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#### SURVIVAL COALITION SUPPORTS DISABILITY PRIORITIES IN GOVERNOR'S BUDGET

(MADISON) -- The Survival Coalition of more than 30 disability organizations recognizes the significant focus on disability issues outlined in Governor Tony Evers' proposed 2019-2021 biennial budget, addressing multiple issues that can improve the lives of people with disabilities and their families statewide.

Survival Coalition co-chairs Beth Swedeen, Kristin Kerschensteiner and Lisa Pugh said Survival Coalition membership strongly supports the following significant investments in Wisconsinites with disabilities listed below, pointing out that appropriate public supports invested in people with disabilities lead to improved health outcomes, higher employment rates and overall reduction in crisis spending.

Survival Coalition applauds the following proposals in the Governor's budget:

- An increase of \$600 million for special education funding to end a decade long of no reimbursement increases, bringing the state's commitment to 30% in the first year and to 60% in the second year;
- An investment in mental health services of over \$31 million for services in school, additional pupil service staff and training; increase for the high cost needs to a 100% reimbursement;
- Increases for transition related services to increase employment for students with disabilities. Also included in the budget is a repeal of the special needs voucher scholarship program and a return to more equitable funding for current students which more closely matches other investments for education in the state.
- Increased accountability required of private schools participating in the special needs scholarship program to increase protections for students with disabilities.
- A commitment to Medicaid expansion to cover an additional 82,000 Wisconsinites, including many who are caregivers, have a disability, or are waiting for disability determination.

- Permanent elimination of waiting lists for the Children’s Long Term Supports waiver program, and improvements to intake and screening functions as well as supports for families navigating the system.
- Codification of the IRIS long term care waiver program in the statutes.
- Increase of \$29 million to the Family Care direct care and services capitated and 1.5 % rate increase to existing funding designed to boost bonuses or wages of direct care workers.
- Investment in addressing social determinants of health—including stable housing, nutrition, and transportation—of Medicaid recipients, which has been demonstrated to improve health outcomes.
- A dental care improvement package to increase access statewide, including an additional \$5 million to reimburse dental providers who serve Medicaid recipients, including those with disabilities.
- Commitment to guarantee health insurance for individuals with pre-existing conditions in the insurance marketplace.
- Inclusion of paid family leave that supports working family caregivers.
- A \$69 million investment in community-based mental health, behavioral health and psychiatrist services, including movement of crisis mental health service costs to the state, rather than county funding.
- Funding to advance all the recommendations of the Interagency Council on Homelessness to help increase the State’s investment in the 21,000 people experiencing homelessness. A high percentage are people struggling with mental illness.
- Investment at Winnebago Mental Health to address staffing concerns and create a safer environment for patients.
- Returning 17-year-olds to juvenile court with additional supports to address mental health, education and other supports, including \$5 million for counties to provide programming.
- Closing Lincoln Hills and Cooper Lake with additional funding to move youth to smaller, community-based facilities that use evidence-based programs.
- \$4 million to expand Opening Avenues to Reentry Success (OARS) program statewide.
- \$6 million in Elderly and Disabled transportation aids and \$22 million in increases to local transit systems statewide that people with disabilities rely on.

The Survival Coalition has a 30-year history of bipartisan work with the Governor and Legislature on issues that improve the lives of people living with disability and their families. Survival co-chairs said they look forward to working with both in the weeks ahead.