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**Over
60
Years of Service**

***Promoting Quality of Life for People with
Developmental and Related Disabilities***

Karen Timberlake, Secretary
Wisconsin Department of Health Services
P.O. Box 7850
Madison, WI 53707-7850

Dear Secretary Timberlake,

The Arc-Wisconsin Disability Association (The Arc-WI) continues to enjoy a strong working relationship with the Department of Health Services and the opportunities we have to serve people with developmental disabilities in the most effective manner.

For the past several years, The Arc-WI has played a very critical role in educating people about Family Care. Our organization has given over 200 presentations on Family Care to audiences that have included people with disabilities, guardians, family members, provider staff, county staff, ADRC staff, CMO staff and DHS staff. While our presentations have always included discussions of concerns our members have expressed about Family Care, our organization has continued to support efforts to meet the stated goals of Family Care: increased choices of long-term care services and providers, increased access to long-term care services, improved quality of long-term care services and providers and ensuring that Family Care is a sustainable program that can provide critical long-term care services in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

As Family Care has expanded, so has the number of people that have contacted our organization to express concerns and questions about Family Care. In response to these concerns and questions, The Arc-Wisconsin hosted two conference calls that provided people with the opportunities to share their experiences about Family Care with others and to discuss ways to ensure that Family Care is in the position to meet its stated goals.

In late April, The Arc-WI hosted a conference call in which over 200 people participated. Much of what was expressed during that call reflects what The Arc-WI has experienced with Family Care over the past decade. Based on this knowledge, we have come up with the following list of primary concerns and questions related to Family Care. We would be grateful for your response to them.

- It is becoming increasingly obvious that there is a lack of adequate funding to support a fully-implemented Family Care program. What are the plans DHS has to secure adequate resources to support existing Family Care programs, as well as expansion? Does DHS have any contingency plans to address the critical needs of Family Care members if there is not an adequate level of funding?

Nichole Hunkins, President
John Beisbier, Treasurer

Jayn Wittenmyer, Vice-President
Jim Hoegemeier, Executive Director

Kay Hurkmans, Secretary



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- There continues to be significant gaps in communication at all levels of Family Care. Family Care participants, guardians and providers often have very little notice of any proposed changes to services. People with seemingly basic questions are often “bounced” between CMO staff and ADRC staff. CMO staff have mentioned that there is a lack of clarity from what DHS expects from CMOs. This lack of communication has resulted in a tremendous lack of consistency in the levels and quality of services provided in the various Family Care regions. Is DHS developing a comprehensive plan to address these ongoing gaps in communication?
- One of the statutory requirements of Family Care, according to Section 977 of 2007 Wisconsin Act 20 related to 46.2825, is the development of regional long-term care councils. In spite of Family Care now being available or implemented in most of the state, there has been minimal support for the development of the required regional long-term care councils. How does DHS plan to address this issue?

Our intent with these questions is to continue our working relationship with DHS and to ensure that people in Wisconsin receive the long-term care services they need when they need them. Our intent is not to “make a statement”. We do not plan to post this letter or any response on our website. However, since much of what we have learned has come from members of local Arc chapters in Wisconsin (they have provided input into this letter), we will share this letter, as well as any response, with local Arc chapters.

We look forward to your timely response to our questions, as well as the continued opportunities to work together to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities.

Sincerely,



Nichole Hunkins, President



Jim Hoegemeier, Executive Director