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# Annual Report for State Fiscal Year 2020

(July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020)

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**COUNCIL ON  
PHYSICAL DISABILITIES**

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**Wisconsin Council on Physical Disabilities**

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## About the Council

The Wisconsin Council on Physical Disabilities (Council) was created by the Wisconsin State Legislature in 1989 to address the needs of people with physical disabilities. The combined efforts of consumers, advocates, and legislators led to Wisconsin State Statute §46.29, establishing the 14-member Council, and assigning the Council the following responsibilities:

- Develop, approve, and continue modification of a state plan for people with physical disabilities.
- Advise and make recommendations to state agencies on funding, programs, policies, and legislation that impact people with physical disabilities.
- Promote public awareness about the abilities of and barriers to people with physical disabilities.
- Encourage the development of programs and policies that prevent physical disabilities.
- Submit recommendations in an annual report to the state legislature on imposed ordinances related to accessible parking and motor vehicle use by people with disabilities (Wis. Stat. § 346.50 (3m)).
- Consider all questions and matters concerning people with physical disabilities arising within the Council or brought to the Council for review.
- Form committees for consideration of policies or programs for people with physical disabilities.
- Meet at least four times annually.

***The Council envisions a world where all people with physical disabilities have access to the same opportunities and life choices as any other Wisconsin resident.***

To achieve this vision, the Council promotes programs and policies that enable people with physical disabilities to:

- Be included and integrated in their communities.
- Make their own life choices.
- Enter, re-enter, or remain in the workforce to the maximum of their capacity.
- Participate in improving and evaluating services.
- Utilize beneficial assistive technology.
- Access transportation and parking.
- Access affordable housing that is visitable.

To learn more about the Council, please visit our [website](https://dhs.wisconsin.gov/cpd) (dhs.wisconsin.gov/cpd).

The Council is administratively attached to the Department of Health Services.

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## The Council Welcomes Your Input

**Wisconsin Council on Physical Disabilities**

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**Phone: 608-266-5364**

**Website: [dhs.wisconsin.gov/cpd](https://dhs.wisconsin.gov/cpd)**

**Facebook:**

**<https://www.facebook.com/Wisconsin-Council-on-Physical-Disabilities-1890634407878497>**

In order for the Council to accomplish its goals and achieve its vision, it is necessary to hear from people with physical disabilities and other concerned individuals. The Council values and relies on input from the public on programs and policies that impact people with physical disabilities. Write, email, or call with your concerns, opinions, or suggestions to the Council. Individuals are also encouraged to attend Council meetings, as all meetings are open to members of the public. Additionally, a portion of every meeting agenda is set aside to receive public comment. Contact the Council for details.

The Council will carefully consider the problems people cite, the laws people feel need to be changed, and suggestions people have to make state programs more effective for people with physical disabilities.

The Council is administratively attached to the Department of Health Services.

To learn more about the Council, please visit our [website](https://dhs.wisconsin.gov/cpd) (dhs.wisconsin.gov/cpd).

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## Council Year-End Summary

The Wisconsin Council on Physical Disabilities worked on the following major initiatives during State Fiscal Year 2020 (July 1, 2019–June 30, 2020).

- Policy: Electronic Visit Verification
- Project: Emergency Preparedness Toolkit Outreach
- Project: Recipient of the Dan Johnson Advocacy Award
- Project: Council By-laws Revision

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## Policy: Electronic Visit Verification

The [21st Century Cures Act](#) mandates that states implement electronic visit verification (EVV) for all Medicaid- funded personal care services (dressing, bathing, bathroom assistance, etc.), home health services, and home care services (cleaning, laundry, transportation, etc.). A soft launch of the program began on November 2, 2020. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, a hard launch has been delayed.

Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) established the EVV forum and workgroup to determine a timeline for the implementation of the program. EVV ensures that necessary services are being performed by using a cell phone application, landline, or EVV digital device to ensure that the caregiver is at a client's location to perform the assigned tasks. A location is logged at the point in time when the application is used, but not the entire visit to ensure privacy. The caregiver accesses the application or calls when the visit is completed. Concerned that the program could have privacy issues for people with disabilities, a member of the Physical Disabilities Council was appointed to the EVV forum and workgroup.

Meetings have been held once a month and public forums have been scheduled quarterly to update stakeholders on the progress of EVV implementation.

