

# Evers announces partnership to boost Medicaid enrollment

Posted on Tuesday, Jun 4, 2019

With Republicans rejecting his call to expand Medicaid under Obamacare, Gov. Tony Evers announced a new partnership aimed at boosting the number of state residents enrolled in the existing program.

In a news conference on the steps of the Capitol Monday, Evers said the new partnership between the Department of Health Services and the Office of Commissioner of Insurance was designed to more widely distribute information about BadgerCare and private insurance options offered in the marketplace created by ACA.

“Getting our two agencies to work together to help ensure a smooth transition into private insurance and keeping a robust insurance marketplace vibrant will benefit all of Wisconsin,” he said.

Evers used the opportunity to continue lobbying for his Medicaid proposal. He noted that an estimated 82,000 people would be covered with an influx of federal dollars, which he said the general public overwhelmingly supports.

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“Seventy percent of the people in Wisconsin indicated in the most recent polls that they support Medicaid expansion,” he said. “We’re going to continue to fight for that.”

JFC Co-chair John Nygren said in a statement he agreed with Evers’ push to “connect more Wisconsinites to coverage” but said his proposed Medicaid expansion was not the way to go about it.

“I do not believe that expanding welfare is the right path for our state to expand

access to care and increase affordability,” the Marinette Republican said.

Under current law, the Medicaid program covers those making up the federal poverty line, which stands at just under \$12,490 per year. Evers’ budget proposed expanding coverage to those making up to 138 percent of the poverty line.

But Nygren in his statement noted that those making between 100 percent and 138 percent of the poverty line in Brown County were eligible for health care plans with deductibles as low as 18 cents per month.

“Instead of forcing individuals into government-run healthcare, we should prioritize connecting those who qualify for this highly-subsidized healthcare that they already are eligible for,” he said.

DHS Secretary Andrea Palm indicated the program’s “most intensive and important focus” would be on Wisconsinites who fall between 100 percent and 200 percent of the poverty line, who can fluctuate between Medicaid eligibility and private insurance.

Quizzed on whether the partnership could move forward without new Medicaid dollars, Palm said the program was designed to build on each other, but the two agencies could “operate them independently” should Medicaid expansion remain stalled.

See the release:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/2019/gov-evers-dept-of-health-services-and-insurance--commission-announce-health-care-coverage-partnership/>

See Nygren’s statement:

<https://www.wispolitics.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/-NygrenStatement-OCI-DHS-Partnership.pdf>