

# Caregiver Crisis

## Introduction

There is ample evidence that the caregiver crisis in Wisconsin's long-term care system has gotten worse in recent years, especially in rural areas. The stress on family caregivers and providers has reached the breaking point. According to a recent survey by the Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Organizations, and other authoritative sources:

- Families provide 80% of the care for children and adults with disabilities and older adults.
- 60% of these families provide more than 40 hours of caregiving in a week, the equivalent of a full-time job.
- Half of the families surveyed cannot find sufficient workers to provide the level of care they need.
- Half of the families say that without the care from family members, their loved one would need to be placed in a residential facility.
- Nearly 80% of people caring for an adult family member face regular out-of-pocket costs resulting in average annual spending of over \$7000.
- In a LTC system which has statutory guarantees that supposedly eliminate waiting lists, we now have a new kind of waiting list in Wisconsin: more and more people waiting to get services from provider agencies which have diminished capacity due to the caregiver crisis.
- There's not enough funding and not enough workers (at current wage rates) to enable provider agencies to expand in order to meet the increased demand for their services.
- The caregiver crisis has had a major detrimental impact on the employment of family caregivers. 2/3 of family caregivers have decreased their paid employment hours outside the home or have left their jobs.

**Unless Wisconsin's caregiver landscape changes dramatically in the near future, these trends are likely to continue in to get worse.**

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<sup>1</sup> This version is mostly organized in terms of bullets under each heading. After we agree on the points we want to make, a polished proposal for the legislature would more likely incorporate those bullets into a narrative.