

# Community Advocates Public Policy Institute: Serious Concerns Remain about BadgerCare Waiver Request

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**Media Contact:** Mike Bare ([920-242-1639](tel:920-242-1639); [mbare@communityadvocates.net](mailto:mbare@communityadvocates.net)) or Lisa Kaiser ([414-270-2999](tel:414-270-2999); [lkaiser@communityadvocates.net](mailto:lkaiser@communityadvocates.net))

Milwaukee—Today, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services is taking public testimony on its waiver application to make major changes to the state's BadgerCare program. The Community Advocates Public Policy Institute welcomes this opportunity to share its opposition to the waiver.

The state seeks to add drug testing requirements, time limits on coverage, co-pays, and premium payments to a health care program intended for the most vulnerable Wisconsinites. Yet there is no evidence that these changes will improve health care access, reduce barriers to employment, or lessen drug use or abuse in the state. In addition, there's no price tag attached to this complex and likely very expensive waiver.

The Public Policy Institute strongly opposed these BadgerCare changes when they were passed as part of the 2015-2017 biennial state budget without a separate public hearing on them. Two years later, we are still concerned about the implementation and impact of these changes, but we also welcome the opportunity to publicly comment on them and raise concerns that we hope will be considered by the state and federal governments.

"If the state's goal is to make health care more affordable and accessible while reducing drug use, then this waiver should be denied," said Mike Bare, research and program coordinator for the Community Advocates Public Policy Institute. "If

approved, these changes will impose new burdens on Wisconsinites living near or below the poverty line, while increasing costs to taxpayers, health care providers, and those with health insurance. We shouldn't put vulnerable Wisconsinites' health at even greater risk."

A copy of Mike Bare's submitted comments on the waiver is attached to this email. Feel free to contact Bare for further comment at [920-242-1639](tel:920-242-1639) or [mbare@communityadvocates.net](mailto:mbare@communityadvocates.net).

*[Community Advocates](#) established the [Public Policy Institute](#) in 2008 to work toward preventing and reducing poverty while improving the quality of life for individuals and families in Milwaukee and throughout Wisconsin. The Public Policy Institute targets poverty by changing relevant public policies and laws; preventing its effects through public health efforts; and working to increase opportunity and wellness for low-income people by fostering factors related to success, resilience, and well-being.*