

# Protect Our Care: Sen. Baldwin and health advocates to Wisconsin legislative republicans “expand badgercare now”

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**WISCONSIN** — Today, US Senator Tammy Baldwin joined health care advocates from across Wisconsin for a discussion focused on Medicaid expansion hosted by Citizen Action of Wisconsin and Protect Our Care Wisconsin.

Moderated by State Rep. Jodi Emerson, the discussion included the perspectives of both a retired pediatrician who spoke eloquently about the duty to care and centrality of health care in the human experience and the co-owner of a caregiving facility treating disabled adults. Speakers had a simple message for Republicans in the state legislature - expand BadgerCare now.

Wisconsin is one of just 14 states that has refused to accept the federal expansion of Medicaid available under the Affordable Care Act. Recently, the non-partisan Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau estimated that choice has cost Wisconsin taxpayers \$1.6 billion since 2014. The American Rescue Plan, signed into law by President Biden last month, offers additional incentives to “holdout” states like Wisconsin to accept the expansion.

The additional federal dollars now available to Wisconsin and other states appear to have changed the calculus in several so-called “Red” states who are moving towards accepting the expansion.

“We need to do this for our patients, for our community, and for our health care workers,” said Mark Neumann, a retired pediatrician from the Driftless region.

Kim Larsen, the HR director and co-owner of a long term care facility serving adults with disabilities noted the current (and growing) crisis in meeting the demand for caregiving. “I get calls every week from adult children desperately seeking placement for their elderly parents,” she said. Larsen focused on the impact Badgercare expansion would have on caregivers themselves, pleading with legislators to, “Show our caregivers how essential they truly are.”

State Rep. Jodi Emerson noted the value of access to affordable health care beyond the needs of individual patients, put on full display during the pandemic, pointing out that “If we want a healthy, thriving community people need to have access to health care.”

In her remarks, US Senator Tammy Baldwin reminded viewers of the toll the pandemic has taken on so many families, noting the historic job loss and associated impacts of the employer based coverage system that defines American health care.

“People in Wisconsin must have quality, affordable health care coverage during and after this crisis,” Baldwin said. “Wisconsin needs to accept the federal investment in Badgercare *now*.”

To view a recording of the live streamed event, click [here](#).