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Testimony before the Senate Committee on Health

Senate Bill 407

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Thank you Chair Cabral-Guevara, Vice-Chair Tesin, and members of the Senate Committee on Health for holding this hearing on Senate Bill (SB) 407, relating to healthy aging grants and making an appropriation. As stated in the Legislative Reference Bureau's analysis, this Bill provides \$378,000 each fiscal year of the 2023-25 fiscal biennium to a private, nonprofit entity to support evidence based health promotion programs to support healthy aging.

The population entering long-term care facilities is ever growing. One leading factor for individuals entering a long-term care facility is injury from a fall. According to the CDC, Wisconsin currently has the highest mortality rate due to falls of any state in the United States. SB 407 provides funding for best-practice strategies to prevent falls, manage chronic conditions, and increase physical activity to reduce costs and improve wellness. Furthermore, it will provide balance and strength training which also helps to reduce an older adult's fall risk

Prevention, in this case, is worth more than a pound of cure. Based on available information from CMS, falls-related health costs in Wisconsin are estimated at about \$1 billion annually. At a time that spending is tight, utilizing resources for healthy aging grants leads to lower costs over time for prevents unplanned, out-of-pocket expenses for older adults. Additionally, falls occupy the time of emergency services, leading some departments with insufficient funding and capacity.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this Bill. Together, we can keep our aging population safe and healthy while reducing the burden on Medicaid in Wisconsin. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.