



2019-21 Legislative and Biennial Budget Priorities

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Moving Forward on Mental Health

- Adopt the federal option to **expand Medicaid coverage for childless adults** up to 138% of the federal poverty level to increase timely access to critical health services, including mental health and substance use treatment. Use the additional federal revenue to support the Governor's proposed 2% increase in MA mental health rates, the creation of a Community Health Benefit to address social determinants of health and additional MA crisis funding
- **Expand school mental health services** by increasing grant funding to \$16 million annually, continuing MA-funded consultation between therapists and teachers, and allowing consultation to include contact with parents to facilitate family engagement in the treatment process.¹
- **Invest in mental health and substance use treatment** by increasing access to OARS (Opening Avenues to Reentry Success) statewide, continuing growth of Treatment Alternative and Diversion programs and creating an MA home health benefit using the hub-and-spoke model at designated opioid treatment centers across the state as proposed in the Governor's budget.
- Provide behavioral health providers financial support to implement the **electronic healthcare information exchange** already implemented in other medical specialties.

Building Strong Youth and Families

- Invest \$10 million to double the number of families benefiting from **home visiting** supports. While half of Wisconsin counties and tribes are served by a home visiting program, as of 2017 only 29 counties and tribes were funded through the state Family Foundations program. The majority of home visiting services across the state are funded with a combination of federal, local and foundation dollars with very limited state GPR investment. Under the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA),² **evidence-based home visiting programs may be eligible for new Title IV-E federal match**, increasing the value of state GPR investments going forward.
- Support the Governor's proposal to eliminate the **Children's Long-Term Support** wait list and provide sufficient rates under the new statewide rate setting process to ensure that children have access to quality services across the state.
- Advance successful futures for **youth in the foster care system** by supporting the Governor's proposal to provide a 2% annual increase in foster care and kinship care rates and the proposal to create a driver's licensing support program. In addition, support the adoption of 2017 AB 777 to provide tuition remission and make higher education more accessible.
- **Increase child & family community aids** to address increasing caseloads and out-of-home care costs. Child and family aids have not kept pace with growing child protective services referrals. Inadequate support for caseworkers increases turnover and impacts the stability and well-being of children in care.

¹ DRAFT School-Based Mental Health 2019-20 Legislative Priorities (12.18);
Background - Advancing School-Based MH Services in WI (03.15)

² DRAFT WAFCA Overview FFPSA 12.18

- Support the Governor’s proposal to fund the **expansion of rural shelters for runaway and homeless youth** and the **recommendations of the Interagency Council on Homelessness**.
- Use surplus Community Options Program high-cost funds to **increase Birth to 3 Program** funding.
- Adopt the Governor’s recommendations on implementation of 2017 Wisconsin Act 185 and **secure residential care centers for children and youth** (SRCCCYs).
- **Adopt the Governor's proposal to return 17-year-olds to the youth justice system** while providing sufficient funding to offset new costs to county government. The youth justice system provides a better array of services and supports for youth and their families than is possible through the adult system.

Reforming Regulations to Improve Access to Quality Care

- Permit **video recording in out-of-home care settings** to improve safety for children and staff. Other states, including states where Wisconsin youth are currently being served out-of-state, permit the use of cameras and recording to monitor for the safety of children and staff and aid in quality assurance and training.
- Require DHS and DCF to **recognize national accreditation** when renewing out-of-home care and mental health and AODA clinic licenses. Recent federal changes are incentivizing more out-of-home care providers to become accredited. Recognizing providers that adopt these more rigorous operational standards will increase quality while decreasing DHS and DCF monitoring costs.
- **Eliminate “re-licensing” requirements** for out-of-home care agencies when a provider relocates or changes their agency name.
- Support additional **clarification of regulations governing substance use treatment providers** to increase access to services.