



WISCONSIN BOARD FOR PEOPLE  
WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

**August 2019**



*Improving a Broken System One Brick at a Time*

My name is David Pinno. I grew up in a small town named Bear Creek, Wisconsin. I currently live in New London and work at the McDonald's in Greenville.

I own my own house and car. I have hit many financial roadblocks including the low public benefit earnings limit. I believe that many public benefits programs, such as Food Stamps (SNAP) and Medicaid, are unfairly counted as unearned income. This has made it difficult to save money for my utility bills.

From 2003 to 2011, I worked in a sheltered workshop and developed a bitter feeling towards sheltered workshops after how they treated myself and others. I knew something had to change.

I attended the first Partners in Policy-Making, put on by the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD) class in 2011. In 2012, I applied to serve on BPDD.

I have been serving on the Board for seven years. In that time, I have learned how some systems work and to have a greater role in advocacy for individuals with disabilities. I also began to realize that I was not alone on the battlefield for inclusion.

Financial management and supported decision-making is an area that I have become passionate about in my advocacy work. For example, ABLÉ legislation was a bill at the Federal level when I came on the Board. ABLÉ stands for Achieving Better Life Experience. I pushed many legislators at both the Federal and state levels to support the ABLÉ act. In 2014, ABLÉ was

Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities  
101 East Wilson Street, Room 219, Madison, Wisconsin 53703  
Voice 608.266.7826 • Toll Free 888.332.1677 • FAX 608.267.3906  
• Website: [www.wi-bpdd.org](http://www.wi-bpdd.org)

passed at the Federal level. The following year, Wisconsin enacted a state ABLE law, with the help of many disability organizations. I worked with these organizations and advocated with legislators at the state level. I continue to help push lawmakers to improve Wisconsin ABLE law.

MAPP stands for Medical Assistance Purchase Plan. In 2017, Governor Walker signed MAPP Reform into law. Under the old legislation, premiums were unfair. I have worked on changing this for six years. I am now part of the state work group that is making changes to make the MAPP premiums fairer for people with earnings over the poverty level.

Extensive advocacy on the Employment First law helped to shape the system to get departments to work with each other more efficiently. I advocated for this change and in 2018 Governor Walker signed the improved legislation into law.

I also advocated for the Partners with Business legislation. This employment law was signed by Governor Walker in 2018. I also advocated for Supported Decision Making, an important piece of legislation.

I still believe with my whole heart that Food Stamp/SNAP reform is vital for allowing people to work more without losing FoodShare benefits right away. To help people be more food secure. I think the Board should set its focus on making this specific program better for people with disabilities who use multiple public support programs. Part of building a full life includes food security.

Thanks for all the advocates, other Board members and staff, and legislators that have helped me throughout my Board service. Even after I leave the Board, I intend to continue being an advocate. Don't be surprised if you hear from me in the future as we all continue our work to make Wisconsin inclusive and more supportive of individuals with disabilities.

David Pinno