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February 19, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SURVIVAL COALITION APPLAUDS EXECUTIVE ORDER ANNOUNCING CAREGIVER TASK FORCE

(MADISON) -- The Survival Coalition of more than 30 disability organizations supports today's announcement by Governor Tony Evers of an Executive Order identifying a caregiver task force to address the growing shortage of direct care providers, both paid and informal as well as the stress on family caregivers statewide.

"We know that people are not getting the care they need," said Beth Swedeen, Survival Coalition co-chair. "Our survey showed that 95% of people with disabilities and their families had trouble finding caregivers, and 45% reported being unable to fill 7 or more shifts each month. This shortage is only projected to increase in the months and years ahead as Wisconsin's population ages."

Lisa Pugh, Survival Coalition co-chair, said the pressure of unmet care needs is impacting families and employers statewide, "Many informal caregivers report being forced to reduce hours or leave the workforce entirely in order to care for family members, incurring risk to their own financial futures and creating challenges for businesses that must adjust work flow for absent employees or deal with higher turnover rates as employees leave the workforce to care for loved ones."

"A focused study of how to attract, train, support and retain quality direct care workers is critical to Wisconsin's future, and has great potential to save public funds by keeping people in their homes instead of costly facilities," said Kristin Kerschensteiner, Survival Coalition co-chair.

The majority of Survival Coalition's member organizations list the direct care worker shortage as the top concern they are experiencing. Survival supports a comprehensive approach to addressing the crisis that includes increased wages and benefits for direct care workers, supports for family caregivers and as innovative public policies to attract and retain high-quality workers. ###