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Thursday, January 22, 2026

Assembly Committee on Health, Aging and Long-Term Care Advances WHA-Supported Next-of-Kin Legislation

On Jan. 21, the Assembly Committee on Health, Aging and Long-Term Care voted to advance AB 598, bipartisan legislation supported by the Wisconsin Hospital Association, that would allow incapacitated family members' next-of-kin to help them gain access to post-acute care without requiring lengthy and expensive guardianship hearings.

The committee voted to adopt two amendments that would transfer the role of collecting and disseminating physician statements and patient representative written acknowledgments from county corporation counsels to registers in probate. It would also clarify that county adult-at-risk agencies are under no obligation to take any action with respect to receiving copies of such written statements.

The legislation, as amended, advanced by a vote of 12-3 and now goes to the full Assembly for consideration. As covered in a previous edition of *The Valued Voice*, the Senate legislation passed the Senate Committee on Health, Aging and Long-Term Care by a 4-1 vote on Nov. 11 and is awaiting to be scheduled for a vote on the full Senate floor. Senator Wimberger has introduced Senate versions of the amendments adopted in the Assembly that are also expected to be taken up on the Senate floor.

WHA will continue to provide updates as the legislation is scheduled for further actions. Contact WHA Vice President of Federal Affairs and Advocacy Jon Hoelter with questions.

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EDUCATION EVENTS

Feb. 10, 2026

Age-Friendly Webinar Series Featuring Advocate Health

Feb. 25, 2026

2026 Advocacy Day

Mar. 13, 2026

2026 Physician Leadership Development Conference