

To: All Legislators

From: Senator Mark Spreitzer and Representative Ann Roe

Date: April 30, 2025

RE: **Co-sponsorship of LRB-2586**, relating to: Eligibility for Family Care for individuals who are deaf-blind.

DEADLINE: May 14th, 2025 at 5:00 pm

[An individual who is deaf-blind](#) is a person who experiences a dual sensory loss affecting both his or her vision and hearing. The degree of vision and hearing loss will vary person to person.

Family Care is a Medicaid long-term care program that provides services and support for older adults and adults with disabilities. The goal of the program is to get members the services they need to live in a home setting when possible.

This bill grants functional eligibility for Family Care to people who are deaf-blind. Under current law, a person must meet certain criteria in order to be eligible for Family Care, including that the person is at least 18 years of age, the person has a physical or developmental disability or is a frail elder, and the person is both functionally and financially eligible based on the standards described in the statute. The bill adds an express provision that a person is functionally eligible for the Family Care program if the person is deaf-blind, as defined in [29 USC 1905](#).

This will allow Wisconsinites who are deaf-blind to qualify for Family Care without a functional eligibility screening. While the screening may be necessary in cases where a condition might improve or shift over time, according to the definition of deaf-blind as defined in the bill, this condition is of such a severe and permanent nature that screening and rescreening an individual is not necessary. Eliminating that annual burden alone is a win for the deaf-blind community to be able to maintain long-term services and support in their daily lives.

For this change to Family Care eligibility, the Department of Health Services would need to modify the Department's existing Family Care waiver. The bill authors have consulted with the Department of Health Services, and the Department has indicated that they do not need additional authority to modify the waiver if this bill were to become law.

To be added as a cosponsor for this legislation, please reply to this email or contact Sen. Spreitzer's office at 608-266-2253 or Rep. Roe's office at 608-237-9144 by May 14th at 5:00pm.