

# Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association: Top ten reasons to support Medicaid expansion - #1 all kids deserve a healthy start

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Contact: Sashi Gregory, 608-443-2943

## **[#1: All Kids Deserve a Healthy Start](#)**

WPHCA's Top Ten Reasons to Support Medicaid Expansion

Madison, WI – Wisconsin Health Centers have first-hand experience addressing the needs of underserved Wisconsinites struggling to balance the high cost of housing, food, childcare, transportation and health care. Health Centers provide comprehensive medical, dental and behavioral health services to over 314,000 people in communities across the state who otherwise would not receive it.

Expanding eligibility for BadgerCare, Wisconsin's Medicaid program, to 138% of the Federal Poverty Level would extend care to 82,000 Wisconsinites.

“Children will benefit greatly under the expansion of BadgerCare eligibility,” said Stephanie Harrison, CEO of the Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association (WPHCA). “Not only because some children would also gain better access to care, but because those who would gain coverage are parents, care givers, child care workers, home health workers, and many other hardworking individuals who find insurance unaffordable and directly impact the lives of thousands of kids in Wisconsin.”

[Research has shown](#) that covering more parents helps kids get covered and receive

the necessary preventive and developmentally appropriate services to help them thrive.

In addition, Wisconsin faces some serious health issues in its infant and adolescent populations, that need to be addressed;

- Children continue to lack access to basic dental services in Wisconsin, and access to dental care by children enrolled in BadgerCare ranks 45<sup>th</sup> in the nation in 2017 according to [data from CMS](#).
- According to a [2018 study by Mental Health America](#), Wisconsin ranks 42<sup>nd</sup> in the nation for youth with a major depressive episode who did not receive mental health services
- Wisconsin's infant mortality rate for black infants is the highest in the nation at 14.28 per 1,000 live births, according to a [2018 CDC National Center for Health Statistics Report](#).

The expansion of BadgerCare would bring in additional needed federal dollars to help support programs that increase children's access to oral and behavioral health care and combat infant mortality.

The Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association and our Health Center members appreciate Governor Tony Evers' and the Wisconsin Legislature's strong commitment to public health. We respectfully request we take advantage of the opportunity that expanding BadgerCare presents to promote the health and well-being of all Wisconsin communities, and giving all kids the healthy start they deserve.