

Scott Walker
Governor



**DIVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH &
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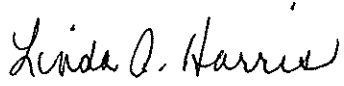
We are pleased to support the vision incorporated in the Strategic Plan, "Advancing Understanding, Care, and Support for Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind Individuals in Wisconsin" that outlines a framework to address providing mental health and substance use services across the lifespan. We recognize the importance of serving the deaf and hard of hearing communities. The unique language, communication, and service approaches defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act provide opportunities to ensure more equitable mental health and substance use service provision. This includes identifying a shared vision of access to and the delivery of services and prevention efforts.


We recognize that commitment and real partnership are needed to successfully engage in meaningful dialogue and action. This Strategic Plan offers positive change and guides policy to create an ongoing process for measuring services, quality, and evaluation of health outcomes for optimal quality of life for all persons who are deaf, deaf-blind, and hard of hearing. As the lead agency addressing mental health and substance use issues for children, youth and adults, we are aware these problems exert a negative impact on employment, education, and health care. Persons who are deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing and their families face tremendous challenges in finding services, that include access to qualified, skilled interpreters within the mental health and substance use systems.

The vision, goals, recommendations and engagement with partners to implement this plan are part of an ongoing process that will occur within a climate with diminishing federal, state and local resources. We need to work together to develop innovative, culturally and linguistically-competent approaches to ensure recovery with optimal health outcomes and the ability to fully participate in our communities.

We look forward to working with you as partners in the promotion of needed change, which fosters prevention and aligns equitable service delivery across Wisconsin. We urge you to give thoughtful consideration and to participate fully in bringing this Strategic Plan successfully to life.

Sincerely,


Linda Harris, Administrator
Division of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services


Pris Boroniec, Administrator
Division of Long Term Care