

Bills for Alzheimer's and Dementia Funds and Grants Have Bipartisan Support

Written by Wisconsin Assembly, Laura Smith
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MADISON - Four bills authored by Assembly Democrats will provide significant new funding for services and research into Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

The bills are among the products of the Speaker's Task Force on Alzheimer's and Dementia and were announced Wednesday. The four Democratic contributions to the package have Republican co-sponsors, improving their chance of passage. They are:

- **LRB 4206/1: To provide a \$1 million increase in funds for respite care under the Alzheimer's Family Caregiver Support Program for fiscal year 2016-17.**

"This will provide a real boost in relief to families whose loved ones have Alzheimer's or dementia, and who want to keep the patients in their homes," said the Democratic sponsor, Rep. Debra Kolste (D-Janesville). "This program currently receives about \$1.5 million, which is not enough to help caregivers."

- **LRB 4306/1: To provide a total of \$250,000 to be used for grants to counties or regions to finance the training of mobile crisis teams in fiscal 2016-17.**

"These funds will help to meet the need to train mobile crisis teams to recognize individuals showing the symptoms of dementia and provide the specialized and individual care they need," said the Democratic sponsor, Rep. Jonathan Brostoff (D-Milwaukee).

- **LRB 4209/1: To finance the hiring of four Dementia Care Specialists in counties with smaller populations, and to fill a dementia specialist coordinator position in the Department of Health Services.**

"Sparsely populated counties need financial assistance serving individuals with Alzheimer's and dementia, as well as the families and communities who care for them," said Democratic sponsor Rep. Beth Meyers (D-Bayfield).

"This bill will provide about \$407,000 to hire dementia specialists in counties with under 150,000 residents. It also will provide about \$93,000 to hire a state professional tasked with educating employers about dementia issues in the workplace, both involving employees and family members of employees."

- **LRB 4469/1: To provide \$50,000 to fund two studies of possible Alzheimer's-Dementia blood factors by the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Alzheimer's Disease Research Center.**

Rep. Dianne Hesselbein (D-Middleton), author of the bill and Vice Chair of the Speaker's Task Force, said: "These exciting UW studies include plans to analyze blood samples from

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middle-aged adult children of parents with Alzheimer's-Dementia.

"If new abnormal proteins are identified as possible causes, these small studies could attract significant funding from the National Institutes of Health and lead to new prevention and treatment approaches."

"We want to see UW-Madison remain on the cutting edge of Alzheimer's- Dementia research."

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