



Date: June 4, 2025

To: Chairwoman Cabral-Guevara and Members of the Senate Committee on Health

From: Janet Zander, Advocacy & Public Policy Coordinator

Re: **Support for SB 262** – Assisted Living Facility Referral Agencies

Thank you for this opportunity to share testimony in support of SB 262. The Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, Inc. (GWAAR) is a nonprofit agency committed to supporting the successful delivery of aging programs and services in our service area consisting of 70 counties (all but Dane and Milwaukee) and 11 tribes in Wisconsin. We are the largest of three area agencies on aging (AAAs) in Wisconsin. Our mission is to deliver innovative support to lead aging agencies, as we work together to **promote, protect, and enhance the well-being of older people in Wisconsin.**

In accordance with our mission, we believe older consumers and their families should have access to comprehensive, unbiased information to empower them to make informed decisions. This requires those providing information to be knowledgeable regarding all services or facilities available to meet someone's needs and to in no way personally or professionally benefit from the choices consumers make. Here in Wisconsin, we have an excellent system in place in our publicly funded Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) for older adults, people with disabilities, and their families to receive free, unbiased, and comprehensive information to help them make informed decisions. Based on reliable information, consumers can choose the right care option for their needs or the needs of a loved one.

Not everyone knows about the ADRCs, and some people may wish to get their information from other sources; we support that right but strongly believe consumers should be able to expect that any information shared will be complete and that any conflicts of interest will be disclosed.

GWAAR supports SB 262, as this legislation requires referral agencies to provide consumers with disclosure agreements outlining any relationships between the referral agencies and any assisted living facilities, any fees received from a facility in exchange for the referral, and if the referral agencies' information (list of facilities) is restricted to only facilities they have a contract with and/or those that do not accept Medicaid. Further, establishing a fixed fee for assisted living facility providers to pay for these referrals will eliminate existing incentives for referral agencies to refer consumers more frequently to higher cost facilities which provide them with larger reimbursements and more quickly spend down consumers available financial resources. Consumers are seeking information to help them find the care that best meets their health and financial needs; the options they are presented should not have less to do with their needs and more to do with how large the kick back is to the referral agency.

A transition from home to any type of facility can be an extremely difficult time for individuals and their families; incomplete or misleading information can result in someone choosing a facility that may not be the best fit and potentially require yet another move, causing further stress.

SB 262 will help to ensure Wisconsin consumers seeking information about assisted living facilities are not misled and will hold referring agencies accountable for fully disclosing any limitations or restrictions regarding the information they provide. We appreciate the interest in and efforts of policy makers to put the needs of long-term care residents first and to protect consumers seeking options for assisted living care. We look forward to continuing to work with you on policies that improve the quality of life of older people in Wisconsin.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and recommendations related to SB 152.

Sincerely,

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