The goals of the forum are to:

- Maintain services provided, including community integration.
- Support provider selection.
- Keep an individual's choice worker.
- Ensure needed care is delivered.
- Ensure data is secure and compliant with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

The Council will continue to monitor EVV, its implementation, and any barriers this may create for people with disabilities in accessing personal care services and home health services.

### Emergency Preparedness Toolkit Outreach Statistics 2020

- Trained over 144 people statewide on the toolkit.
- Distributed 100 toolkits and Go Bags statewide.
- Distributed 600 copies of the toolkit's Visual Communications Tool.
- Distributed 250 medical wallet cards.
- 50 Disability Checklists and General Checklists.

## Project: Emergency Preparedness Toolkit Outreach

The Wisconsin Council on Physical Disabilities issued the third edition of the “Be Prepared, Have a Plan: Emergency Preparedness Toolkit for People with Disabilities.” The toolkit serves as a resource for people with disabilities to proactively prepare for emergencies and natural disasters. It has proven to be a resource for people with disabilities, family members, caregivers, first responders, emergency managers, homecare organizations, fire and police departments, and for anyone seeking a plan for emergency preparedness. The toolkit includes tips, checklists, forms, medical emergency wallet card, visual communications tool, and other resources. The

toolkit and other resources are available on the [Council's website](https://dhs.wisconsin.gov/cpd/toolkit.htm) (dhs.wisconsin.gov/cpd/toolkit.htm).

During the pandemic, the Council has conducted toolkit outreach through its Facebook page and website. The Council also conducted online trainings to stakeholders who can benefit from the information in the toolkit.

To date, the Council has disseminated 1,695 emergency preparedness toolkits and conducted 33 toolkit presentations to a total of 1,023 individuals throughout Wisconsin.

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## Project: Recipient of the Dan Johnson Advocacy Award



The Council was pleased and honored to announce John Nousaine was the first recipient of the Dan Johnson Advocacy Award. The award ceremony took place on October 24, 2019 at the Sheraton Hotel in Madison.

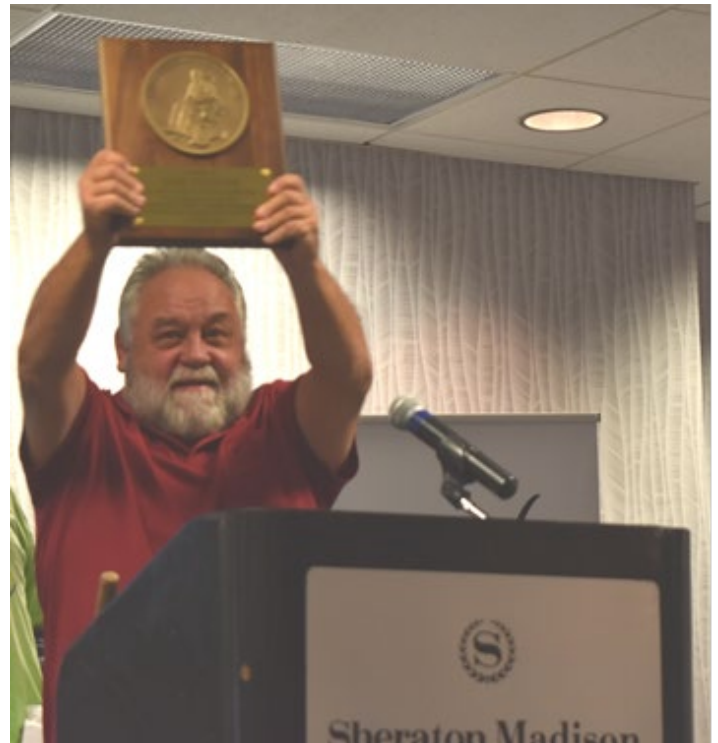
The Dan Johnson Advocacy Award is aimed at recognizing excellence in advocacy and public policy change for people with physical disabilities, rather than disability advocacy. To be selected, a nominated individual must be a person with a physical disability who advocates for people with physical disabilities and who has had a positive impact on federal or state legislation, public policy, or programs that affect people with disabilities in Wisconsin.

John Nousaine was 24 years old when he lost his leg in a construction accident. That event changed the course of his life. "As a white male it was my welcoming into the world of discrimination," he said. "I never really realized that I was being judged just based on one single characteristic of my life until I started really trying to find a good job."

