



Coalition
of
Wisconsin
Aging Groups



WISCONSIN COALITION FOR ADVOCACY

TO: Joint Committee on Finance Members

FROM: Tom Frazier – Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups
Gail Sumi – AARP Wisconsin
Lynn Breedlove – Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy
Michael Blumenfeld – Wisconsin Jewish Conference
Jennifer Ondrejka – Survival Coalition

DATE: April 25, 2005

SUBJECT: Elderly and Disabled Transportation Aids

On behalf of aging and disability coalitions*, we urge your approval of the Governor's proposed increase in the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Aids program (i.e., Option A.1., LFB Paper #727).

- ◆ Current funding for Elderly and Disabled Transportation Aids only serves 10% of the people that are eligible for this program.
- ◆ Current program funding is \$8.37 million annually which is distributed to all 72 counties under the 85.21 program. Funds are allocated based on the population of the elderly and disabled within the county. Smaller counties receive a base amount. These funds are the backbone of their programs.
- ◆ The Governor's budget proposes a \$2 million increase in each year of the budget for a total of \$6 million more. This would be the first significant increase in the program's funding in over a decade.
- ◆ Rural counties are facing the biggest challenge.
- ◆ Transportation to employment is limited or nonexistent.

While our organizations support improved coordination, we do not believe the increased funding should be delayed because of the newness and potential startup problems associated with implementing the new transportation broker initiative.

This is a very high priority issue for older persons and people with disabilities. It doesn't make any difference how good community programs and services are if people do not have transportation to get to them.

Again, we urge your Approval of Option A.1. Thank you.

* - The Elderly and Disabled Transportation includes AARP Wisconsin, Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups, Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Groups, Wisconsin Association of Taxicab Owners, Wisconsin Jewish Conference, Wisconsin Rural and Para transit Providers Association, Wisconsin Urban Rural Transportation Association and 1000 Friends of Wisconsin.