

# Rep. Riemer and Sen. Erpenbach: Republican health care plan puts Wisconsin at risk

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**Madison** - Members of Congress are currently debating a bill put forward by Speaker Paul Ryan that would repeal the Affordable Care Act. The Congressional Budget Office found that this bill would drastically raise premiums on senior citizens, cause 24 million Americans to lose their health insurance, and defund Planned Parenthood. The bill rations health care to the elderly, people with disabilities, low-income children and families, and pregnant women by block granting Medicaid. The repeal of the Affordable Care Act and move toward Medicaid block grants could also strip health care coverage from 2.8 million Americans suffering from a substance abuse disorder.

State Representative Daniel Riemer (D—Milwaukee) and State Senator Jon Erpenbach (D—Middleton) released the following statement following their meeting and press conference with health care advocates and Wisconsinites who rely on Medicaid for their health care coverage:

“Converting Medicaid into a block grant of any kind is rationing health care for vulnerable Wisconsinites, plain and simple,” **said Rep. Riemer.** “Speaker Paul Ryan’s health care plan, pushed by President Trump, will lead to drastic funding cuts to Wisconsin’s Medicaid programs by implementing sweeping block grants. This puts lives at risk, jeopardizes women’s health, hinders mental health services, and diminishes long-term care for seniors and people with disabilities. This block

grant will lead to fewer people covered, fewer people getting preventive medicine, and more people who are sick not getting the care they need.”

Over 1.1 million citizens of Wisconsin rely on Medicaid services, such as BadgerCare, IRIS, FamilyCare, SeniorCare, and the Well Woman program, for their health and long-term care. Health care advocates who work with people every day to access and utilize these programs are concerned about what the over 1.1 million Wisconsinites and their families will do when the programs they depend on are targeted for cuts with a Medicaid block grant.

“The fact that Paul Ryan and Scott Walker are advocating for changing Medicaid over to a block grant or per capita system under the guise of more flexibility is a sham. States already have a lot of flexibility in coverage and services and Wisconsin has been a leader in requesting and receiving waivers specific to our state’s Medicaid population,” **said Sen. Erpenbach.** “Wisconsin doctors and hospitals rely on Medicaid to fund essential health care services in communities across our state, in both rural and urban areas. When Medicaid is cut, it will only add to the \$1 billion and growing hidden health care tax, shifting those costs on to those with private insurance.”

While Republicans continue to look for ways to profit politically from eliminating care for our most vulnerable citizens, Wisconsin Democrats will fight for fairness and opportunity in health care. Every citizen of Wisconsin deserves the chance to a productive member of their community, and Republican efforts to cut Medicaid funding by a third over the next decade, raise health care costs for seniors, and force 400,000 Wisconsinites to lose their health insurance prevents that from happening.