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Contact: John Sauer, President/CEO
608.255.7060; jsauer@leadingagewi.org

LeadingAge Wisconsin Applauds Legislature's Investment in Medicaid Long-Term Care

(Madison, WI) LeadingAge Wisconsin voices its strong support for the actions taken this week by the State Legislature in approving a budget that makes significant investments in long-term care (LTC) programs and services for skilled nursing facilities and Family Care providers.

The budget passed by the State Legislature provides \$233.7 million in State funding for long-term care as part of the 2019-21 State budget bill. For facility-based providers, that represents a \$154 million increase in funding to support increased Medicaid reimbursement rates for nursing home and Family Care providers.

"The State Assembly and State Senate fully recognized the need to target State resources to address the long-term care workforce challenges and to improve access to much-needed long-term care and services in the State," said John Sauer, LeadingAge Wisconsin President/CEO.

Wisconsin long-term care providers continue to experience high levels of caregiver vacancy rates, with a recent survey finding that 1 in 5 caregiver positions remains vacant. Low Medicaid reimbursement rates, the ability to staff facilities, and access issues are some of the major challenges facing long-term care providers. These challenges have contributed to the alarming number of nursing facility closures that have occurred in the last year.

"This significant two-year investment will go a long way toward addressing historically inadequate Medicaid rates that have contributed to nursing facility closures and challenges in recruiting and retaining high quality caregivers," Sauer said. Providers across the long-term care continuum thank the Legislators for their actions and the Governor for his support in addressing the direct care workforce challenges. "The people who provide daily care and services for our State's elderly and persons with a disability are especially appreciative of these efforts, and urge the Governor to take swift action on the State budget to enable the funding increases to reach the care and service providers as quickly as possible."

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LeadingAge Wisconsin is a non-profit association comprised of more than 200 mission-driven member organizations, including nursing facilities, facilities for the developmentally disabled, independent and assisted living facilities, and community service agencies. Statewide, LeadingAge Wisconsin members employ over 38,000 people who provide compassionate care to more than 48,000 individuals daily.