

# Supporting Family Caregivers in Wisconsin

AN ADRC PROPOSAL



## WHY DO FAMILY CAREGIVERS NEED SUPPORT?

Our state relies on family caregivers to provide daily support to a large and growing number of older adults and people with disabilities of all ages. In Wisconsin family caregivers provide an estimated 80% of all care. Many family caregivers are forced to leave the workforce in order to provide care. The physical work can be hard, and many family caregivers experience isolation and emotional and financial strain. The limited availability of caregiver supports--especially for those caring for people under age 60--often results in caregiver burnout, families in crisis, and premature placements in Medicaid-funded institutional facilities. Keeping family caregivers healthy and able to continue care helps older adults and people with disabilities stay in their homes, which is better for both the individual and the state budget.

## WHAT DO AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTERS (ADRCs) DO?

ADRCs are located in every county and many tribes and serve as a one-stop shop for accurate, unbiased information on all aspects of life related to aging or living with a disability. ADRCs connect older adults, people with disabilities, and their families to various resources.

ADRCs help people stay living and working independently and avoiding costly Medicaid funded institutional settings like nursing homes. Many people who access these supports need only additional information or a small amount of help. ADRCs also create awareness about and refer to other community resources as well as conduct benefits counseling and home visits that help identify additional needs and get people connected to available supports that keep them out of expensive institutions.

In the state's most recent satisfaction survey almost one in three respondents said that the ADRC helped them stay in their home when they might otherwise have gone to a nursing home or assisted living facility.

# 1 IN 3

ADRC Customers say ADRC supports delayed placement of their loved one

# SAVINGS OF UP TO \$6,079/MONTH/PERSON

Estimated Medicaid Savings when someone does not enter a nursing home (Genworth 2020)

This proposal would ensure ADRCs can offer timely support to the many family caregivers of people aged 19-59. (ADRCs are not able to fully support this population now.) Many people acquire disabilities or degenerative/chronic conditions earlier than age 60. Our system needs to better reflect the reality of people's lives. Each ADRC would dedicate a Caregiver Coordinator who would be a central point of contact and manage all caregiver support funding streams, allowing for more efficient use of limited dollars. The proposal would also help ADRCs to promote and increase awareness of caregiver supports that are intended to reach caregivers before they are in crisis and decide to place a loved one in a costly publicly funded institutional setting.

**Cost: \$4M, including support for tribes.**

### WHAT IS THE INTENDED OUTCOME OF THIS CHANGE?

- With additional funds directed to a caregiver program at the ADRC, more caregivers will be served. For example, a caregiver of an adult under age 60 who had a stroke, MS, cancer or a disability could receive respite care or adaptive equipment to help reduce the burden of caregiving, allowing them to stay healthy and provide care for a longer time.
- A Caregiver Coordinator position in every ADRC would increase caregiver identification and ensure more caregivers are connected with cost-effective supports. This will result in more efficient use of publicly funded and limited caregiver resources.
- Increased public awareness of caregiver support programs will help caregivers receive support and education before they go into crisis and are looking for costly out of home placements.
- Caregivers who have access to respite care, assistive technology, support groups, trainings and other support are able to maintain healthier lives and have reduced caregiver burden. This allows them to provide care at home for a longer period of time.

### WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WITH HOW THINGS ARE CURRENTLY WORKING? WHAT IS THE GAP?

- Many people are not aware that ADRCs have caregiver support programs and resources. The most recent state ADRC survey indicates the majority of customers heard of the ADRC through word of mouth and are calling with a pressing concern or emergency. This lack of awareness often means a caregiver has already decided to place their loved one outside of the home. Due to funding, there is limited to no marketing about ADRC caregiver supports in many counties.
- Without a dedicated Caregiver Coordinator staff person, caregivers are not always identified and may not receive a thorough assessment and follow-up.
- There are no caregiver support programs for caregivers of people under age 60 (unless the person has dementia).
- Current caregiver support programs are limited in their ability to provide adequate support to caregivers.

