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For Immediate Release

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Governor Walker Announces Plan to Lift Family Care Enrollment Cap, Expand to New Counties

Legislative action needed to lift cap and expand long-term care program

Madison—Earlier this year an enrollment cap was placed on Family Care in response to a Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) evaluation which found a number of areas the program could be improved and made more efficient. After a briefing on the hard work done by DHS over the past couple of months, today Governor Walker announced a plan to lift the Family Care cap. Governor Walker’s plan also calls for Family Care to be expanded to additional counties.

“I am confident that Family Care can continue to be implemented efficiently and cost effectively,” said Governor Walker. “Lifting the cap will be done in a way that respects taxpayers and is mindful of their investment, while at the same time providing care for those who are truly in need.”

The 2011-2013 state budget and the Legislative Audit Bureau required the Department of Health Services to do a thorough review of the program given its rapid growth. The LAB report released in April 2011 offered recommendations for improving the program. A very critical issue raised in the report was that the cost effectiveness of Family Care was difficult to assess. Because the Department was able to take the time to strengthen the program, Wisconsin now has the detailed data needed to develop solutions to ensure Family Care is on sound financial footing for those in the program now and for future enrollees.

The Governor will continue to work with DHS to ensure that lifting the cap is done in a way that reestablishes the focus on helping seniors and individuals with disabilities live well in the community—using the right amount of care, in the appropriate setting, by the most cost-effective means possible.

The Governor’s plan to lift the Family Care enrollment cap calls for legislative action and DHS implementation by this spring.

Also at the announcement today to support the lifting of the enrollment cap was Lynn Breedlove from Disability Rights Wisconsin, Heather Bruemmer Executive Director of the Board on Aging and Long Term Care, Kim Marheine from the Board on Aging and Long Term Care, Beth Sweeden from the Board for Persons with Developmental Disabilities, Maureen Ryan with the Wisconsin Coalition of Independent Living Centers, Michael Blumenfeld representing several MCOs, Teri Buros from Southwest Wisconsin Family Center, State Senator Terry Moulton, and State Representative Dean Kaufert.

In addition to the Family Care announcement, DHS also stated they believe the federal government has met the statutory requirements necessary for an agreement related to the Medicaid waiver application. The state will continue to negotiate with the federal government on any remaining issues yet to be resolved.

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