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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kids Forward Urges Legislators to Reconsider Medicaid Expansion

The following is a statement by Ken Taylor, executive director of Kids Forward, regarding the Joint Finance Committee's vote Thursday to delete from the budget bill the Governor's proposal to expand the state Medicaid program, and to turn down the increase federal funding that would more than pay for that expansion.

Because the motion approved Thursday by the Joint Finance Committee creates a huge hole in the budget bill, it will be very apparent as budget deliberations continue that the legislature should reverse the preliminary decision to reject increased federal Medicaid funds.

Rejecting Wisconsin's rightful share of federal Medicaid funding will make it nearly impossible to fund the much needed health care investments contained in the governor's budget, such as increases in mental health and substance use treatment, the Healthy Women/ Healthy Babies initiative, and increased access to dental care.

Rejecting Medicaid expansion would also squander an opportunity to reduce the number of uninsured Wisconsinites and the amount of uncompensated care for hospitals. If the legislature fails to reverse the preliminary choice made on Thursday, single childless adults who have minimum wage jobs will continue to be ineligible for BadgerCare and will continue in many cases to be uninsured.

As the legislative process continues, we urge legislators to side with the large majority of Wisconsinites who want our state to expand BadgerCare and to accept the increased federal funding that most other states have been getting since 2014.

