

Rep. Duchow: Votes for COVID-19 response bill

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Madison, WI – State Representative Cindi Duchow (R-Delafield) voted with her colleagues in the Assembly to approve the COVID-19 Response Bill during Tuesday’s extraordinary session. Assembly Bill 1038, which passed by a vote of 97-2, aims to help the state address the challenges from the coronavirus outbreak and assist Wisconsinites who are out of work.

“This bipartisan bill provides level of certainty to our health care professionals, affected businesses and workforce during these very uncertain times,” said Rep. Duchow. “The people of Wisconsin have been doing their part by staying home and social distancing, and I am happy the legislature was able to do our part by passing this bill.”

In addition to retroactively eliminating the one-week waiting period for unemployment insurance benefits for claims made after March 12 and running through February 7, 2021, this bill allows the state to capture more Medicaid dollars from the federal government.

The legislation also provides for the following:

- Eases licensing requirements for health care professionals and emergency medical responders
- Allows pharmacists to extend prescriptions
- Expands SeniorCare to include coverage of vaccinations
- Ensures no co-pays for COVID-19 testing

- Prohibits health insurance coverage discrimination based on COVID-19
- Provides the needed flexibilities for school districts to complete the school year online
- Sets aside \$75 million to address future, unexpected needs that federal dollars don't cover
- Requires the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to develop a plan to assist the state's main industries (tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, construction and retail)

“Legislative leaders from both houses came together and worked for the benefit of all Wisconsinites,” said Rep. Duchow. “By passing this bill, we ensure the state can continue responding to the current public health emergency.”

This legislation, which now heads to the Senate for consideration on Wednesday, ensures Wisconsin will receive the entire \$2 billion in federal assistance that Governor Evers has sole discretion over spending. Rep. Duchow and the Assembly Republicans have asked the governor to prioritize the needs of the health care industry, workers, small businesses and local governments when allocating these dollars.