

Wisconsin Children's Long-Term Support Council

2019-2021 Biennial Budget Recommendations

The Council on Children with Long-Term Support Needs serves as advisors to the Department of Health Services on how best to meet the needs of children with disabilities and their families. Part of the Council charge includes recommendations for the biennial budget. These recommendations are intended to increase families' capacity to support, nurture and plan for the future of their child and support the community's inclusion of the child and family. We believe that supporting the contribution and effort of families is key to the financial sustainability of our long-term support systems.

FUNDING - Funding for Services

DHS and the legislature have made a commitment to end waiting lists for adults with long-term support needs. We believe this should happen for children with disabilities and their families as well. As of October 2018, **1388 children with disabilities currently eligible for Children's Long-Term Supports (CLTS) are on wait lists** due to insufficient resources. Children with disabilities are the only Medicaid population waiting for services due to lack of funding.

RECOMMENDATION

End wait lists for children with significant disabilities by the end of next biennium. Include CLTS funding in the base Medicaid budget. This would fulfill the legislative intent to serve all children eligible for long-term supports and services and would be consistent with the state's commitment to fully fund services to adults who qualify for the state's MA-funded long-term care programs.

ACCESS – Family Support and Disability Resource Centers

Many families who have children with disabilities talk about how hard it is to find help. While supporting families is at the core of our children's long-term support system, we have not intentionally designed supports and services to accomplish this. We recommend the inclusion of **cost effective strategies directed to support and assist families in acquiring skills, knowledge and supports to successfully meet the needs of their children.** Families with these supports can more effectively maintain their advocacy, caregiving and economic security efforts; utilize personal resources such as private insurance and; access community resources such as childcare and school-based services.

RECOMMENDATION

Build on and realign existing resources to develop and maintain an infrastructure for Family Support and Disability Resource Centers to provide: family access to information, system navigation supports and eligibility determination that includes: expertise on working with children and their families; information to families on supports and services available in their region including information on disability and non-disability resources; and help with navigation of multiple supports and services. FSDRC will include:

- eligibility determination for Wisconsin long-term supports and services for children;
- accurate and comprehensive information, assistance and benefits counseling;
- navigators to help families access resources already available in their health, community and school systems;
- family-to-family connections and
- advocacy skills training