuesday to respond to the COVID-19 crisis**. It is important that the needs of people with disabilities are reflected in COVID-19 decisions and funding.

The services people receive in their homes and communities are now even more critical -especially for high risk populations--like older adults and people with disabilities. Keeping people healthy in their homes will help prevent spread of COVID-19 and keep people out of hospitals and nursing homes.

Wisconsin also must ensure home and community-based providers organizations and workers do not go out of business or lose their jobs because of the COVID-19 crisis, and can start up as soon as the public health emergency has passed.

While the exact legislative language has not been released yet, Survival Coalition reviewed the Legislative Summary of the COVID-19 response bill, and sent a [letter to legislative leaders](#) with questions and recommendations.

If you are concerned about how COVID-19 is impacting your life and your services, contact your state Senator and state Representative. ([Who Are My Legislators?](#))

Action Steps:

1. Contact your state Senator and state Representative (Look up [Who are my legislators](#))
2. Make sure your legislators are aware of the full range of Home and Community Based services (HCBS) and supports you and 85,000 other Wisconsinites rely on daily in Family Care, IRIS, CLTS, or on your Forward Health card to help you live in your home instead of expensive facilities.
3. Tell your legislators that **Congress has not** provided enough support for the workers and small businesses that provide these critical services people need to live and work in the community.
4. **Ask the legislature to reconvene as soon as possible to do the following:**
 - a. Allow DHS to apply for needed waivers, including the 1115, 1915 (c) Appendix K and 1135 waivers, that will help respond to COVID-19.
 - b. Make sure a substantial proportion of the extra federal Medicaid dollars received go directly to supporting the Home and Community Based Service system
 - c. Require front-line home and community-based direct support professionals receive overtime and hazard pay and have access to needed personal protective equipment (PPE) to ensure the safety of their clients and themselves
 - d. Temporarily change the state Family Medical Leave Act policy so that family members can care for siblings, grandparents, and others who normally daily supports have

changed due to COVID-19.

5. Pass a clean COVID-19 response bill. Remove these provisions:

- a. Changes to Joint Finance Committee authority that would allow the 16 member committee to suspend statutory changes, and transfer sum sufficient appropriations. These provisions would make permanent changes that could impact education, transportation, workforce quality and training, and other state services and programs important to people with disabilities.
- b. Changes to training hours for Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs). DHS has already granted flexibility for expedited training for Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA) during the COVID-19 crisis.