



**PRESS RELEASE
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Interview: Bobby Peterson (608) 261-6939 ext. 201 (office) or (608) 444-7197 (cell)

Walker Administration's Medicaid Waiver Request: Pick Your Poison

Madison, WI – On Friday, November 18, ABC for Health's HealthWatch Wisconsin project published a new edition of the "HealthWatch Reporter," a special report, analysis and commentary on the future of BadgerCare and Medicaid in Wisconsin. The HealthWatch Reporter is available to the media and public at the following link:

<http://www.safetyweb.org/healthwatchwi/reporters/reporter111811.htm>

On Thursday November 10, the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee approved a Department of Health Services proposal that imposes drastic eligibility and coverage limits to the BadgerCare Plus program. The proposal was then sent to federal regulators for approval. If approved, 64,748 individuals, approximately 29,000 of which are children, would be ineligible for BadgerCare Plus. If not approved, 53,000 adults and parents on BadgerCare could receive a New Year's Day notice of termination of benefits.

Bobby Peterson, public interest attorney and Executive Director of ABC for Health said, "The Joint Finance Committee rubber stamped a dangerous and foolish Department of Health Services proposal and failed in an essential responsibility to the people of Wisconsin." This edition of the HealthWatch Reporter tells how Joint Finance failed to consider the greater good and long term financial interests of the state. It also outlines how to comment on the proposal to federal officials.

The proposed waiver submitted to federal officials could directly impact 458,000 Wisconsin BadgerCare and Medicaid beneficiaries and millions more state residents indirectly through loss of federal health revenues and cost shifting due to higher uncompensated care like uncovered emergency room use. Peterson concluded, "But remember, damaging a program that affects 1.2 million people and many more family members and friends across Wisconsin is playing with fire. Before too long the smoldering will become a flame that could singe the short-sighted Republican majority."

ABC for Health, Inc. 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.

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