



State of Wisconsin

Governor's Committee for People with Disabilities

1 WEST WILSON STREET,
ROOM 551
POST OFFICE BOX 2659
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Telephone: 608-266-9354
Website: dhs.wisconsin.gov/gcpd

Thursday, February 16, 2023

The Honorable Tony Evers
115 E. Capitol Dr. # 1
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Governor Evers,

Attached please find the 2022 Annual Report of the Governor's Committee for People with Disabilities (GCPD). The report is divided into three sections: Activities; Structure and Function; and Membership.

The work and accomplishments of the GCPD was made possible by the efforts of Committee members together with the significant engagement of the staff from the Department of Health Services and involvement of the Governor's and Lieutenant Governor's offices.

Respectfully,

Margaret Kristan, Chair
Governor's Committee for People with Disabilities

CC: GCPD Members and Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes



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Governor's Committee for People with Disabilities (GCPD) Annual Report 2022

The GCPD is dedicated to enhancing the health and well-being of Wisconsin citizens who have disabilities. As a Committee of Governor-appointed volunteers with cross-disability council representation (Board for People with Developmental Disabilities, Council on Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Council on Physical Disabilities, Statutory Council on Blindness), GCPD serves to advise the Governor, state agencies, and the state legislature on issues of concern for people who have disabilities.

This report serves as an overview of activity and accomplishments of GCPD during the 2022 calendar year.

GCPD has been appreciative of the collaboration and partnership with the Governor's and Lieutenant Governor's offices over the past year.

Structure and Function

- The full Committee Bi-Monthly meeting schedule established in 2020 was continued through 2022. Full Committee meetings will resume a quarterly meeting basis in the 2023 calendar year. The Executive Committee transitioned from meeting on a weekly basis to meeting month beginning September 2022. The work GCPD is doing requires more research and collaborative meetings to advance GCPD's work plan and related policy issues. Thus, GCPD switched to a monthly meeting basis to allow for assignments to be completed in-between meetings.
- All meetings of the GCPD were held virtually during 2022 and plans to resume hybrid meetings in calendar year 2023. GCPD is grateful for the assistance of the Department of Health Services (DHS) support staff for their assistance with hosting these meetings for GCPD.
- GCPD revised its by-laws including changing the composition of the Governor's Committee membership to include a simple majority of people with disabilities (51%); allows Executive Committee to find alternative representatives if Council's will not appoint representation to ensure all people with disabilities are represented on the Committee; adds registered lobbyist disclosure; and changes election cycle for chair and vice chair. It is the hope of GCPD that these changes will allow the Committee to recruit members and conduct business more effectively.



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Activities

- In January 2022, GCPD issued a [press release](#) about Margaret Kristan being elected Chair and Rhonda Staats being elected as Vice-Chair of GCPD.
- GCPD worked tirelessly on a COVID-19 Educational Training Video to capture the experiences of people with disabilities accessing health care during the pandemic. GCPD's #Access4All video project highlights testimonials from people with disabilities and their caregivers about the physical and communication barriers experienced in healthcare settings. It is critically important that we listen and learn from the experiences and stories of individuals with disabilities, so that Wisconsin can continue to be a strong leader in offering the best quality of health care to all citizens. The #Access4All videos can be viewed on [GCPD's website](#) or on [GCPD's YouTube channel](#).
- In March 2022, GCPD issued a letter to Governor Evers asking him to veto Senate Bill 905 and Senate Bill 912 as both bills would negatively impact people with disabilities. Senate Bill 905 proposed changes regarding Medicaid eligibility determinations that would negatively impact people with disabilities by requiring Medicaid eligibility redetermination every six months instead of the current twelve months. Senate Bill 912 would impose penalties on certain "able-bodied" Medicaid members for not accepting a job offer or not agreeing to work more hours, regardless of the nature of the job or how many additional work hours were offered.
- In April 2022, GCPD partnered with the Wisconsin Council on Physical Disabilities (CPD) and to create the [Emergency Preparedness Communications Folder](#). This folder was designed as a resource for health care providers and people with disabilities to address communication and access barriers in health care settings.
- GCPD hosted a watch party and listening session for the #Access4All video project on May 19, 2022, Global Accessibility Awareness Day. The event was attended by approximately 80 participants and the [Wisconsin State Journal published a story about the Watch Party](#).
- In September 2022, GCPD did a presentation to Concordia University health alliance students on the Committee, expressions of disability, difficulties in identifying and disclosing a disability, disability etiquette, person-first and identity language, and reasonable accommodations. GCPD received numerous thank you letters from students



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and the presentation was so well received that they have asked GCPD to do presentations twice a year for their students.

- In November 2022, GCPD's Transportation Subcommittee made recommendations to the Non-Emergency Medical Transportation program on how to improve forms and processes to better meet the needs of people with disabilities.
- In November 2022, GCPD's Opportunities and Access Subcommittee advanced several policy recommendations to the Executive Committee to address accessibility for people with disabilities including expanding the Attorney General's Office responsibilities to include Civil Rights Enforcement and to have a state government Digital Accessibility Coordinator to ensure state government websites and documents are accessible for people with disabilities.
- In December 2022, GCPD held officer elections and elected Rhonda Staats as Vice-Chair. Ramsey Lee, Ben Barrett, and John Hartman were also elected as an Executive Committee At-Large Members.



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Membership

The members listed below served on GCPD during calendar year 2022.

Member's Name	Member's Role
Margaret Kristan	Chair, Member-at-Large, Executive Committee Member
Rhonda Staats	Vice-Chair, Statutory Council on Blindness Representative (with a disability), Executive Committee Member
Ramsey Lee	Member-at-Large (with disability), Executive Committee Member
Tom O'Connor	Representative from the Wisconsin Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (with a disability), Executive Committee Member
Ben Barrett	Executive Committee Member, Representative from the Wisconsin Council on Physical Disabilities (with a disability)
Nancy Leipzig	Member-at-Large
Julie Blasky	Member-at-Large (with a disability)
Gail Bovy	Representative from the Board for People with Developmental Disabilities
Kimberlee Coronado	Representative from the Wisconsin Council on Mental Health
John Hartman	Member-at-Large (with a disability)
Dan Idzikowski	Member-at-Large
Daniel Laatsch	Member-at-Large (with a disability)
Ramsey Lee	Member-at-Large (with a disability)
Fred Ludwig	Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes, Ex-Officio Member
Pearl Fessenden	Member-at-Large
Dr. Katherine Schneider	Member-at-Large (with a disability)
David Morstad	Member-at-Large
Vacant	Member-at-Large (with a disability)
Vacant	Member-at-Large
Stacy Stone	Representative from the State Council on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse

- The GCPD made a concerted effort to fill vacant positions throughout the year. This included both at-large positions and two Council liaison roles that had proven to be less active than needed. By the end of the year, the Council positions appear to have stabilized and attendance and participation has improved.



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- The vacancies in the at-large positions proves to be challenging due to a unique situation within GCPD's own by-laws. The by-laws state that a majority of the members must be people with disabilities; in fact, one statement requires that 66% have disabilities. At the same time, appointments to the GCPD have no term limits. This makes achieving the required level of membership by people with disabilities difficult.
 - In addition, GCPD recognizes the need to have a more diverse membership that better reflects the ethnic and cultural composition of the State's population and is exploring strategies to attract people of color and diverse ethnic backgrounds to be appointed to GCPD. GCPD also recognizes the need to recruit and attract younger people with disabilities to be appointed to GCPD.