

State of Wisconsin
JOINT LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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January 10, 2013

Senator Luther Olsen, Co-Chair
Joint Legislative Council
Room 319 South
State Capitol
Madison, WI 53707

Representative Joan Ballweg, Co-Chair
Joint Legislative Council
Room 210 North
State Capitol
Madison, WI 53707

Re: Support for the Department of Health Services' proposed system redesign of care delivery systems for individuals with dementia.

Dear Co-Chairs Olsen and Ballweg:

On behalf of the Special Committee on Legal Interventions for Persons with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias, I write to express the Special Committee's support for the proposed redesign of the state's care delivery systems for individuals with dementia, as set forth in the recommendations provided to the Special Committee by the Department of Health Services (DHS). For your reference, I have enclosed with this letter a copy of the full set of recommendations from DHS, which DHS submitted to the Special Committee in reaction to WLC: 0061/1, an earlier version of WLC: 0061/2, relating to psychiatric and behavioral care and treatment for individuals with dementia. The portions of DHS's recommendations that include the system redesign endorsed by this letter are found on pages 4 and 5, particularly in the final seven bullet points on page 5.¹

In its recommendations, DHS calls for a redesign of the care delivery systems and capacities for persons with dementia, within two years, to maintain individuals in their current placements with adequate treatment and supports, until such time as their behavior warrants an alternative placement. DHS states that the goals of redesigning the system include reducing the unnecessary use of psychotropic medications for persons with dementia and addressing the lack of appropriate community-based, facility-based delivery systems and capacities to provide services to individuals with dementia.

The Special Committee received the enclosed recommendations only several days prior to its last scheduled meeting. Due to time constraints, the Special Committee was unable to revise its draft legislation to incorporate DHS's proposal for a system redesign. In addition, as

¹ Several other aspects of DHS's proposal are not supported by the Special Committee. This letter of support pertains only to the portions of the DHS recommendation relating to a system redesign.

noted in its memorandum to the Special Committee, the system redesign contemplated by DHS will require substantial funding. The Special Committee understood that it was not within the committee's charge to forward a proposal of this magnitude to the Legislature, and thus it focused on pragmatic, revenue-neutral solutions, with the acknowledgement that the system does not currently have the capacity to adequately serve the dementia population.

The draft legislation developed by the Special Committee, WLC: 0061/2, is in harmony with DHS's proposed dementia care system redesign. The procedures created by the draft will ensure access to psychiatric care for individuals with dementia both in the dementia care system as it currently exists and as it is proposed to be redesigned in the future by DHS.

The individual members of the Special Committee note and appreciate DHS's willingness to include stakeholders in the redesign process. Although the Special Committee has completed its work, the individual members will remain engaged. They look forward to future discussions with representatives from DHS and from the Legislature to ensure implementation of DHS's recommendations and to continue to develop solutions to the complex issues raised by challenging behaviors in individuals with dementia and Alzheimer's Disease.

In closing, the Special Committee urges the Joint Legislative Council to approve WLC: 0061/2, relating to psychiatric and behavioral care and treatment for individuals with dementia. In addition, it is hoped that the Legislature will take action to implement DHS's proposed system redesign of the state's care delivery systems for individuals with dementia.

Sincerely,

Representative Dan Knodl, Chair
Special Committee on Legal Interventions for
Persons with Alzheimer's Disease and Related
Dementias

DK:jr:tr

Enclosure