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## **BPDD Statement on Federal Executive Order on Homelessness that Impacts People with Disabilities**

The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities opposes the July 24 federal Executive Order order calling on federal agencies to prioritize funding for cities and states that adopt or enforce laws targeting unhoused individuals and those with visible mental health or substance use conditions. It encourages policies that expand involuntary treatment and restrict a housing-first approach that has a proven track record of reducing homelessness. BPDD also is concerned that the order directs federal agencies to collect data on people experiencing homelessness.

This Executive Order is rooted in old ideas and assumptions that take us back to outdated policies that were abandoned for good reason.

This Order shows a lack of understanding of who is homeless. The fastest growing homeless populations are older adults and families, many of them experiencing homelessness for the first time. People with disabilities are overly represented. Why? People on fixed incomes cannot absorb rising housing costs, and the lack of age-appropriate or accessible affordable housing. (citation <https://endhomelessness.org/state-of-homelessness/>)

Forcibly taking away people's rights and putting them into institutions is not effective, it's not treatment, and it doesn't change the underlying causes of homelessness.

People with Intellectual Disabilities have lived experience of what mass institutionalization as a policy approach means to individuals, families, and to communities. It is not a solution. It creates new problems.

BPDD is concerned this action will further harm people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), especially those who also experience mental health disabilities. The action increases the risk of institutionalization, surveillance, and criminalization for people who need access to community-based supports, not punishment. Forced treatment and expanded policing do not address the root causes of disability-related housing instability or address the national crisis in housing affordability.