



of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

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February 10, 2014

Senator Darling  
Joint Finance Committee Co-Chair  
State Capitol, Room 317 East  
Madison, WI 53707

Representative Nygren  
Joint Finance Committee Co-Chair  
State Capitol, Room 309 East  
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Sen. Darling, Rep. Nygren, and members of the Joint Finance Committee;

As outlined in our letter of December 19, 2013, the Survival Coalition was able to schedule meetings with all but three members of the Joint Finance Committee in January to discuss the expansion of Family Care into the remaining fifteen counties currently waiting for the program. We appreciate the time and attention that Committee members are devoting to this issue, and request clarification from the committee on the next steps to move forward on Family Care expansion and a timeline for implementation.

We understand from conversations with committee members, that some members may have additional questions about Family Care and/or DHS's cost benefit analysis report provided to Joint Finance. Survival Coalition has suggested to Joint Finance members that it may be appropriate to request the Department appear before the committee to explain their report and answer any questions that the legislature may have regarding the program.

A forum for discussion may prove fruitful to address legislators' concerns. We respectfully request co-chairs to schedule time on the Joint Finance Committee docket and invite the Department to present their report on Family Care and respond to member questions.

Survival Coalition is extremely concerned that the expansion of Family Care has not occurred in the last four years despite many counties actively wanting to transition to Family Care. DHS has stated that they are reluctant to issue the Request for Proposal (RFP) without assurance that the Joint Finance Committee will be amenable to approving the resulting contract. The Joint Finance Committee cannot act unless there is a contract to which it must actively review and respond. Survival Coalition is concerned that the very real consequences for people waiting for Family Care in 15 counties will continue unless this impasse is resolved.

In the 57 counties that currently have Family Care, residents with disabilities and older adults can access supports in their homes and communities when they need them, which keeps them out of costly nursing homes. The story is much different for residents in the 15 counties still waiting for Family Care; people can wait years—sometimes a decade or longer—for help. Access to supports that enable people to stay in their homes and communities should be available statewide, not dependent on the county in which a person lives.

As we have previously articulated, we find the cost-effectiveness of a statewide expansion of Family Care was clearly demonstrated in DHS's December 2013 report to Joint Finance. The DHS report clearly demonstrates that expanding Family Care would reduce the growth of state spending by \$34.7 million over the next ten years, and eliminate the waiting list for 1600 people in 15 counties. Survival Coalition supports statewide expansion of Family Care, and has been working with the legislature and with Joint Finance members to ensure that all people with disabilities and elderly residents have access to the same community based supports regardless of where they live.

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,

Survival Co-Chairs:

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