

# Legislators meet with advocates of funding for disabled

**By Anna Krejci  
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People with developmental disabilities and their allies spoke out for more state and federal aid for a program that helps people with disabilities live and work outside of an institution during a listening session with state legislators on Tuesday.

The daily rates counties are paying to help people with disabilities live and work in communities through the Community Integration Program 1B waiver are far behind increases in the rate of inflation, said Anne Medeiros, a political consultant for Rehabilitation for Wisconsin Inc., a nonprofit association of more than 50 rehabilitation providers across the state.

A 2.8 percent increase in 2001 raised the daily rate to support individuals with disabilities to \$49.67 - the sum is the cost of supporting an individual to work and live in a community. Since 1995, the rate of inflation has risen 23 percent, according to data from RFW.

RFW, and several of its local members who are care providers in the area, such as N.E.W. Curative and ASPIRO, are advocating that the daily rate of the CIP 1B program be raised to \$89.20 in 2005 and \$90.99 in 2006.

Reps. Karl Van Roy, Judy Krawczyk and Becky Weber and Sens. Robert Cowles and Dave Hansen attended the listening session. People with disabilities spoke to the representatives, as well as ASPIRO and N.E.W. Curative employees and parents or caretakers of people with disabilities.

"The suppression of the daily rate has suppressed wages too," said John Foote, program services coordinator for Dungarvin Wisconsin, Inc. in Green Bay.

He said increased funding would enable providers to pay their employees more, resulting in a lower turnover rate and lower the amount of dollars they have to invest in training new employees who do not stay in the job.

Dave Johnson, father of a son with autism, said Minnesota is a model state for taking advantage of federal funding and committing to its citizens who have disabilities.

Medeiros said the last time the daily CIP 1B rate in Minnesota equaled the present rate in Wisconsin was in 1984.

Cowles urged the people attending the listening session to contact the state's secretary of the Health and Family Services department, Helene Nelson, who can then take their concerns to the governor in the form of budget recommendations.

According to RFW, the federal government will give Wisconsin \$1.43 for each dollar spent on the CIP 1B program.

Cowles said proponents of increased CIP 1B funding should contact the Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau in Madison with requests to calculate the savings the state could realize from dedicating more funding to the CIP 1B program.

Medeiros said 2002 data from the state's department of health and family services shows that in Brown County, \$10,107,116 went towards CIP 1B. Of that, the county paid \$2.8 million, or 27.8 percent of the total cost, and the state paid \$1.3 million, or 13.6 percent of the cost. The federal government paid the remaining 58.5 percent.

The county is paying more than the \$49.67 CIP 1B rate now. It is paying \$72.55 per day to support an individual living in a community setting.