



Wisconsin Long-term Care Stakeholder Organizations Support a 15% Increase to the Personal Care Rate

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Twenty long-term care stakeholder organizations sent a letter to Joint Finance Committee Co-Chairs Tuesday advocating for a 15% increase to the Medicaid personal care rate, which has only increased by \$0.24 over the past 14 years.

The groups represent a broad cross-section of long-term care stakeholders including aging and disability advocacy organizations and provider associations. They say the rate increase is needed to address the direct care workforce crisis.

“Wisconsin is currently experiencing a crisis-level shortage of direct care workers that is putting personal care agencies out of business and leaving people with disabilities and older adults without needed care,” said Wisconsin Personal Services Association President Darci Knapp.

Personal care workers help people get out of bed, use the bathroom, get dressed, prepare meals, travel to and from work or school and complete other activities necessary for daily living. More than 85% of Wisconsinites who rely on direct care workers for some or all of their support needs say they cannot find enough workers.

Advocates say the Governor’s proposed 2% per year increase to the personal care reimbursement rate is an important first step but are asking for a 15% increase to address the significant worker shortage in the community.

“Wisconsin is on track to become one of the first states in the nation to end waiting lists for both children and adults in need of long-term care,” said Wisconsin Long Term Care Coalition Co-Chair Lynn Breedlove. “However, a de facto waiting list is developing in the community because of the direct care workforce crisis.”

Forty-three percent of people who responded to a recent Survival Coalition survey said they can’t find a worker seven or more times per month.

“We’ve heard heartbreaking stories from individuals across the state that have been left in their wheelchair overnight, suffered falls, or spent the entire day in their bed because the workforce crisis is leaving them without the supports they need,” said State Director of the Arc Wisconsin Lisa Pugh.

The Legislature’s Joint Finance Committee will vote on the proposed personal care rate increase on Thursday, May 25.

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