That "good job" came when he was hired to manage the fledgling independent living program run by Catholic Charities in Superior, Wisconsin. During his time in Superior, he worked to make North Country Independent Living a strong, free-standing non-profit with a simple mission, full inclusion for people with disabilities. He surrounded himself with other people with disabilities as staff and

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board members to ensure North Country continues the work of true independence where individuals with disabilities participate fully and society adapts as well.



When serving on the Governor appointed Independent Living Council of Wisconsin (ILCW) as the Independent Living representative he was informed he had to be resident of Wisconsin. As a result, John sold his home in Minnesota to serve on ILCW. This demonstrates John's commitment to the Independent Living (IL) movement and IL philosophy.

After several decades as a local, state, and national advocate for independence and independent living, he is keeping his options open and having some much needed relaxation in the form of fishing, diving, and skiing.

While the criteria for this award were stringent, the members of CPD feel they have found a recipient who exemplifies advocacy through action, just as Dan Johnson did. John makes everyone he meets feel enthusiastic and hopeful for their future. He encourages everyone to imagine their best self and then make a plan to become that person. North Country Independent Living, the state, and the nation have benefitted from the people John has encouraged to take part in their communities and be the change that is needed.

To learn more about the award, visit the [Council's website](https://dhs.wisconsin.gov/cpd/dj-award.htm) (dhs.wisconsin.gov/cpd/dj-award.htm).



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## **Project: Council By-laws Revision**

The Council began a review of its by-laws early in the fiscal year. Many years had passed since a formal review of the by-laws had been conducted. The Council's by-laws were enacted in 1991, but had not been amended since 2003. The By-laws Committee spent the majority of its time reorganizing and the document and simplifying the language so the by-laws would be easy to understand. Due to changes at the state level, the Council took strides to adjust wording to bring the document in line with both legislation and the way the Council does business. Some outdated word usage was addressed as well as an effort to keep the document in line with the state statute which established the Council.

The By-laws Committee was appointed and held meetings, according to established procedures and guidelines established by the state's open meeting law. There were several drafts and revisions; as the group met monthly. During this time the COVID-19 pandemic struck, and all meetings were held remotely for the safety of all Council members involved. This situation also reminded the Council that changes would need to be incorporated that take into account all of the ramifications of doing Council business virtually.

The final draft of the Council's By-laws received approval by the full Council at the October 22, 2020 CPD Quarterly Meeting.

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## **Looking Forward**

The Council is hopeful the projects and policies addressed it worked on during State Fiscal Year 2020 will result in increased quality of life and opportunities for people with physical disabilities in Wisconsin. The Council looks forward to continuing to address issues that will allow people with disabilities to have the same opportunities and life choices as every Wisconsin resident. If you would like to work with the Council on projects, policies, or legislation, please contact us.

## Council Members and Liaisons – State Fiscal Year 2020

Council Member* Name	Location/County	Council Role
Ben Barrett	Trego, WI/Washburn County	Council Chairperson/Person with a Physical Disability
Jason Ostrowski	Waukesha, WI/Waukesha County	Council Vice-Chairperson/Person with a Physical Disability
Roberto Escamilla II	Hayward, WI/Sawyer County	Employment and Health Committee Chair/Person with a Physical Disability
Gabriel Schlieve	Eau Claire, WI/Eau Claire County	Person with a Physical Disability
Dr. Noah Hershkowitz	Madison, WI/Dane County	Person with a Physical Disability
Karen Secor	Montreal, WI/Iron County	Emergency Preparedness Committee Chair/Public Member
Charles Vandenplas	Shawano, WI/Shawano County	Person with a Physical Disability
Nicole Herda	Two Rivers, WI/Manitowoc County	Parent of a Person with a Physical Disability
Jackie Gordon	New Richmond, WI/St. Croix County	Council Secretary/Relative of a Person with a Physical Disability
Kathy Johnson	Madison, WI/Dane County	Relative of a Person with a Physical Disability

Liaison Member Name	Agency	Council Role
Jody Ullman	Wisconsin Office of the Commissioner of Insurance	Liaison Member
Heather Bruemmer	Wisconsin Board on Aging and Long-Term Care	Liaison Member
Eva Kubinski	Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction	Liaison Member
Taqwanya Smith	Wisconsin Department of Transportation	Liaison Member
Sarah Lincoln	Division of Vocation Rehabilitation, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development	Liaison Member
Nicholas Zouski	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource	Liaison Member
Eric Cormany	Wisconsin Office of the Commissioner of Insurance	Liaison Member

The Council on Physical Disabilities had three member vacancies during State Fiscal Year 2020.