Gov. Evers: Announces second package of comprehensive legislative proposals providing COVID-19 relief and support

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today announced a second package of comprehensive legislative proposals that would provide critical investments in health services, support for essential workers, and assistance for Wisconsin families and businesses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The governor's announcement today comes just days after Gov. Evers announced a first piece of legislation, which included additional funding and flexibility for public health professionals and healthcare professionals, a repeal of the one-week waiting period for unemployment insurance, expanding and improving access to telehealth services, among many other proposals.

"What the federal government has passed is a great start, but I am concerned it does not go nearly far enough. We need to take aggressive legislative steps here in Wisconsin for not only the health and safety of our families and workers, but for our state's economy," said Gov. Evers. "I'm calling on the Legislature to convene without any further delay to take up these proposals supporting our healthcare providers, essential workers, small businesses, and families across our state who need our help during this difficult time. These are unprecedented times, but we must remember that we are all in this together. We need to do everything we can to support those who need it."

As additional needs and issues arise from agencies and stakeholders, the governor is committed to working with legislators to find bipartisan solutions. The governor's office welcomes the opportunity to hear and consider any proposals that legislators have to address the impacts of COVID-19 on the health and well-being of Wisconsin residents, businesses and communities.

This package, among many other proposals, includes:
• Increasing funding for Medicaid providers via supplemental payments and rate increases to support the healthcare system's response to the public health emergency;
• Establishing a fund to reduce providers' uncompensated care costs targeting reimbursement for treatment-related costs for uninsured individuals;
• Establishing a COVID-19 reinsurance program to reduce health insurance premiums;
• Providing grant funding to provide food assistance and meal delivery;
• Prohibiting utility cooperatives from disconnecting customers and prohibiting land-lord directed disconnections from rental units during a public health emergency;
• Ensuring workers receive back payment for any lost unemployment insurance benefits as a result of the delay in suspending the one-week waiting period;
• Providing supplemental payments to child care providers, if that provider needed to shut down during the public health emergency;
• Allowing households to apply for heating assistance under the low-income energy assistance program anytime during the 2020 calendar year;
• Increasing the Earned Income Tax Credit for low-income families;
• Providing municipalities the flexibility to implement multiple installments of three or more payments for 2020 property taxes;
• Waiving interest and penalties on delinquent property taxes included in the 2019 payable 2020 tax roll, on and after April 1, 2020;
• Creating a fund through the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Association to provide 6 months of support for prevention of single-family foreclosures and providing refinancing opportunities to current borrowers; and
• Providing grant funding for small businesses and workers through the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation.
The governor's first COVID-19-related legislation was introduced last week as LRB-5920 and is available here for review. A brief explanation of LRB-5920 is available here. A brief explanation of the governor's second round of proposed legislation announced today is available here.