



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 10, 2011

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

Joint Finance Must Reject “BadgerCare Minus” Proposal

Madison, WI – On Thursday November 10, the Legislature’s Joint Finance Committee will review a Department of Health Services proposal that imposes drastic eligibility and coverage limits to the BadgerCare Plus program. The proposal, if not approved by federal regulators, could result in a New Year’s Day notice of termination of benefits for over 53,000 adults. Bobby Peterson, public interest attorney and Executive Director of ABC for Health wants Joint Finance Committee members to carefully consider the underlying motives of Wisconsin’s health secretary. “Mr. Smith proposes to model BadgerCare on a free market system that is badly misaligned with Wisconsin’s values,” Peterson noted. “Despite strong bi-partisan roots of BadgerCare Plus, the program is now being disassembled by highly partisan ideologues.”

Peterson calls the health secretary’s proposal “BadgerCare Minus.” He continued, “The Legislative Fiscal Bureau [report](#) confirms our suspicions, that this proposal is nothing more than attempt to drop large numbers of children and families from BadgerCare Plus, gutting Wisconsin’s successful programs.” Peterson says the result is hundreds of thousands of Wisconsinites displaced from care or completely uninsured. That translates into tens of millions of dollars in new uncompensated health care expenses. “Thousands will be forced into emergency room care and could lead to the largest redistribution and socialization of uncompensated care and medical debt I have seen in over 20 years of patient advocacy. Terminations of eligibility and massive amounts of new red tape only serve to drive up the cost of health care for everyone in Wisconsin.”

“The proposal is a futile attempt to drive people to small group and individual private insurance markets that have largely failed or are in the last stages of a death spiral. People need large risk pools and public private partnerships that are a hallmark of the BadgerCare Plus program that serves over 770, 000 friends neighbors and relatives. Large pools help spreads risk and lowers costs. Here, Smith proposes to rip holes in the BadgerCare pool to revive some dried up puddles,” says Peterson.

Peterson implores the Joint Finance Committee to take a smarter approach and examine better alternative to the DHS plan that rips massive holes in the successful BadgerCare pool. He proposes “[The Pathway Plan for 2012](#),” providing a creative and cost effective public-private partnership as an alternative to Wisconsin’s Department of Health Services proposed, destructive cuts to BadgerCare and Medicaid. Peterson says the Pathway Plan for 2012 could eventually cover all Wisconsin residents while providing high-quality care, continued choice, and strong consumer protections. “While building from a solid foundation, the Pathway Plan for 2012 proposes to expand health care coverage, significantly lower costs, and ensure that all Wisconsinites have access to both coverage and quality medical services.” BadgerCare costs for individual and extrapolated family coverage are estimated as anywhere from 37-67% less expensive than free market alternatives.



The Pathway Plan for 2012 creates a multi-payor Health Care Exchange on the foundation of Wisconsin's popular BadgerCare Plus program. The Plan uses risk pooling and purchasing leverage by reshaping our current system into combined large purchasing pools. In addition, the Pathway Plan for 2012 includes the vital components of outreach, education, and advocacy through the use of Health Benefits Counselors and Health Care Navigators.

Peterson concludes, "The Pathway Plan for 2012 is the smart route for Wisconsin to follow. Many industries have retooled during our down economy including the media, auto makers and others. The small group market with risk puddles and highly segregated risk is no longer viable. The large profit margins for these small groups of the past are gone and cannot be resurrected by destroying the large Badger Care pool. We need to give significant cost savings, public and private partnerships and consumer protections as outlined in the Pathway Plan a try."

HealthWatch Wisconsin discussed the proposal and waiver request in an edition of its popular web show, the "HealthWatch WatchDog." The show is available to the public and media at the following link: <http://96.60.62.171/mediasiteabc/Viewer/?peid=d16d05f7807649bb883eabfa12144da4>

In a follow-up web cast, Peterson discusses his alternative proposal, The Pathway Plan for 2012. This show is available to the public and media at the following link: <http://96.60.62.171/mediasiteabc/Viewer/?peid=e3dffb4038443b5a0684707e578770b>

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.