

# Repair and Rebuild the Long-Term Care Workforce

Support Aging in Place, Preserve Independence, and Save Money

## Core Member Organizations

- Aging and Disability Professionals Association of Wisconsin (ADPAW)
- Alzheimer's Association Wisconsin Chapter
- Wisconsin Adult Day Services Association (WADSA)
- Wisconsin Association of Area Agencies on Aging (W4A)
- Wisconsin Association of Benefit Specialists (WABS)
- Wisconsin Association of Nutrition Directors (WAND)
- Wisconsin Association of Senior Centers (WASC)
- Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA)
- Wisconsin Senior Advocates
- Wisconsin Senior Corps Association (WISCA)
- Wisconsin Tribal Aging Unit Association

The Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network is a collaborative group of individuals and associations working with and for Wisconsin's older adults to shape public policy to improve their quality of life.

**WAAN State Issue Brief**  
February 2023

***WAAN's Position: Repair and rebuild the long-term care workforce by increasing home and community-based provider rates; providing ongoing funding for initiatives designed to better recruit, support, and retain long-term care workers; expanding Wisconsin's Family and Medical Leave program; and incentivizing earned income.***

Overwhelmingly, older adults want to remain in their own homes. Studies have demonstrated aging in place can promote higher quality of life and self-esteem.<sup>1</sup> The shortage of long-term care workers is resulting in a lack of needed services for older adults and people with disabilities who are dependent on others to meet their daily care needs. The number of people living at home who are older and/or disabled is increasing, yet many lack the services they need to do so safely. Family members have been stepping up to fill the care gaps left by unfilled shifts and waiting lists for services, but caregiver exhaustion and a lack of family members to fill all the gaps and meet all the care needs is putting many older adults and people with disabilities at risk of hospitalization and more expensive residential care. Additionally, the lack of long-term care workers providing home and community-based services has left older adults and people with disabilities stuck in hospitals and nursing homes long after they are ready to return home, as it can take months to find in-home care.

## Budget Requests

- 1. Provide a 25 percent increase in the Family Care capitation rates, with a corresponding increase in IRIS rates** to enable providers to establish competitive wages for the home and community-based long-term care workforce. Competitive wages are needed to repair and rebuild our long-term care system.





2. **Establish and fund minimum provider reimbursement rates for home and community-based services** (residential, supportive home care, and personal care) in the Family Care and Family Care Partnership programs.
3. **Continue the 5 percent home and community-based services rate increases until the new minimum rate bands** (see #2 above) are implemented.
4. **Develop a reliable method to ensure the Include, Respect, I Self-Direct (IRIS) individual budget setting algorithm is revised to achieve comparable increases to those in Family Care.**
5. **Increase Medicaid Personal Care (MAPC) rates by 39 percent** (from \$23.44/hr to \$32.63/hr) to cover the actual cost of providing services.
6. **Provide funding to continue initiatives implemented with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding:**
  - **A tiered-rate career ladder for personal care and supportive home care workers** that rewards professional advancement.
  - **A statewide professional credentialing and continuing education system** to expand career opportunities.
  - **A statewide registry of direct care workers**, so individuals who need care can search for qualified direct care professionals to meet their needs.
7. **Expand Wisconsin Family and Medical Leave Policies.** Many workers are not covered by or able to access federal or state family and medical leave (FMLA) benefits including those who work for employers with fewer than 50 employees, workers caring for individuals outside their immediate family, and those who cannot afford to take unpaid leave. Expanding state leave policies to apply to employers with fewer than 50 employees and including grandparents, grandchildren, siblings, and other extended family members or persons with close affinity relationship who are taking on increasing caregiving roles will save the state money, keep people working, and provide the flexibility workers need to meet care responsibilities without fear of losing their job. Creating a paid family leave program would ensure those with access to family leave could *afford* to use it.
8. **Eliminate the fiscal cliff for FoodShare, Wisconsin Shares, and Wisconsin Works by creating an earned income disregard or providing transitional benefits as household income increases.**

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1. Rowland, C. (2022, September 25). Seniors are stuck at home alone as health aides flee for higher-paying jobs. Washington Post. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2022/09/25/seniors-home-health-care/> on September 26, 2022.



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