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SEN. JACQUE'S PRE-EXISTING CONDITION GUARANTEED COVERAGE ACT CLEARS ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE NEARLY UNANIMOUSLY

Bill protects Wisconsinites' access to coverage regardless of medical challenges they face

MADISON... Health insurance companies would not be able to deny Wisconsin citizens policies on the basis of their pre-existing conditions, exclude coverage for treatment of their health conditions, or charge higher premiums on the basis of their medical histories, under legislation passed in a 10-1 vote Wednesday in the Assembly Committee on Insurance.

State Sen. André Jacques (R- De Pere), author of the measure along with Rep. Gae Magnafici, said it was important to put these protections into state law, due to uncertainty at the federal level.

"One of the most important things we can do as a legislature is to safeguard the well-being of our constituents," Sen. Jacques said. "This legislation will help ensure that Wisconsin residents won't be denied access to life-saving treatments or necessary healthcare just because of their medical history."

Sen. Jacques said the measure protects access to health insurance by:

- Guaranteeing coverage despite having a pre-existing condition;
- Preventing premium rates from increasing based on your condition;
- Preventing the limiting of treatments based on your condition; and
- Preventing lifetime caps, ensuring that if you have health insurance, you can use it

"While this language is currently codified in federal law, the people of Wisconsin should rest easy knowing they won't be denied stable health coverage in our state due to changes at the national level," Sen. Jacques said. "Wisconsin is already a leader in healthcare quality, and this bill would help us maintain that high standard."

Sen. Jacques said the legislation, which passed the full Assembly last session, should again bring lawmakers together on a bi-partisan basis to put these protections in place.

"We've all spoken to people about health insurance, and we all know someone with serious medical issues," Sen. Jacques said. "People enduring everything from cancer to high risk pregnancies to migraines have enough to worry about without also having to worry about their health insurance coverage."

The Pre-Existing Coverage Guarantee Act (Assembly Bill 34) now heads for a vote in the full Assembly.

Senator André Jacques represents Northeast Wisconsin's First Senate District, consisting of Door and Kewaunee Counties and portions of Brown, Calumet, Manitowoc, and Outagamie counties.