

# Evers calls special session on Medicaid expansion, proposes economic development projects with additional federal money

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Gov. Tony Evers, rebuffed multiple times by Republican lawmakers over expanding Medicaid, today announced a special session to take up covering an additional 90,000 Wisconsinites through the program.

To up the pressure on GOP lawmakers to accept expansion, Evers announced \$850 million in projects, including economic development work, he said would be covered by an additional \$1 billion in federal funds the expansion would draw. The rest of the money would go into the budget stabilization fund, he said.

Evers warned that Republicans who shoot down his call to expand Medicaid this time also would be rejecting projects in their districts. He said many of the projects he'd fund with the additional federal money were proposed by Republican lawmakers.

"At the end of the day, this has to be about the health care of Wisconsinites," Evers said. "But if that isn't a concern of theirs, a concern of theirs will be, 'What project am I voting down?'"

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During a news conference in Middleton, Evers signed an executive order calling the special session May 25. Evers can call a special session, but can't force the Legislature to meet and take up the proposal.

GOP legislative leaders were unswayed with Senate President Chris Kapenga, R-

Delafield, and Assembly Majority Leader Jim Steineke, R-Kaukauna, saying Evers should fund the projects he included in his proposal with the “mountain of federal funds at his direct disposal.” The state is expected to receive \$2.5 billion in federal COVID stimulus funds split evenly between two payments, one this spring and one next year.

“This is a thinly-veiled political maneuver by the Governor. We intend to gavel out this unserious stunt,” the GOP leaders said.

Evers’ budget accounted for an additional \$1.4 billion in federal money that would be generated over the biennium to help cover the costs of providing coverage for an additional 90,000 people. It also accounted for \$634 million in general-purpose revenue savings over two years that would result from expansion.

Since Evers announced his budget, the federal government approved a COVID-19 relief package that included a \$1 billion sweetener to encourage states like Wisconsin that haven’t expanded Medicaid to make the move.

The economic development projects Evers announced today would be covered by those one-time funds.

Today’s announcement comes after the GOP-controlled Joint Finance Committee already rejected Evers’ call to expand the program and pulled it from the budget.

See the [release](#).

See more in today’s PM Update.