

# Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities: Senate passes Medicaid bills impacting family caregivers and people with disabilities in BadgerCare

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The state Senate passed two bills, AB 934 and AB 936, that will impact people with disabilities and family caregivers who have healthcare in BadgerCare.

BadgerCare covers some people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) who do not meet the criteria for long-term care programs, people waiting for a disability determination, people with chronic or intermittent conditions that can result in fluctuations in work hours and status, people with undiagnosed I/DD, family caregivers of people with disabilities, and many Direct Care workers people with disabilities rely on for daily care needs.

**AB-934** would require people in BadgerCare to reapply every six months, doubling the amount of paperwork and time needed to keep their health care coverage. It also requires applicants to start from scratch every time, refilling the same information into blank forms. Any errors could mean no health care for six months.

“Navigating Medicaid administrative requirements and paperwork is already difficult, mentally and emotionally taxing, and burdensome for people with disabilities and family members,” said Beth Swedeen. “Increasing the frequency of this already repetitive renewal process will be especially challenging for people who have cognitive processing delays, are non-readers, are in unstable housing, who have little or no access to internet, and have a constant level of daily crisis that

impacts their lives.”

**AB-936** would penalize BadgerCare participants, many of whom are already working, for turning down additional hours or pay increases that jeopardize their continued eligibility for BadgerCare health coverage by suspending their health care coverage for six months.

Many people with disabilities in BadgerCare already work and would not be captured under the bill’s current exemption categories.

The bill includes a narrow exemption for family caregivers of adults with disabilities, but many family caregivers would still be subject to these new requirements. The bill does not appear to exempt family caregivers caring for working adults with disabilities earning more than substantial gainful activity—encouraged by the Social Security administration—who cannot be claimed as a dependent (i.e., earn more than \$4,150 per year), caregivers of people waiting for a disability determinacy, people with disabilities who do not receive SSI, or those with chronic or intermittent conditions.

[Many family caregivers of adults with disabilities have been forced to leave the paid workforce or reduce employment hours to care for loved ones.](#)

“Many people with disabilities in BadgerCare work part-time, intermittently due to seasonal employment or changes in health status and have increases and decreases in hours and income due to shift schedule changes or job changes,” said Swedeen. “Whether an individual or family caregiver accepts a given job offer, increase in hours, or pay raise can depend on many factors—including non-driver transportation options, individual’s skills and interests and health status, job duties, and care needs schedule. Turning down a raise or hours shouldn’t result in loss of health care coverage.”

*BPDD is charged under the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act with advocacy, capacity building, and systems change to improve self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion in all facets of community life for people with developmental disabilities*[\[1\]](#).

[\[1\] More about BPDD https://wi-bpdd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/-Legislative\\_Overview\\_BPDD.pdf .](https://wi-bpdd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/-Legislative_Overview_BPDD.pdf)