



November 12, 2012

TO: Rep. Daniel R. Knodl, Co-Chairperson
Rep. Penny Bernard Schaber, Co-Chairperson
Members of the Legislative Council Special Committee on Legal Interventions for Persons With Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias

FROM: Robert Kellerman, Executive Director, Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, and Spokesperson, Wisconsin Aging Network

The Wisconsin Aging Network is a statewide alliance of program providers-funded through the Older Americans Act-who are dedicated to ensuring that older people in Wisconsin live independently and age with dignity.

Member organizations:

Aging and Disability Professionals Association of Wisconsin (ADPAW)

Alzheimer's Association, SE Wisconsin Chapter

Wisconsin Adult Day Services Association (WADSA)

Wisconsin Association of Area Agencies on Aging (W4A)

Wisconsin Association of Benefit Specialists (WABS)

Wisconsin Association of Nutrition Directors (WAND)

Wisconsin Association of Senior Centers (WASC)

I am writing on behalf of the Wisconsin Aging Network (WAN), a statewide collaborative that includes representation from various professional aging and disability associations and advocates. Our members include the three area agencies on aging, state associations for county and tribal aging office directors, aging and disability resource centers, senior centers, adult day programs, as well as those representing the Alzheimer's and related dementia network.

The Wisconsin Aging Network is pleased that the Legislative Council has convened this Special Legislative Council Committee to address issues and recommend legislation addressing the diverse needs of people with Alzheimer's and related dementias in the areas of powers of attorney for health care, involuntary admissions to treatment facilities, and the involuntary administration of psychotropic medications. We are concerned, however, that the Committee is moving at such a fast pace that the interests of all relevant stakeholders, especially those of consumers, their guardians, and families will not have sufficient time to be considered. In addition, we are aware that mental health and other disability advocates have other concerns about unintended consequences related to the scope of this legislation. Many of our members were very significantly involved in the work leading up to the 2006 passage of the three bills related to guardianship, protective services, and adults-at-risk. They are intimately familiar with what the goals of those legislative changes included and are also carefully following the issues that have arisen since they became effective.

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We have been following your work via your website, and are continuously reviewing your bill drafts to keep current on the discussions taking place. Our goal is to ensure that individuals with Alzheimer's and related dementia receive the most appropriate care consistent with their individual needs and avoiding, wherever possible, relocation to another facility. We believe that your sub-committee is definitely moving in the right direction. We would therefore welcome the opportunity to provide input to the sub-committee with the goal of working with the members to develop solid legislation that will address the needs of counties, health care providers, law enforcement, families, and most importantly, individuals with Alzheimer's and related dementia. We would then be in a position to assist sponsors with securing additional support through the legislative process.

Again, we appreciate your attention to these most important issues for vulnerable adults with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. We hope that by slowing down the process and including more perspectives and interests, and engaging in further refinement and careful group discussions, we will be able to support your work in the legislature.