



May 2, 2023

Senator Howard Marklein
 Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Finance
 Wisconsin State Legislature
 PO Box 7882
 Madison, WI, 53707

Representative Mark Born
 Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Finance
 Wisconsin State Legislature
 PO Box 8952
 Madison, WI 53708

Re: Full funding for Community Support Programs (CSP)

Dear Chairman Marklein, Chairman Born and Members of the Joint Committee on Finance:

The undersigned organizations, representing mental health advocates, county human service agencies and providers across Wisconsin’s 72 counties, are committed to strengthening mental health and substance use services for children and adults throughout Wisconsin. Evidence-based practices, based on the Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) model, are essential to well-being and recovery for residents with serious mental illness. Community Support Programs (CSP) have historically delivered these services in Wisconsin. Outcomes for people with the most serious mental illnesses enrolled in CSP, include improved engagement in treatment, more successful outcomes, reduced hospitalization, reduced justice system involvement, independent living, and higher employment.

The 2023-25 Executive Budget proposes full funding for Community Support Programs by authorizing \$40,755,600 over the next biennium. These funds would cover the non-federal share

of Medicaid for CSP services delivered by county human service agencies. The current requirement that counties fund all costs not reimbursed by federal Medicaid dollars, has led to inequities across the state, delays in CSP enrollment, a decrease in CSP participants. Meanwhile, psychiatric emergencies lead to increasing demands on hospital emergency departments, on transportation by law enforcement and on Winnebago Mental Health Institute. Wisconsin now uses state hospitals at 2.5 times the national rate.¹

By contrast, removing financial disincentives would open the way for counties to strengthen Community Support Programs to meet the fidelity standards of Wisconsin's world renown, well-researched Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) model. Community Support Programs provide in-depth assessment and treatment planning, medication management, individual, family and group therapy, crisis management and case management. CSP also advances employment and independent living using proven methods. Community Support Programs readily respond to a participant's needs and provide services where the person resides to facilitate positive relationships with family, friends, and the community at large.

The Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) program serves youth and adults who need coordinated care, but the program is not designed to serve people with serious mental illness. In 2014, the non-federal share of CCS was fully funded by the state. While persons with serious mental illness can receive some services under CCS, their full needs can only be met under CSP. Full funding of CSP would expand the continuum to provide mental health services more effectively for people with higher level needs.

The potential of Community Support Programs will only be realized when counties receive full funding for CSP, thereby incentivizing fidelity to ACT. We believe the investment proposed in the Executive Budget is critical to expand the capacity of Community Support Programs and provide the recognized standard of care for people with serious mental illness, reducing overutilization of emergency, hospital, and justice system resources. We urge you to fully fund this proposal in the 2023-25 budget bill to be enacted by the Wisconsin Legislature.

Sincerely,

Ashland County Health & Human Services

Barron County Department of Health & Human Services

Burnett County Department of Health & Human Services

Clark County Community Services

Crawford County Health & Human Services

Dane County Department of Human Services

Disability Rights Wisconsin (DRW)

Dunn County Human Services

¹ Wisconsin 2021 Mental Health National Outcome Measures (NOMS): SAMHSA Uniform Reporting System: <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/reports/rpt39398/Wisconsin.pdf>

Florence County Human Services
Jefferson County Human Services
Journey Mental Health Center
The Human Service Center of Forest, Oneida, and Vilas Counties
Inclusa, Inc.
Kenosha County Division of Aging, Disability and Behavioral Health Services
Kenosha Human Development Services, Inc.
League of Women Voters of Wisconsin (LWVWI)
Manitowoc County Human Services Department
Mental Health America of Wisconsin (MHA)
Mental Health Alliance of People Who Are Deaf/Hard of Hearing/DeafBlind
Milwaukee Center for Independence
Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services, Behavioral Health Services
Milwaukee Mental Health Task Force
National Alliance on Mental Illness, NAMI Wisconsin, and Local Affiliates
National Association of Social Workers (NASW), Wisconsin Chapter
Ozaukee County Human Services
Pierce County Department of Human Services
Price County Health and Human Services
Psychological Consultation, SC
Rock County Human Services Department
Sauk County Department of Human Services
Waukesha County, Health & Human Services Department
Wisconsin Association of Family & Children's Agencies (WAFCA)
Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association (WCPA)
Wisconsin Community Services (WCS)
Wisconsin County Human Service Association (WCHSA)
Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA)
Wisconsin Psychiatric Association (WPA)