



**PRESS RELEASE  
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**ABC for Health Submits Comment to Feds on Wisconsin's Proposed BadgerCare Plus Waiver**

**Madison, WI** – On July 10, ABC for Health, Inc. submitted comments and concerns to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services on Wisconsin's Section 1115 Demonstration Waiver. The proposal seeks dramatic changes to the BadgerCare Plus program, such as adding drug testing, work requirements, and other substantive enrollment and eligibility penalties, mostly impacting adults without dependent children.

ABC for Health, Inc. Executive Director Bobby Peterson says, "Our comments reflect ABC for Health's perspective of over 23 years of direct client services for people seeking Medicaid and BadgerCare. Sadly, the proposed changes create unnecessary administrative hoops and hurdles that impede access to health coverage and care for otherwise eligible individuals – in this case, our lowest income and most vulnerable adults."

In its comments, ABC for Health strongly opposes the premium, work, and drug testing requirements the waiver would inflict on childless adults. Not only are they counterproductive and expensive, other states have found similar requirements to be ineffective and unconstitutional.

Peterson continues, "The waiver seeks authority to upend the Medicaid program, remove the entitlement and limit access to care and services. The waiver language perpetuates inappropriate stereotypes and uses paternalistic, demeaning language resurrected from the War on Drugs in the 80's and 90's. The waiver asserts that moral depravity and the lack of 'personal responsibility' are at the root of social problems, and fails to look at the social determinants of health like poverty, homelessness, and racism." Peterson suggests, "Instead of blaming the victim, Wisconsin and CMS should innovate and expand coverage options like BadgerCare Plus to promote large scale pooling and discounted care due to purchasing power and economic efficiencies. Wisconsin should accept federal Medicaid Expansion funds to help connect individuals and families to care, services, and treatment."

The comment period on the state's waiver request will end **JULY 15th**. ABC for Health urges people to share their story. The [waiver comment page](#) is not easy to find-the form is buried on the Medicaid.gov webpage. ABC for Health has made a video that explains the state's waiver and how to comment on it. Comments are due before the July 15 deadline. The video is available online: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQaugCKFHdY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQaugCKFHdY)  
ABC's letter is available in its entirety online: <http://safetyweb.org/news.html>

Peterson concludes, "In Wisconsin, about 144,000 childless adults rely on BadgerCare Plus to provide essential, affordable, and effective health care services. The impact of BadgerCare reaches thousands more--our friends, neighbors, grandparents, colleagues, and health care providers large and small in every county of Wisconsin. Once again, Wisconsin has released a proposal that radically restructures and limits benefits while creating a complicated eligibility maze - driven by ideology. This means increased costs to others as providers socialize and redistribute unpaid medical bills to small business, people with insurance, and other hospital patients – while watching their uncompensated care increase."

*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.*