

Governor Evers introduced his proposed [2021-2023 state budget](#) on February 16th. This document summarizes some of the budget proposals related to children with disabilities. It is important to note that the items described below are just proposals and cannot take effect until they are passed by the Legislature and signed into law by the Governor. The next step in the budget process is for the Joint Finance Committee (the Legislature's budget-writing committee) to draft their budget and hold [public hearings](#) across the state to get feedback.

### Department of Health Services

#### Long-Term Supports and Services - Children

1. We appreciate the Governor's request to serve all children with disabilities who are eligible for the children's long-term supports waiver but are very disappointed there is no investment in a statewide [Disability Resource Center for Children and Families](#). This center would provide families with desperately needed information, assistance and advocacy services and is supported by families, counties, and disability advocates.
2. **Children's Long-Term Support Waiver** - The Governor recommends requiring the department to ensure that any child who is eligible and applies for the disabled Children's Long-Term Support waiver program receives services under the program.
3. **Expand Access to the Birth to 3 Program** - \$6.6M - The Governor recommends increasing funding in the Birth to 3 Program to expand services to eligible children who have a positive blood lead test above 5 micrograms per deciliter.
4. **Birth to 3 Program** - \$1.1M - The Governor recommends increasing ongoing funding for the Birth to 3 Program by the amount of one-time funding provided in 2019 WI Act 9.

#### Long-Term Supports and Services - Adults

5. **Direct Care Funding for Family Care** - (\$40m 1<sup>st</sup> year, \$37M 2<sup>nd</sup> year) The Governor recommends providing funding to increase the direct care and services portion of the capitation rates the department provides to managed care organizations in recognition of the direct caregiver workforce challenges facing the state.
6. **Home Care Provider Registry** -The Governor recommends requiring the department to conduct a one-year pilot program to create a home care provider registry to support home- and community-based long-term care support programs and clients and vendors of care services. The Governor also recommends requiring the department to issue a request for proposals to select a vendor of the software platform for the registry.
7. **Family and Guardian Training** - The Governor recommends establishing mandatory initial training requirements for guardians. The Governor also recommends providing funding for the department to award a grant to an organization with expertise in state guardianship law to develop, administer and conduct the required guardian training in a plain language,

Web-based, on-line training module that can be accessed for free, with printed versions available for free upon request.

8. **Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs)** - The Governor recommends providing funding to aging and disability resource centers to: (a) expand caregiver support services to address the needs of caregivers of adults with disabilities who are age 19 to 59; (b) require aging and disability resource centers to designate a caregiver coordinator and create a marketing plan to increase knowledge of programs available; (c) expand the tribal aging and disability resources specialist program, which provides liaison services between the tribes and the aging and disability resource centers to ensure that tribal members receive culturally appropriate information and can comfortably and effectively access long-term care programs and services; and (d) expand the tribal disability benefit specialist program, which is a contractual partnership between the department and the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council to provide assistance and advocacy services to adult tribal members with disabilities.

## Medicaid

9. **Direct Care Funding for Personal Care Services** - \$40M in the first year, \$37M/second year - The Governor recommends providing funding to increase support to direct care staff that provide medical services through personal care programs.
10. **Medicaid Expansion** - \$411 million - To provide healthcare coverage to 90,900 low-income families, of which approximately 45,100 are uninsured, and lower state healthcare costs by \$634,100,000 GPR over the biennium, the Governor recommends accepting the federal Affordable Care Act's provision for Medicaid expansion. Medicaid expansion reduces the fiscal burden associated with healthcare costs for many more Wisconsin residents and unites Wisconsin with 38 other states that provide free healthcare for the nation's impoverished. The Governor also recommends repealing the federal waiver for childless adults to administer the Medicaid program uniformly across all Medicaid eligibility groups.
11. **Medicaid Dental Access Incentive Payments** - \$24M - Governor recommends increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates for dental providers who provide services to Medicaid and BadgerCare Plus patients to increase access to dental services under the Medicaid program.
12. **Licensure of Dental Therapists** - The Governor recommends creating a new license for dental therapists to increase the number of dental providers and dental services provided across the state, especially in regions designated as dental provider shortage areas.
13. **Medicaid Speech-Language Pathology Rate Increase** - \$1.9M - The Governor recommends increasing expenditure authority to provide a rate increase for speech-language pathology services provided under the Medicaid program.
14. **Medicaid Audiology Rate Increase Agency** - \$9M - The Governor recommends increasing expenditure authority to provide a rate increase for audiology services provided under the Medicaid program.
15. **Medicaid Autism Treatment Rate Increase** - \$15M - The Governor recommends increasing expenditure authority to provide a rate increase for autism treatment services provided under the Medicaid program.
16. **Medicaid Outpatient Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and Child-Adolescent Day Treatment Rate Increases** - \$30.6M - The Governor recommends increasing the Medicaid reimbursement rate for outpatient mental health and substance abuse services and child-adolescent day treatment to increase access to suicide treatment and prevention services.

17. **Child Psychiatry Consultation Program** \$.5M - The Governor recommends increasing funding for the Child Psychiatry Consultation Program to expand the program statewide.
18. **Regional Crisis Centers** - Provide \$12.3 million GPR in fiscal year 2022-23 Support 2.0 FTE GPR human services program coordinator positions to develop and evaluate the centers on an ongoing basis. Establish up to two regional crisis centers, with each offering a crisis urgent care and observation center, a crisis stabilization facility and inpatient psychiatric beds, to improve the crisis response system, and reduce the need for long distance emergency detention transportation. Centers will be able to serve people of all ages from across the state and will provide support and clinical expertise to local mobile crisis units.

