



---

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

**For Immediate Release:** Monday, March 20, 2017

**Contact:** Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Organizations, Co-Chairs  
Maureen Ryan, moryan@charter.net; (608) 444-3842  
Beth Swedeen, beth.swedeen@wisconsin.gov; (608) 266-1166  
Kristin M. Kerschensteiner, kitk@drwi.org; (608) 267-0214

**More Than 500 Members of Disability Community Come to Madison Tuesday for Annual Disability Advocacy Day**

**Medicaid, Transportation, Direct Care Workforce, Ending Children’s Wait Lists, Education Funding, Mental Health Supports all on Priority List**

(MADISON) – More than 500 members of the disability community from all parts of Wisconsin will gather at the Capitol Tuesday, March 21, for Disability Advocacy Day. Advocates will spread out to visit their Wisconsin State Legislative offices to tell their story and discuss public policy issues that impact people with disabilities in their everyday lives.

This year’s priority is to share concerns about proposed significant changes to the way federal Medicaid would be funded. One in 5 Wisconsinites depend on Medicaid programs for health insurance. For the disability community, many also use additional long-term supports that allow them to live at home, work and participate in their communities instead of relying on costly nursing homes and other facilities. Participants will be asking for more information on what these changes will entail and what they mean for the 50,000 people who use these programs.

“Family Care and IRIS not only help people with disabilities live in their own homes but they also enable individuals to work, socialize and be active participants in the community,” said Survival Coalition Co-Chair Maureen Ryan. “These changes were proposed without any input from consumers or stakeholders, and many people statewide are telling us they worry that these so-called reforms will jeopardize their ability to live independent lives.”

“We also are getting lots of questions about the future of Aging and Disability Resource Centers,” said Kristin Kerschensteiner, Survival Coalition Co-Chair. “These county-based, unbiased information and referral centers have been extremely useful in providing important information about local services. The proposed budget makes their future uncertain.”

Other state budget priorities include the current critical direct care worker shortage and adequate wages for care workers, finding transportation solutions for people who don’t drive or own cars, preserving and more equitably distributing proposed increases in public education funding, and supporting proposed mental health supports.

Disability Advocacy Day will include an overview of disability issues and planning time as legislative teams at Monona Terrace from 10:30 to noon. Participants will gather in the Capitol Rotunda at 12:30 p.m. for a short rally and wearing their blue Survival Coalition t-shirts. Legislative visits are scheduled at 1 p.m. for Senate offices, and 2 p.m. for Assembly offices.

Disability Advocacy Day is organized by the Survival Coalition 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.

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

##

Sincerely,

Survival Co-Chairs:

Maureen Ryan, [moryan@charter.net](mailto:moryan@charter.net); (608) 444-3842;  
Beth Swedeen, [beth.swedeen@wisconsin.gov](mailto:beth.swedeen@wisconsin.gov); (608) 266-1166;  
Kristin M. Kerschensteiner, [kitk@drwi.org](mailto:kitk@drwi.org); (608) 267-0214

---

*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.*

---

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