

A new session means a new opportunity for Wisconsin to reaffirm its commitment to protecting and enhancing family and community wellbeing. As the statewide network of non-profit and for-profit providers of mental health and human services, WAFCA remains a committed partner in Wisconsin's continuum of care. WAFCA members' services include an array of prevention, child welfare, mental health and substance use treatment services across levels of care.

Our members are essential community connectors and advocates who employ thousands of human services professionals across Wisconsin, providing critical support in collaboration with state, county, and school partners. Human services providers are key to Wisconsin's economic and social infrastructure. They work with parents and caregivers as they develop lasting bonds with their babies, share strategies and pathways for healing as families recover from trauma, journey with youth to discover purpose and hope, and use the power of relationship to help every individual they serve realize their full human potential.

Invest in Prevention and Early Intervention

Research has shown that with increased investment in prevention services referrals to the child welfare system decline. Early intervention efforts are most effective when integrated with institutions that have direct, early access to children and families. For this reason, investing in early prevention services helps identify and address children and families' needs early on - preventing issues that, if left untreated, can lead to deeper system involvement, family and community disruption and more costly interventions.

Prevention and early intervention services include:

- **Securing long-term, sustainable funding for School-Based Mental Health**
- **Funding and growing Family Resource Centers**
- **Expanding state funding support for Home Visiting and Early Care Mental Health Consultation**
- **Supporting parents and our workforce through access to high quality child care options and resources**
- **Establishing a sustainable funding source for 988 mental health services**

Strengthen Services and Support for Children and Youth

Wisconsin's current continuum of care is not capable of responding timely and sufficiently to the needs of children and their families. This results in delayed or denied access to services and sometimes placement outside of the state. For Wisconsin's children with particularly intensive needs including complex trauma, cognitive and developmental delays, and persistent mental health challenges, the inability to respond with the right resource can exacerbate their conditions as they move from care setting to care setting, sometimes to detention and justice system involvement.

Support for children and youth includes:

- **Reforming funding for Residential Care Centers (RCC) and Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities (PRTF)**
- **Supporting the Children's Behavioral Health Initiative Waiver**
- **Returning 17-year-olds to the youth justice system**
- **Ensuring adequate and accountable Medicaid reimbursement rates including adolescent day treatment rates that support community care**
- **Expanding funding for independent living services and runaway and homeless youth**

Grow Our Future Workforce to Support Mental Health and Wellbeing

The current health care workforce crisis is an opportunity to expand career pathways for a wider array of healthcare professionals – including community health workers and peers. Behavioral health and human services careers will become more attractive and more competitive as the state continues to adapt to new technology and adopt an operational infrastructure that increases worker satisfaction and reduces burnout and turnover.

Growing our workforce and supporting mental health and wellbeing include:

- **Requiring parity coverage for Qualified Treatment Trainees (QTTs) and Peer Specialists**
- **Increasing funding for the Qualified Treatment Trainee (QTT) Grant Program**
- **Engaging peer settings and peer specialists to expand community recovery options**
- **Increasing Efficiency through Centralized Medicaid Credentialing**