

U.S. Rep. Kind: Calls on Wisconsin Legislature to put aside partisan politics and expand BadgerCare

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Washington, DC – Today, **Rep. Ron Kind** sent a letter to Wisconsin Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu and Assembly Speaker Robin Vos urging them to stop playing politics and accept federal investments to expand BadgerCare as proposed in Governor Tony Evers's 2021-2023 Budget.

Wisconsin is one of only 12 states that have failed to fully expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, costing the state \$2.1 billion since 2014. Now, the recently passed American Rescue Plan is providing financial incentives to states that newly expand Medicaid to adults earning up to 138% of the federal poverty level, and Wisconsin stands to receive \$1 billion in additional federal funding if state leaders adopt Medicaid expansion. This common-sense proposal will guarantee access to health care for thousands of Wisconsinites while also saving taxpayers money.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored that leaders need to do what we can to ensure all Wisconsinites have access to quality, affordable health care,” said **Rep. Ron Kind**. “The refusal by the State Legislature to accept federal investments to expand BadgerCare over the years has only hurt us, undermining the health of Wisconsinites at the expense of our taxpayers. Now more than ever, we cannot afford to have health care be used as a political football. It’s past time to put partisanship aside and accept the \$1 billion in available federal funding for BadgerCare expansion so we can guarantee access to health care for thousands of Wisconsinites and save taxpayers money.”

Medicaid expansion will guarantee access to health care coverage for an additional 90,000 Wisconsinites. Studies have demonstrated that expanding Medicaid improves health outcomes and reduces premature deaths. People in states that have expanded Medicaid are more likely to receive regular check-ups, including screenings for potentially life-threatening conditions such as heart disease and cancer. Medicaid expansion could also help combat the opioid epidemic in Wisconsin by expanding access to mental health and substance abuse treatment.

Wisconsin's previous governor and State Legislature opted not to accept federal funding for Medicaid expansion. Rep. Kind called on him 11 times to put partisan politics aside and accept Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act.

Read the letter [here](#).