



SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

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WAITING LISTS CONTINUE TO GROW

(MADISON, May 15, 2001) The Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities announced today the results of its annual county data study that shows that waiting lists for people with developmental disabilities continues to grow by 10 percent per year. To eliminate the waiting lists now would require more than \$77 million in the state budget.

The number of people with developmental disabilities waiting for services as of the end of 1997 was over 5,200, in 1998 it was over 5,600 and now that number as of the end of 1999 is over 6,200. That number is projected to increase to over 6,800 when this data is again compiled a year from now.

The data further shows what counties have known for sometime; the costs to provide these services have been gradually shifting from the state to county government. Since 1998, counties have added nearly \$6 million to developmental disabilities service budgets while state community aid funds to counties, the Family Support Program and the daily rates for Community Integration Program participants have remained stagnant. Consistent increases in state funding for these services have stopped. Counties are left to fund much of the growth in community services.

“This data shows that children, adults and families are waiting for services, without any relief in sight,” said Jim Strachota, chair of the Council. He further added, “The State of Wisconsin needs to recognize their responsibility to fund and support community-based services.”

The Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities is required by state statute to compile comprehensive county and statewide data on an annual basis. This data is used to advise the governor, the legislature and other decision-makers about the status of services for people with developmental disabilities in Wisconsin. The most recent data compilation shows that the situation for people with developmental disabilities in Wisconsin is getting worse, not better.

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