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Family Voices Thanks Governor Evers for Supporting Children with Disabilities and Their Families

Family Voices of Wisconsin is pleased to see the Governor's proposed investment in the long-term health and wellness of children with disabilities and their families.

Specifically, Family Voices is very supportive of the proposal to ensure that any child who is eligible for the Children's Long-Term Supports (CLTS) program will no longer have to wait for funding. Children with disabilities are the only Medicaid eligible group who are waiting for services due to a lack of funding. This proposal is consistent with legislative intent in the last budget to serve eligible children and the commitment to serve all eligible adults with long-term support needs.

We are also very pleased to see a \$4.5 million investment in supporting families who have children with disabilities by improving access to information, assistance and advocacy resources and eligibility determination for the children's long-term supports programs including Katie Beckett Medicaid, the CLTS program and the Children's Community Options Program. This proposal creates access to child disability resource specialists to help families find information, assist with navigating resources, supports, benefits and advocacy services. Wisconsin families struggle with finding accurate information as they navigate multiple systems in support of their children. This lack of navigation supports can impact family stress, income and employment and opportunities for child development and future success.

Family Voices applauds the Governor's proposed investments in improving access to dental care, mental and behavioral health services, increases to the personal care reimbursement rate and protections for those with preexisting conditions. We support access to health care with the Medicaid expansion to those living in poverty. This is particularly helpful in addressing the direct care workforce crisis by providing basic healthcare to those who support people with disabilities and elders who need assistance.

Family Voices of Wisconsin is a statewide network of families who have children and youth with disabilities and/or special health care needs. We work statewide to help families navigate supports and services and advocate for improving systems and policies that assure the health and well-being of children with disabilities and their families.