

Sen. Erpenbach and Riemer: Introduce Medicaid Expansion bill

Posted on Monday, Aug 5, 2019

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

(MADISON)—State Senator Jon Erpenbach stood with Governor Tony Evers and others today to announce that he will be introducing stand-alone legislation to increase the eligibility limit of the Wisconsin Medicaid program to 133% of the federal poverty level. Representative Daniel Riemer (D-Milwaukee) will introduce the Assembly companion.

“In 2019, 100% of the federal poverty limit is \$12,490 for a single person; you can’t make more than that and still qualify for BadgerCare,” said Erpenbach, (D-West Point) “That is not a lot of money. By increasing that number to 133% of the federal poverty level, or about \$16,612, what we are doing here today is helping real people take an extra shift and not making them choose between school supplies and insulin. The people stopping this bill don’t have to make that choice.”

According to the Department of Revenue, without expansion, taxpayers will pay more than \$2 billion over the next biennium in federal income taxes for other states to expand their Medicaid programs. Wisconsin state residents experience no return on these investments without the expansion of Medicare.

“Every time healthcare opponents don’t like an idea, they call it ‘welfare’ to try to make it sound bad. That’s what they’re doing with this proposal to expand Medicaid. All they are really doing is opposing a plan to cover tens of thousands of Wisconsinites and save Wisconsin hundreds of millions of dollars. What they actually support is sending billions of our tax dollars to other states. If they think it’s welfare, why do they support welfare for New Jersey and Illinois? Why do they oppose healthcare for Wisconsinites who need it?” said Rep. Riemer.

The fiscal irresponsibility from Republicans continues to be a losing issue for them, which is why Wisconsinites have seen Republican legislators survey their districts on the issue using terms like “welfare” and “government-run healthcare”. Meanwhile, when given the facts, Medicaid Expansion continues to poll at over 70%, and there is no logical reason to reject a proposal to accept the federal funds. Expansion puts our tax dollars to work in Wisconsin, ensures more Wisconsinites are covered, and saves the state \$324.5 million which can be reinvested back into the health care system to expand services and access to care across the state.

Erpenbach and Riemer will circulate a bill for co-sponsorship and look forward to having the support of the Republican legislators who have spoken in favor of Medicaid Expansion in the past.