



**Testimony of
Janet L. Zander, Advocacy & Public Policy Coordinator
Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, Inc.**

AB 453 – Relating to: Requiring the Family Care benefit and self-directed services option to be provided in Rock County

**Before the Wisconsin Joint Committee on Finance
November 4, 2015**

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.

Core member organizations:

Aging and Disability Professionals Association of Wisconsin (ADPAW)

Alzheimer's Association
SE Wisconsin Chapter

Wisconsin Adult Day Services Association (WADSA)

Wisconsin Association of Area Agencies on Aging (WAA)

Wisconsin Association of Benefit Specialists (WABS)

Wisconsin Association of Nutrition Directors (WAND)

Wisconsin Association of Senior Centers (WASC)

Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA)

Chairpersons Darling and Nygren and Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on AB 453 which will bring the Family Care and IRIS benefits to older adults and people with disabilities in Rock County. My name is Janet Zander. I am the Advocacy & Public Policy Coordinator for the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources. I am testifying today on behalf of my agency, as well as the Wisconsin Agency Advocacy Network.

Based upon Family Care's demonstrated ability to control the growth of long-term care costs and serve people in their own homes or community-based settings, aging advocates have been strong supporters of efforts to complete statewide expansion and eliminate waiting lists. We believe, it is critical that all eligible Wisconsin adults with long-term care needs have equal access to in-home, community-based, and institutional care. Bringing the approximately 1,100 adults currently receiving legacy waiver services or on a waiting list for services in Rock County into the Family Care or IRIS program brings us one step closer to achieving that goal.

Phased-in enrollment of Family Care and IRIS expansion to Rock County legacy waiver participants and individuals on the waiting list is anticipated to begin in July 2016 and will occur in equal increments over a three year period of time. As state planning continues around the development and implementation of a new integrated system of long-term services and supports and acute, primary, and behavioral health, as outlined in Act 55, we encourage all parties involved to carefully consider these "newer" Family Care and IRIS counties as the transition plan is formulated. It will be very important to remain mindful of the potential disruption to those served by these essential programs that could result from being transitioned from one program to another within a short period of time.

Senator Darling, Representative Nygren, and members of the Joint Finance Committee, thank you for this opportunity to comment on this important legislation. We look forward to continuing to work with you as redesign efforts continue and community-based long-term care services and supports become available to all eligible older adults and people with disabilities no matter where they live.

Contact WAAN

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