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**Wisconsin Celebrates Family Caregivers During National Family Caregiver Awareness Month;
Forms *Wisconsin Family Caregiver Support Alliance***

While the nation recognizes the contributions of Family Caregivers annually in November, this year, disability and aging stakeholder organizations in Wisconsin are using the occasion to announce their combined efforts to draw attention to the state's caregiver crisis and strategies for improvement.

According to a 2013 AARP report 578,000 caregivers in Wisconsin provide an estimated 538 million hours of unpaid care to loved ones who are individuals with disabilities or older adults. This amounts to more than \$7 million in unpaid care. The costs of this caregiving can also equate to lost time on the job, worsening health and loss of social connection for caregivers.

Thirteen percent (13%) of caregivers are adults caring for their sisters or brothers with disabilities or long-term illnesses. Most of these siblings report they don't feel prepared emotionally or financially.

In the next two decades Wisconsin baby boomers will age out of their peak caregiving years (ages 45-64) and leave the state struggling to find caregiving supports for frail elders and to find quality and cost-effective solutions for adult children with developmental disabilities who cannot live independently.

In August of 2017 aging and disability advocates convened at the Wingspread conference facilities in Racine, Wisconsin to discuss solutions to this pending dilemma and to form a statewide coalition to address family support and caregiving needs for family members taking care of an aging parent or a loved one with a disability.

WisconSibs, Inc, a nonprofit dedicated to the interests of people who have siblings with disabilities, is one of several founding organizations of The Wisconsin Family Caregiver Support Alliance which formed to work over the next year on:

- Employer engagement and support for employees providing care to family members
- Expansion of respite care options statewide
- Improved navigation and access to caregiving or family support resources
- Expansion of Future Planning supports

Watch for more news on the work of the Wisconsin Family Caregiver Support Alliance in 2018.

WisconSibs, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization that connects siblings of people with disabilities with each other, and with resources to help them throughout their lifelong journey. In northeastern Wisconsin, it provides Sibshops® and camps for girls and boys, and future planning and social events for families. Statewide, its services include web content, consulting, coaching, future planning, and conference presentations. Nationally, it is the Wisconsin chapter of the Sibling Leadership Network.