



Survival Coalition

of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

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For Immediate Release: Monday, March 22, 2021

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More Than 200 Members of Disability Community Plan to Participate in Virtual Annual Disability Advocacy Day

Direct Care Workforce, Special Education, Medicaid, Transportation, Children and Family Supports, Mental Health, ABLE, Long-Term Care all on Priority List

(MADISON) – More than 200 members of the disability community from all parts of Wisconsin plan to rally virtually on March 23 for the Survival Coalition’s annual Disability Advocacy Day. Advocates will participate in issue discussions and planning sessions before making targeted calls to their state legislators to tell their story and discuss the issues that impact people with disabilities in their everyday lives.

“COVID-19 and the heightened health risks for individuals with disabilities and chronic health concerns mean we can’t meet in person in Madison this year, but this won’t lessen our impact,” said Survival Coalition Co-Chair Lisa Pugh. “We plan to be flooding the capitol with calls on March 23.”

This year’s priority is to ensure legislators understand the significant impact that the pandemic has had in the lives of people with disabilities and the supports and investments required to ensure people can return to normal as soon as possible.

“The direct care workforce crisis has only heightened during these past 12 months,” said Survival Coalition Co-Chair Beth Swedeen. “Many people have been forced to move from their homes because they couldn’t find care or lost the workers they had. They worry they won’t be able to get those workers back and return to their independence. We have to reinvest in our systems to pay for the actual costs of care.”

“Social isolation has also intensified the need for better and more mental health supports in our state,” said Kristin Kerschensteiner, Survival Coalition Co-Chair. “We need crisis supports closer to home and rates that can create capacity in our mental health system.”

Other state budget priorities include finding transportation solutions for people who don’t drive, providing sustainable and critical increases in special education funding, expanding voting access,

supporting ABLE accounts, and ensuring appropriate supports for families raising children with disabilities.

Virtual Disability Advocacy Day of Action will include an overview of disability issues and planning time from 10:00 to noon. Participants are encouraged to rally as if they were in person, with poster signs and rally cheers via Zoom. Following issue briefings participants will use a Phone2Action platform to call their state Assembly and Senator offices.

Disability Advocacy Day is organized by the Survival Coalition which is comprised of more than 20 statewide disability organizations that advocate and support policies and practices that lead to the full inclusion, participation, and contribution of people living with disability.

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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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