

# Rep. Riemer and Sen. Erpenbach: Past time to strengthen BadgerCare for working Wisconsin families

Posted on Thursday, Nov 2, 2017

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Madison – Since 2013, Republican politicians in Madison have turned their back on over a billion dollars of our own tax money by not expanding BadgerCare. Today, Representative Daniel Riemer (D – Milwaukee) and Senator Jon Erpenbach (D – Middleton) introduced legislation to expand access to BadgerCare for tens of thousands of Wisconsin citizens.

“From cancer patients to those recovering from addiction trying to get back on their feet, the number of people I’ve talked to that would benefit from being able to have BadgerCare is extensive,” said Sen. Erpenbach. “It’s past time for politics, the Affordable Care Act is the law of the land, and it’s time Wisconsin takes advantage.”

“Republicans in Washington have spent their time voting to take health care away from over 30 million Americans while giving health insurance companies the power to deny coverage to people with pre-existing conditions. Every step of the way, Governor Walker has been their greatest cheerleader,” said Rep. Riemer. “Today, we are doing what is right for the health and economic well-being of the people of Wisconsin by strengthening BadgerCare. That means providing affordable health insurance for those who need it, while at the same time saving our state’s bottom line hundreds of millions of dollars.”

Recent acts of the current administration in Washington have put the health care of people across Wisconsin and our country in unnecessary turmoil. The repercussions

of this – making health insurance less affordable for working people – could be greatly mitigated by covering Wisconsin citizens in BadgerCare Plus up to 133% of the federal poverty level.

Additionally, the failure of Congress to green light CHIP (Children’s Health Insurance Program) threatens to cost the state \$134 million to backfill the cost of the 120,000 Wisconsin children who rely on this important Medicaid program. This, along with the failure in Washington to keep the cost of health insurance down for working people, shows the urgency to strengthen BadgerCare now.

This legislation would allow a single person making up to \$16,000 a year, or a family of four with a household income of up to \$32,000, to enroll in Medicaid. According to the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau, this legislation would generate an additional \$286 million in revenue for the State of Wisconsin in this biennium alone.