

## Important Budget Updates for Children with Disabilities

The 2019-2021 budget is moving forward. The Legislature's Joint Finance Committee (JFC) voted on the Department of Health Services' budget on June 4. **This includes items that impact families who have children with disabilities.** Family Voices will continue to watch what's happening at the capitol closely and keep you updated on the progress on Wisconsin's State Budget.

**Following are the actions JFC has taken:**

**Ending Wait Lists:** JFC approved funding to serve children who are currently waiting for Children's Long-Term Supports and who are already in the program. But it did not include a provision to ensure that in the future eligible children will not have to wait for services.

**Single point of entry:** JFC voted to fund a single, statewide eligibility and enrollment process for the Katie Beckett, Children's Community Options and Children's waiver programs. The funding for these programs, though, will not be provided immediately.

**Family Support and Disability Resources:** JFC rejected the governor's proposal to create a **front door** to help families navigate through complex systems. The plan would have included a children's ombudsman program, family navigators and benefits counseling.

**Direct care workforce:** JFC acted on addressing the direct-care workforce crisis by approving a **9% pay increase** for Medicaid personal care workers in 2019 and a **3%** increase for 2020.

**Expanding Birth-to-3 Eligibility:** JFC rejected the governor's recommended expansion of Birth-to-3 Program eligibility to include children with high levels of lead in their blood. Instead they called for a **onetime transfer** of \$2.2 million from the current Children's Community Option Program funds to cover Birth-to-3 Program costs.

**Improving Dental Access:** JFC partially funded the governor's proposal to set aside money for dentists who serve Medicaid recipients with physical or intellectual disabilities. They approved \$2.5 million—half of the governor's original proposal. Last month, the committee also removed a provision from the budget that would have allowed dental therapists to perform additional services, while expanding access to dental services to Medicaid recipients.

To learn more, see the Survival Coalition Press Statement – June 5, 2019 -

[http://www.survivalcoalitionwi.org/wp-](http://www.survivalcoalitionwi.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/SurvivalCoalition_JFC_DHSBudgetPressRelease_FINAL.pdf)

[content/uploads/2019/06/SurvivalCoalition\\_JFC\\_DHSBudgetPressRelease\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.survivalcoalitionwi.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/SurvivalCoalition_JFC_DHSBudgetPressRelease_FINAL.pdf) and the Joint

Finance Committee motions <https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/misc/lfb/jfcmotions/2019>