

HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE



Wisconsin Council of the
Blind & Visually Impaired

Protect and strengthen health coverage for people who are blind or visually impaired. People with vision-related disabilities, whether purchasing their own health insurance or accessing Medicaid, are vulnerable to changes in these systems. Those who are income-limited, suffer from a traumatic eye injury or disease, require surgery or medication, or have other health conditions are especially impacted.

BUDGET ITEMS

Address Access Issues within the Office of Blind and Visually Impaired:

Allocate funding to conduct a thorough needs assessment for the Office of the Blind and Visually Impaired (OBVI) services to bring service provision into line with best practices. Use predictive modeling to project future population numbers and geographic locations to enhance long-range planning for the Office. Direct the Department of Health Services to develop a strategic plan for the OBVI by the end of fiscal year 2022-23.

Over 100,000 Wisconsinites have a life-shaping visual impairment.

In the next 15 to 20 years, **this number is expected to double.**

Expand Access to Vision Services for Medicaid Patients:

Expand the type of certified professionals who can bill Medicaid for vision services. Currently, Medicaid will pay for vision rehabilitation if the services are performed by a licensed occupational therapist (OT). Other highly qualified vision rehabilitation specialists, such as a certified low vision therapist, certified orientation and mobility specialist, certified vision rehabilitation specialist or a certified assistive technology trainer cannot be reimbursed by Medicaid.