



State of Wisconsin
2025 - 2026 LEGISLATURE

LRB-0735/1

JPC:skw

2025 ASSEMBLY BILL 92

February 28, 2025 - Introduced by Representatives TITTL, WITTKE, TUSLER, ANDERSON, ARNEY, BRILL, CLANCY, DITTRICH, DUCHOW, MADISON, MURSAU, NEUBAUER, O'CONNOR, PHELPS, SINICKI, SPIROS, SUBECK, SUMMERFIELD and UDELL, cosponsored by Senators WANGGAARD, CARPENTER, HABUSH SINYKIN, JAMES, RATCLIFF, SPREITZER, TOMCZYK and LARSON. Referred to Committee on Colleges and Universities.

1 **AN ACT** *to create* 15.197 (20), 20.435 (1) (cd) and 255.45 of the statutes;
2 **relating to:** spinal cord injury research grants and symposia and making an
3 appropriation.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill requires the Department of Health Services to establish a program to award grants to persons in this state for research into spinal cord injuries. The grants must support research into new and innovative treatments and rehabilitative efforts for the functional improvement of individuals with spinal cord injuries. Research topics may include pharmaceutical, medical device, brain stimulus, and rehabilitative approaches and techniques. DHS must make annual reports to the legislature about the grants. The bill specifies that no more than 8 percent of any grant award may be used for administrative or indirect costs and expenses.

The bill also requires DHS to appoint a Spinal Cord Injury Council with one member representing the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health who is a researcher specializing in spinal cord injuries, one member representing Marquette University who is a researcher specializing in spinal cord injuries, one member representing the Medical College of Wisconsin who is an expert in spinal cord injuries, and the following members: 1) a person with a spinal cord injury; 2) a family member of a person with a spinal cord injury; 3) a veteran

ASSEMBLY BILL 92**SECTION 1**

with a spinal cord injury; 4) a physician specializing in the treatment of spinal cord injuries; 5) a neurosurgery researcher; and 6) a researcher employed by the federal Veterans Health Administration of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. If DHS is unable to appoint any of the foregoing members, the bill allows DHS to appoint, in lieu of that member, a member representing the general public. Members of the council have two-year terms. The bill requires the council to develop criteria for DHS to evaluate and award grants, review and make recommendations on grant applications, and perform other duties specified by DHS. Council members must make written disclosures of financial interests in organizations that the council recommends for grants.

Finally, the bill allows DHS, with the permission of the council, to hold symposia, not more than once every two years, for grant recipients to present findings of research supported by the grants.

For further information see the state fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

1 **SECTION 1.** 15.197 (20) of the statutes is created to read:

2 **15.197 (20) SPINAL CORD INJURY COUNCIL.** (a) There is created in the
3 department of health services a spinal cord injury council that, except as provided
4 in par. (b), consists of the following members appointed by the department for 2-
5 year terms:

6 1. One member representing the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine
7 and Public Health who is a researcher specializing in spinal cord injuries.

8 2. One member representing Marquette University who is a researcher
9 specializing in spinal cord injuries.

10 3. One member representing the Medical College of Wisconsin who is an
11 expert in spinal cord injuries.

12 4. One member who has a spinal cord injury.

13 5. One member who is a family member of a person with a spinal cord injury.

ASSEMBLY BILL 92

SECTION 1

1 6. One member who is a veteran who has a spinal cord injury.

2 7. One member who is a physician specializing in the treatment of spinal cord
3 injuries.

4 8. One member who is a researcher in the field of neurosurgery.

9. One member who is a researcher employed by the veterans health
administration of the U.S. department of veterans affairs.

(b) If the department of health services is unable to appoint a member specified in par. (a) 1. to 9., the department of health services may appoint a member representing the general public in lieu of the member so specified.

10 **SECTION 2.** 20.005 (3) (schedule) of the statutes: at the appropriate place,
11 insert the following amounts for the purposes indicated:

12 2025-26 2026-27

13 **20.435 Health services, department of**

14 (1) PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES PLANNING,

15 REGULATION, AND DELIVERY

16	(cd)	Spinal cord injury research	GPR	B	2,500,000	2,500,000
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17 **SECTION 3.** 20.435 (1) (cd) of the statutes is created to read:

20.435 (1) (cd) *Spinal cord injury research*. Biennially, the amounts in the
schedule for grants and symposia under s. 255.45 (2) and (3).

20 **SECTION 4.** 255.45 of the statutes is created to read:

21 **255.45 Spinal cord injury research grants and symposia. (1)**

22 DEFINITIONS. In this section:

23 (a) “Council” means the spinal cord injury council.

ASSEMBLY BILL 92**SECTION 4**

1 (b) “Grant program” means the program established under sub. (2).

2 (2) GRANT PROGRAM. From the appropriation under s. 20.435 (1) (cd), the
3 department shall award grants to persons in this state for research into spinal cord
4 injuries. The purpose of the grants is to support research into new and innovative
5 treatments and rehabilitative efforts for the functional improvement of individuals
6 with spinal cord injuries, and research topics may include pharmaceutical, medical
7 device, brain stimulus, and rehabilitative approaches and techniques. Grant
8 recipients shall agree to present their research findings at symposia held by the
9 department under sub. (3).

10 (3) SYMPOSIA. If the council approves, the department shall hold a
11 symposium for recipients of grants under the grant program to present findings of
12 research supported by the grants. The department may not hold a symposium
13 under this subsection more than once every 2 years.

14 (4) GRANT REPORTS. By January 15 of each year, the department shall submit
15 an annual report to the appropriate standing committees of the legislature under s.
16 13.172 (3) that identifies the recipients of grants under the grant program and the
17 purposes for which the grants were used.

18 (5) COUNCIL. (a) The council shall do all of the following:

19 1. Develop criteria for the department to evaluate and award grants under the
20 grant program.

21 2. Review and make recommendations to the department on applications
22 submitted under the grant program.

23 3. Perform other duties specified by the department.

ASSEMBLY BILL 92

SECTION 4

(b) Each member of the council shall disclose in a written statement any financial interest in any organization that the council recommends to receive a grant under the grant program. The council shall include the written statements with its recommendations to the department under par. (a) 2. on grant applications.

(6) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES. A recipient of a grant under sub. (2) may annually expend no more than 8 percent of the amount received under sub. (2) for administrative or indirect costs and expenses.

SECTION 5. Nonstatutory provisions.

(1) SPINAL CORD INJURY COUNCIL; INITIAL APPOINTMENTS. Notwithstanding the length of terms specified for the members of the spinal cord injury council under s. 15.197 (20) (a) (intro.), initial appointments to the council shall be made as follows:

(a) The members appointed under s. 15.197 (20) (a) 1., 3., 5., 7., and 9., or in lieu of those members under s. 15.197 (20) (b), shall be appointed for terms expiring on July 1, 2027.

(b) The members appointed under s. 15.197 (20) (a) 2., 4., 6., and 8., or in lieu of those members under s. 15.197 (20) (b), shall be appointed for terms expiring on July 1, 2028.

SECTION 6. Effective date.

(1) This act takes effect on the day after publication, or on the 2nd day after publication of the 2025 biennial budget act, whichever is later.

(END)