

# Wikler: First priority getting party more involved in fight to expand Medicaid

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New Dem Chair Ben Wikler said his first order of business will be getting the state party more involved in the fight to expand Medicaid in Wisconsin.

Gov. Tony Evers had proposed in his budget accepting federal money under the Affordable Care Act to expand the program. Republicans have pulled that provision from the budget, but Evers has continued to press for expansion in public appearances.

“We have a party that is hungry to stand up for Wisconsin families on an issue where Republicans are on the wrong side of history,” Wikler said.

Wikler bested Rep. David Bowen, who had served as first vice chair for the past four years, by a more than 4-to-1 margin. Wikler said he personally called every delegate as he campaigned for the office.

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“Our entire slate ran on the premise that organizing is the heart of winning elections for Democrats,” Wikler said.

Wikler, who resigned as a senior adviser to MoveOn.org to campaign, said he will serve as a full-time chair. Outgoing Chair Martha Laning will stay on through a transition period, but Wikler will now be the lead in making party decisions.

He said one of his top priorities will be continuing to build the party’s infrastructure going into the 2020 presidential election.

“We’re going to build a powerhouse operation like no one in Wisconsin has ever seen to make sure Wisconsin is a blue brick wall for the presidential election,” Wikler said.