



Aging & Disability Resource Center

OF DANE COUNTY

Connecting People With The Assistance They Need

February 19, 2015

Dear Senator Fred Risser:

On behalf of the Governing Board of the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Dane County, I am writing to alert you to a provision in the budget that will be harmful to ADRCs statewide, including Dane County, and the thousands of older people, people with disabilities, and their families that we serve each year. The Governor's budget proposal would eliminate ADRC Governing Boards, Long-term Care Advisory Councils, and would allow the state to contract with a private entity to provide some or all services presently provided by ADRCs. In other words, it would be possible to totally replace existing ADRCs, most of which are public agencies, with private companies.

The birth of ADRCs began in Wisconsin in the 1990s and has since spread to every state in the country. The ADRC of Dane County opened in November of 2012 and has provided almost 44,000 contacts with the community. The ADRC brings to the community a blend of public supports and community resources empowering customers to make informed choices regarding options available, taking into account a customer's private resources. The idea of "one stop shopping" to learn about all services that might be available to an older person and people with disabilities has resonated with ADRCs in every county in Wisconsin and every state in the U.S. In short, ADRCs have been a huge success story that had its beginnings in Wisconsin.

There are many other concerns in the Governor's budget beyond the ADRC proposals, including elimination of the IRIS (Include, Respect, I Self-Direct) program of self-directed care, and what appears to be a desire to turn Family Care and existing long-term care programs over to private insurance companies. Wisconsin's long-term care programs, including ADRCs, are not broken. Just the opposite is true; Wisconsin is among a few states that have successfully reformed its long-term care programs to reverse the institutional bias and to provide real consumer choices to frail older persons and people with disabilities. ADRCs are a major part of that reform and are a model for all other states.

Since ADRC's have been so successful based on a Wisconsin idea that is locally accountable, this proposal seems like a betrayal of that idea, and the intent of the program to assist local people to learn about local resources. In fact, we are at a loss to understand the reason and source of this change. We would appreciate your assistance in learning the reasons for it.

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We urge you to maintain ADRCs and related programs as they exist, instead of the Governor's proposals to "fix" them. We look forward to hearing back from you regarding our questions and concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Frazier'.

Thomas L. Frazier
Chair, Dane County ADRC Governing Board.

CC: Governor Scott Walker
Dane County Board of Supervisors
County Executive Joseph Parisi
Lynn Green, Director Dane County Human Services
Joint Committee on Finance