



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Honorable Members of the Assembly Committee on Mental Health

**FROM:** Sarah Diedrick-Kasdorf, Deputy Director of Government Affairs

**DATE:** October 24, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Assembly Bill 538

The Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) would like to make the following comments on Assembly Bill 538, relating to transfer for emergency detention and warning of dangerousness.

The Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) reached out to WCA several years ago to develop statutory language that would ensure hospitals across the state are meeting their federal EMTALA obligations, while at the same time recognizing the role county crisis units play in the emergency detention process.

There are many players involved in the emergency detention process, thus making any changes to Chapter 51, an already complicated section of the statutes, difficult. There was significant back and forth between WHA, WCA, representatives from the county corporation counsel association, and county human services departments to develop language that ensures the best interests of an individual in crisis are met, while also ensuring the valuable role each entity plays in the emergency detention process is respected. After several years of meetings, conference calls, etc., Assembly Bill 538 was introduced that WCA believes protects the county role in the emergency detention process, while ensuring our partners are in compliance with federal law.

WCA is comfortable with the language contained in Assembly Bill 538 and looks forward to continuing work with our partners in the emergency detention process to ensure the best interests of our citizens are met.

Thank you for considering our comments.