## **Department of Public Instruction (DPI)**

19. **Special Education Categorical Aid** - (\$296M first year, \$412M second year) The Governor recommends increasing the rate at which eligible special education costs are reimbursed to 45 percent in FY22 and 50 percent in FY23. The Governor also recommends changing the appropriation type from sum certain to sum sufficient to ensure school districts receive the percent reimbursement promised by the state.
20. **High-Cost Special Education Aid** - (\$1.7M first year, \$7.8M second year) The Governor recommends increasing the reimbursement rate for eligible program costs to 40 percent in FY22 and to 60 percent in FY23.
21. **Mental Health and Student Wellness Aid** - (\$22M first year, \$24M second year) The Governor recommends providing funding to expand the School Mental Health Categorical Aid Program to reimburse 10% of school expenditures for pupil support staff generally, rather than only for school districts with an increase in social worker expenditures.
22. **School-Based Mental Health Services Grants** - (\$3.5M per year) The Governor recommends providing additional funding to increase the number and size of grants provided. The Governor also recommends expanding the definition of mental health providers to allow more rural school districts and qualified organizations to access grants by partnering with independent providers or other organizations.
23. **School District General Aids and Revenue Limits** - The Governor's budget provides a significant general aid increase of over \$600 million over the biennium. Note, provision included updating state aid and revenue limit adjustments for county children with disabilities boards to count students that use the open enrollment program to attend school in a district other than their school district of residence.
24. **Special Education Transition Readiness Grant** - (\$0 first year, \$1.5M second year) The Governor recommends providing additional funding to help students with disabilities transition into the workforce and postsecondary education.

## **Department of Workforce Development**

25. **Family and Medical Leave** - The Governor recommends expanding current state law, which provides 12 weeks of family and medical leave, as follows: (a) applying the law to employers with at least 25 employees, instead of 50 employees; (b) permitting leave to be taken to care for a grandparent, grandchild or sibling with a serious health condition; (c) expanding the definition of "qualifying exigency" to include deployment of a spouse or child, and an unforeseen or unexpected closure of a school or child care facility; (d) expanding the definition of "serious health condition" to include medical quarantine to allow workers to take Family

and Medical Leave Act leave when under a medical quarantine, or caring for someone under quarantine, regardless of whether the person is exhibiting symptoms or not; (e) reducing the number of hours an employee is required to work before qualifying to 680 hours, instead of 1,000 hours; and (f) extending the statute of limitations for filing a complaint regarding law violations to 300 days, instead of 30 days.

26. **Project SEARCH** - The Governor recommends transferring \$250,000 GPR from the department's Wisconsin Fast Forward program to Project SEARCH to provide greater resources for young adults with disabilities.

## Department of Children and Families

27. **Internet Assistance Program** - Creating an Internet assistance program to aid low-income households in paying for monthly Internet subscriptions. The Governor also recommends providing \$20 million annually for the program, funded with \$10 million from GPR and \$10 million in TANF funding.
28. **Internet Assistance Program** - Creating an Internet assistance program to aid low-income households in paying for monthly Internet subscriptions. The Governor also recommends providing \$20 million annually for the program, funded with \$10 million from GPR and \$10 million in TANF funding. The Governor further recommends adding a 1.0 FTE position to support the program. See Item #3; and Public Service Commission, Item #5.

## Department of Revenue

29. **Caregiver Tax Credit** - The Governor recommends creating a nonrefundable individual income tax credit for qualified expenses incurred by a family caregiver to assist a qualified family member. For the purposes of the credit, a qualified family member must be at least 18 years of age, must require assistance with one or more daily living activities as certified by a physician, and must be the credit claimant's spouse or related by blood, marriage or adoption within the third degree of kinship. The credit is equal to 50 percent of qualified expenses in the taxable year and is limited to \$500 for most filers and \$250 for married-separate filers. The credit is subject to income limits that phase out the credit between \$75,000 and \$85,000 in income for single and head of household filers and \$150,000 and \$170,000 in income for married-joint filers. The credit first applies to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2020. The fiscal impact is an estimated decrease in tax revenue of \$100.4 million in FY22 and \$102.5 million in FY23.

## Department of Financial Institutions

30. **ABLE Accounts** - The department shall implement and administer an ABLE program, either directly or by entering into a formal or informal agreement with another state, or with an entity representing an alliance of states, to establish an ABLE program or administer ABLE program services for the residents of this state.: 1. Develop and implement an ABLE program in accordance with all requirements under section 529A of the Internal Revenue Code, and modify this ABLE program as necessary for participants in the ABLE program to qualify for the federal income tax benefits or treatment provided under section 529A of the Internal Revenue Code and rules adopted under section 529A. 2. Engage the services of vendors on a contractual basis for rendering professional and technical assistance and advice in developing marketing

plans and promotional materials to publicize the ABLE program. 3. Work with organizations with expertise in supporting people with disabilities and their families in administering the agreement and ensuring accessibility of the ABLE program for people with disabilities. 4. Take any other action necessary to implement and administer the ABLE program. (d) Information about ABLE accounts. The department shall include on its Internet site information concerning ABLE accounts.