

Dear lawmaker,

Wisconsin families need your help to retain access to affordable health coverage. Please do not cut adults or children from the very successful BadgerCare Plus program.

The state got some very good news in late December about BadgerCare. The Department of Health Services (DHS) now estimates that the anticipated Medicaid deficit has been reduced by \$322 million-- including \$127 million in state GPR funding and \$195 million in federal funds. This reduction in the program's deficit exceeds the amount that DHS had proposed to save from a series of mostly controversial changes to BadgerCare.

In addition, the state received a \$24.5 million performance bonus from the federal government in late December, and the state can expect a similar bonus in December 2012. Without even counting the bonus at the end of 2012, the recent developments yield a \$151 million GPR improvement in the state's Medicaid financing, which far exceeds the hoped-for savings of \$116 million GPR from all of the proposed changes to BadgerCare, including the Alternative Benchmark Plan.

As a Wisconsin lawmaker, please use your power to reconsider the changes to BadgerCare that DHS recommended when the deficit was thought to be \$322 million higher and DHS was required to cut that amount.

To achieve this cut, DHS had proposed BadgerCare modifications to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that would result in more than 64,000 people—including over 29,000 kids—losing their BadgerCare coverage, with an additional 263,000 seeing reduced coverage and much higher co-pay.

The Legislative Fiscal Bureau estimates that cutting BadgerCare enrollment by 29,000 kids would reduce the state's performance bonus payments and cost the state a little over \$10 million GPR per year, starting in the middle of 2012 (amounting to a \$15 million GPR cost to the state over the next 24 months). If application and eligibility standards were maintained, the state could expect a similar bonus payment in December 2012.

Equally troubling, reducing BadgerCare coverage by more than 64,000 people would cause thousands of Wisconsin families to become uninsured, thereby increasing reliance on emergency rooms, increasing hospitals' uncompensated care, and shifting costs to people with insurance.

We urge the Governor and legislators to take advantage of the reduced deficit and the federal bonus payments to avoid making changes to BadgerCare that would deprive children, people with disabilities, adults, and entire families of insurance coverage.

Thank you for your attention to this extremely important issue.

9to5 Milwaukee

Autism Society of Greater Madison

Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups

Community Advocates Public Policy Institute

Epilepsy Foundation Southern Wisconsin

First Steps Services Homeless Refugee Center

ABC for Health, Inc.

Citizen Action of Wisconsin

Community Action Coalition for South Central Wisconsin, Inc.

Disability Rights Wisconsin

Equality Wisconsin FUND

Greater Wisconsin Committee

Independent Living Council of Wisconsin	Linda & Gene Farley Chapter, PNHP
Madison Mennonite Church	Mental Health America of Wisconsin
NARAL Pro-Choice Wisconsin	National Association of Social Workers, Wisconsin
Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin	Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice – WI
Reproductive Justice Collective	Social Concerns Cmtte, Bradford Community Church
Southeast WI Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure	Stay in Balance
Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Organizations	WI FACETS
Wisconsin Alliance for Women’s Health	Wisconsin APSE
Wisconsin Breast Cancer Coalition	Wisconsin Ch., American Academy of Pediatrics
Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence	Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Wisconsin Council of Churches	Wisconsin Council on Children and Families
Wisconsin Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals	Wisconsin Prevention Network
Wisconsin Section of the American Congress of Obstetrics and Gynecologists	Wisconsin Voices
Wise Women Gathering Place	Women’s Medical Fund, Inc.

CC: Department of Health Services Secretary Dennis Smith