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Medicaid bills up for Assembly vote

Amendments improve but do not fully resolve concerns for family caregivers and people with disabilities in BadgerCare

Two bills, AB 934 and AB 936, headed for an Assembly floor vote today include important amendments that help many, but not all, people with disabilities and family caregivers.

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.

The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD) appreciates the amendment to the bill that exempts people in Medicaid long term care programs--Family Care, IRIS, PACE/Partnership, Children's Long Term Care Services (CLTS)—the Katie Beckett program which serves disabled children; and the Medical Assistance Purchase Plan (MAPP), the Medicaid-buy in work incentive program for people with disabilities.

People with disabilities who do not meet a nursing home level of care, family caregivers, Direct Care workers in BadgerCare would still be subject to the increased administrative requirements.

"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. BPDD appreciates the amendment that adds an exception for family caregivers of adults with disabilities and older adults. [Many of these caregivers have been forced to leave the paid workforce or reduce employment hours to care for loved ones.](#) While we believe this amendment is not fully inclusive of all family caregivers, we welcome efforts that recognize the significant challenges family caregivers face.

BadgerCare covers some people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) who do not meet a nursing home level of care, 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 who people with disabilities rely on for daily care needs. Many people with disabilities and caregivers in BadgerCare already work, and would not be captured under the bill's current exemption categories.



“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 accepts a given job offer, increase in hours, or pay raise can depend on many factors—including non-driver transportation options, an individual’s skills and health status, and job duties. 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 disabilities¹.

¹ More about BPDD https://wi-bpdd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Legislative_Overview_BPDD.pdf.