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Governor Evers' Task Force on Caregiving Holds First Meeting in Milwaukee

The 29-member group has goals to increase caregiver workforce, improve conditions for direct care workers, and provide support for family caregivers

Today the Governor kicked off the first meeting of the Caregivers Task force at the 27th Street Job Center in Milwaukee. The task force was formed as part of [Executive Order #11 (link is external)](https://evers.wi.gov/Pages/Newsroom/Executive%20Orders/E.O%2011%20Relating%20to%20the%20Creation%20of%20the%20Governor%27s%20Task%20Force%20on%20Caregiving.pdf) issued by the governor in February. The group, co-chaired by Todd Costello, the Executive Director of Community Living Alliance, and Lisa Pugh, Executive Director of Arc Wisconsin, is looking for ways to attract and retain a strong direct care workforce, provide greater access to care, and improve the quality of caregiving in the state.

“The members of my task force on caregiving share my belief that we have work to do to support the important work caregivers are doing across our state. We need to make sure that we are doing all we can to strengthen our direct care system and getting caregivers the resources they need so folks can live and age with dignity and respect,” said Governor Evers.

One of the key areas of support that the task force is undertaking is assessing the compensation and benefits for direct care workers, including proposals to make their healthcare more affordable.

“It’s ironic that the people who give their hearts and their time to caring for our loved ones should have a tough time getting affordable healthcare coverage for themselves. Governor Evers and I share the goal of everyone in our state having high-quality, affordable health coverage, and I am glad that the task force will explore this as part of its broader effort to better support direct care workers,” said DHS Secretary-designee Andrea Palm.

To make it easier for those who need care to find the right person to provide it, the task force is also charged with establishing one or more registries of home care providers, as well as developing a plan to provide referral or matching services for people in need.

“Direct care is about more than helping with day-to-day personal tasks. Caregivers can be a touchstone for a person who would otherwise be isolated”, said Task Force Co-Chair Todd Costello. “A person can’t be matched to the right caregiver if they don’t know where to start.”

It’s estimated that there are over a half million family caregivers in Wisconsin, and the task force will work to find solutions to make sure they have the supports they need.

“We applaud the hundreds of thousands of Wisconsin families who take it upon themselves to care for a loved one with a disability or who is aging, but we also know there are challenges, as well as rewards, and we want those family caregivers to have a chance for respite, and other supports, too”, said Task Force Co-Chair Lisa Pugh.

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) and Department of Workforce Development (DWD) are providing assistance to the task force. Members also include legislators, a caregiving recipient, a caregiver, an employer of direct care workers, and a representative from an organization that provides respite services.