



April 28, 2021

Representative Mark Born, Co-Chair
Senator Howard L. Marklein, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Finance
Wisconsin Legislature

Re: Funding for the Wisconsin Chronic Disease Program (WCDP) and BadgerCare

Dear Representative Born, Senator Howard, and Members of the Joint Committee on Finance:

On behalf of people living with cystic fibrosis (CF) in Wisconsin, we write to ask for your support of funding for the Wisconsin Chronic Disease Program (WCDP) and BadgerCare—two programs of importance to the CF community—in the 2021-2023 biennial budget. Adequate funding for these programs remains more important than ever, and will help ensure continued access to quality, specialized care for people with CF.

About Cystic Fibrosis

Cystic fibrosis is a life-threatening genetic disease that affects more than 30,000 children and adults in the United States, including nearly 700 Wisconsinites. CF causes the body to produce thick, sticky mucus that clogs the lungs and digestive system, which can lead to life-threatening infections. Because cystic fibrosis is a complex, multi-system condition and requires specialized treatment and medications, most people with CF receive at care at one of the more than 130 accredited CF care centers in the United States, including seven in Wisconsin, where clinicians use evidence-based guidelines to delivery multi-disciplinary care. While great strides have been made in the treatment of the disease, the lives of young people with CF are still cut far too short; half of young adults with the disease still die before age 30.

Wisconsin Chronic Disease Program (WCDP)

The WCDP is a state-run program that helps people living with CF afford the high-cost of their care. It houses the Adult Cystic Fibrosis (ACF) Program, which helps adults with cystic fibrosis pay for services like prescriptions and doctor's visits when there are gaps left by other forms of insurance. According to a recent survey conducted by George Washington University of over 1,800 people living with CF and their families, more than 70 percent of respondents said paying for their health care has caused financial problems such as being contacted by a collection agency, filing for bankruptcy, experiencing difficulty paying for basic living expenses like rent and utilities, or taking a second job to make ends meet. Funding programs like the WCDP helps ensure that people with CF have access to the care and treatments they need.

Wisconsin Medicaid

BadgerCare is also a crucial source of coverage for people with CF, and we urge you to ensure the 2021-2023 budget preserves existing Medicaid funding, eligibility, and benefits. Nearly forty percent of children and a quarter of adults living with CF in Wisconsin depend on the program for some or all of

their health care needs. Medicaid plays an important role in helping people with cystic fibrosis afford the specialized care and treatments needed to manage the disease and, for many with CF, it fills coverage gaps in private insurance that leave patients with unsustainable out-of-pocket costs.

BadgerCare and the WCDP play a critical role in promoting the health and well-being of Wisconsinites with CF, especially during these uncertain times. Thank you for your attention to this issue and for keeping the needs of people with CF in mind when forming the 2021-2023 budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary B. Dwight', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mary B. Dwight
Chief Policy & Advocacy Officer
Senior Vice President of Policy and Advocacy

Cc: Joint Committee on Finance Members