

# GOVERNOR EVERS' 2021-23 BIENNIAL BUDGET

## Supporting Wisconsin's Direct Care Workers

Wisconsin's direct care workforce (including personal care workers, home health aides, and certified nursing assistants) provides vital services to thousands of older adults and people with disabilities across our state. The Governor recognized the challenges facing the direct care workforce by creating the Task Force on Caregiving in 2019. The budget advances reforms developed by the Task Force and other proposals to support direct care workers and those that they serve.

### NURSING HOME FUNDING INCREASE (\$241 MILLION)

Current Medicaid rates cover about 72% of the cost of care for residents in nursing homes. By increasing reimbursement rates, Medicaid will cover an estimated 86% of the cost of resident care, making rates consistent with those for other residential care, such as rehabilitation hospitals.

### PERSONAL CARE SERVICES (\$77.8 MILLION)

Personal care service agencies make it possible for people to live in their own homes by providing assistance with activities of daily living. By increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates for direct care costs, agencies will be able to more effectively recruit, and retain staff.

### FAMILY CARE DIRECT CARE INVESTMENT (\$77.8 MILLION)

MCOs (managed care organizations) contract with health care providers to deliver long-term care services in Wisconsin's Medicaid program by increasing funding supplements to MCOs, the provider networks will be able to increase wages, bonuses, and paid time off for direct care workers. These benefits will reduce turnover, making it easier for providers to retain staff, and improve care.

### HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED WAIVER PROGRAMS RATE BANDS

Rate bands can improve consistency and transparency for reimbursement for MCOs providing home and community based services. DHS will develop a statewide rate band proposal for home and community based long-term care supports, for implementation in the 2023-25 biennium.

### DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

The direct care workforce is made up of many different professions and settings, each with unique requirements and standards. DHS will develop a pilot program to provide training on standards of practice and create a "career ladder" for potential nurse aide certification.

### INCOME DISREGARD FOR CHILD CARE SUBSIDY ELIGIBILITY

The Wisconsin Shares program at the Department of Children and Families helps working families afford child care. The Governor's budget makes it easier for direct care workers to qualify for these subsidies by letting them disregard a portion of their income when applying.

### OTHER PROVISIONS

The budget makes other key investments in Wisconsin's workforce, including \$10 million for training for individuals and businesses affected by the pandemic, \$5 million to address the nurse educator shortage, and improvements to broadband access and affordability. The Governor also expands the Earned Income Tax Credit, a change that can improve health and economic wellbeing.

**For more information on all of Governor Evers' proposed investments in Wisconsin's health, visit [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/budget](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/budget)**