



**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 8, 2013

Interview: Bobby Peterson (608) 261-6939 ext. 201 (office) or (608) 444-7197 (cell)
Brynne McBride (608) 261-6939 ext. 210 (office) or (608) 279-2426 (cell)

Health Coverage Expansion Makes Moral, Fiscal Sense for Wisconsin

Madison, WI – More than a half a million people in Wisconsin are uninsured and many are underinsured. “Wisconsin people, including taxpayers, could benefit from health care coverage expansions in Wisconsin,” says Bobby Peterson, Public Interest Attorney at ABC for Health. Covering the uninsured tops Peterson’s lists of reasons to expand coverage in Wisconsin, as envisioned in the Affordable Care Act. Other reasons are fiscally motivated. “The Walker administration has a real opportunity to help local property tax payors, reduce uncompensated care costs, and save the state money,” says Peterson.

[Read the “Top 10 Reasons to Expand Health Care Coverage in Wisconsin.”](#)

ABC for Health’s “top ten” list emerges as Governor Walker must decide on whether to accept federal funding to expand health care coverage for more low-income families and individuals in Wisconsin. Peterson states that Wisconsin counties spend over \$500 million annually to pay for mental health and substance abuse services. Medicaid could cover some of these local payments and help reduce local property tax levies. Peterson also reminds us that Wisconsin ranks poorly in securing federal dollars. Peterson noted, “Expanding health coverage will bring home federal dollars to help promote economic growth and jobs in Wisconsin. Why should New York, California, and Illinois get our federal tax dollars and related economic growth and jobs?”

Similarly, Wisconsin hospitals provide over \$1.2 billion in uncompensated care annually for people without any health insurance or inadequate insurance. Peterson continues, “Most health systems that serve the uninsured socialize and redistribute uncompensated care costs to other payors, which results in higher overall health care costs that we all pay. A coverage expansion can reduce uncompensated care costs and cost shifting.”

Peterson concludes, “Walker must make a decision as the BadgerCare Plus Core Plan waiting list approaches 150,000, and the number of uninsured in our state exceeds 550,000 people. We have thousands of people in Wisconsin standing in an endless line, waiting for basic health coverage. Governor Walker has an important opportunity to lead and to recognize all the people in our state, including the poor and uninsured. We are willing to work with Governor to help these folks.”

ABC for Health is a Wisconsin-based, nonprofit, public interest law firm dedicated to linking children and families, particularly those with special health care needs, to health care benefits and services. ABC for Health’s mission is to provide information, advocacy tools, legal services and expert support needed to obtain, maintain, and finance health care coverage and services.