THE WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Public Policy: The steps a government takes to act on behalf of the public. e.g. Creating laws, regulations, governmental bodies or allocating resources.

Legislation: The preparation and enactment of laws by a legislative body through its lawmaking process.

Stakeholders: Individuals or groups who have a vested interest in a given issue. On issues that affect mental health, stakeholders include people living with mental illness, their families and supporters, mental health care providers, advocates and other community members.

How a Bill Becomes a Law in Wisconsin:

- Basic guide to the Wisconsin legislative process (see infographic below), click here.
- More detailed booklet on the legislative process, click here.
- For a video of the process, click here.

1. A bill may be introduced in either the Senate or Assembly, where it is read by the Chief Clerk (“first reading”)

2. A committee studies the bill and often holds public hearings on it.

3. The committee votes on the bill and reports the bill “out of committee.” The bill is then referred to the “Rules Committee” to be placed on the calendar for debate.

4. At the second reading, a bill is subject to debate and amendment before being placed on the calendar for a third reading and final passage.

5. After passing one house, the bill goes through the same procedure (steps 1-5) in the other house. If one house makes amendments, the other must agree.

6. When the bill is accepted in both houses, it is signed by both leaders (Speaker of the House and Senate Leader) and sent to the Governor.

7. The Governor signs the bill into law or may veto parts or all of it. If this happens, the legislature may override the veto with a 2/3 vote in each house. If the Governor fails to act on a bill, it may become law without his/her signature.

What does the legislative process actually look like?

Watch LIVE coverage of Wisconsin politics and state community events on WisconsinEYE: www.wiseye.org
Wisconsin State Budget Process — How Does it Work?
- For a written overview, check out this article, courtesy of the Wisconsin Budget Project
- For a visual depiction, check out the infographic below, courtesy of the Wisconsin Alliance for Women’s Health. Infographic available online here (can enlarge).