



Phone: (920) 843-8083 Email: office@esther-foxvalley.org
Address: PO Box 784 Neenah, WI 54957 Website: esther-foxvalley.org

**ESTHER and WISDOM Wisconsin
Statement on the Signing of Wisconsin Assembly Bill 604**

April 8, 2026

Today, we celebrate the signing of Assembly Bill 604 into law. This is a meaningful step toward dignity, healing, and justice for incarcerated people and their families across Wisconsin.

By allowing eligible individuals to access Medical Assistance coverage in the critical weeks before release, AB 604 recognizes a simple truth: health care is a human right, and successful reentry begins with continuity of care. Too often, people leaving incarceration are forced to navigate untreated mental health needs, substance use disorders, chronic illnesses, and the trauma of reentry without support. This legislation helps close that gap.

This victory is about more than policy. It is about affirming the humanity of people returning home, reducing preventable overdose deaths, supporting mental health stabilization, and strengthening families and communities. When people have access to care before release, they are better positioned to secure housing, reconnect with loved ones, maintain employment, and avoid cycles of reincarceration.

AB 604 is also a public safety measure rooted in compassion and evidence. Communities are safer when reentry systems invest in treatment, support, and restoration rather than abandonment.

We commend the bipartisan lawmakers, directly impacted advocates, health justice organizers, and community partners whose leadership made this moment possible. Their work reflects a growing understanding that justice must include care, redemption, and real opportunities for people to thrive after incarceration.

While we celebrate this milestone, we know the work is far from over. Wisconsin must continue investing in policies that dismantle barriers to reentry, expand behavioral health access, and address the racial and economic inequities that drive incarceration in the first place. ESTHER and the rest of the WISDOM network will continue to advocate for these changes - until our justice system, truly, reflects its name.

Today, Wisconsin moved closer to a system that values people over punishment. We thank Governor Evers for signing AB 604 into law.