

Create a Healthier Wisconsin by Insuring More People WCCF's recommendations relating to health care issues in the 2013-15 Budget

Increasing health care coverage is an important step in improving the health of Wisconsinites. Unfortunately, the Governor's budget decreases coverage by ending BadgerCare for about 89,000 parents and 6,000 childless adults over the poverty level. This was done in order to add to BadgerCare about 80,000 childless adults with income below the federal poverty level (FPL).

Although the Governor's plan would be a positive step for coverage of childless adults, alternative options would yield substantial savings for the state budget, cover far more people, reduce uncompensated care for hospitals, and help Wisconsin employers and the state economy.

We urge state lawmakers to do the following:

- 1. Expand coverage of childless adults to 133% of the federal poverty level (FPL), and retain current eligibility standards for parents.** – A preliminary Legislative Fiscal Bureau analysis shows that covering childless adults to 133% of FPL and preserving BadgerCare eligibility for parents would save about \$44 million in state funds in the 2013-15 biennium. Compared to the Governor's plan, our recommendation would result in far fewer uninsured Wisconsinites, reduce uncompensated care, and minimize the federal tax penalty for large employers whose employees are covered in the new health insurance exchanges.
- 2. Preserve quality, affordable care for pregnant women by retaining their current BadgerCare eligibility** – The Governor's proposal would end regular BadgerCare coverage for pregnant women over 133% of FPL, and instead would make their "unborn children" eligible, which results in inferior coverage for pregnant women. The Department of Health Services (DHS) said this was a mistake and changing coverage for pregnant women is not the Governor's intent. However, we need to be sure that legislators and the Governor correct that mistake.
- 3. Delete the proposed policy changes that could cause about 29,000 fewer children to be enrolled in BadgerCare.** – The bill seeks to resurrect changes DHS proposed in 2011, which could cause 29,000 children to lose BadgerCare coverage if/when federal officials allow those changes to be implemented. Nearly all of the proposals adversely affecting children were taken off the table last year as state and federal officials were negotiating the terms of an agreement on changing coverage for adults. Now DHS is seeking to revive all of them.
- 4. Support the mental health initiatives in the Governor's budget.** – The Governor's bill proposes to spend \$29 million of state funding for a number of commendable measures to improve access to mental health care.