



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Medicaid Bills Could Harm Older Adults and Caregivers

Two bills (AB 934 & AB 936) moving swiftly through the legislative process will impose burdensome new requirements, making it more difficult for older adults, family caregivers, and others to keep their critical health care coverage.

AB 934 requires BadgerCare Plus participants to reapply for program eligibility every six months instead of annually. This creates double the work for applicants, who must gather all the information and fill out the required forms twice as often, and for the workers who process the applications. Missed deadlines could result in disenrollment and reporting errors could result in losing health care coverage for six months. Further complicating the eligibility renewal process, this legislation prohibits the Department of Health Services from using prepopulated forms or otherwise supplying information, other than name and address, to program participants or applicants, even if the Department has the information.

BadgerCare Plus participants include adults (up to age 64) with disabilities and chronic conditions who do not meet eligibility requirements for Medicaid long-term care programs, individuals waiting for disability determinations (which can take months and years), people with undiagnosed disabilities, and individuals who in addition to juggling the responsibilities of work and their own families are also providing care to a family member(s). Navigating the complex maze of systems and services can already be challenging without the additional stress of more paperwork, deadlines, and the fear of losing critical health care coverage.

AB 936 makes BadgerCare Plus participants, many of whom are already working, ineligible for benefits for six months if they turn down additional work hours or additional wages. Many low-wage workers (such as those providing direct care services to older adults and people with disabilities) would lose far more than they gain from the additional hours. The additional wages are unlikely to be enough to cover health care costs and other lost benefits. In addition, family caregivers, including those caring for a loved one who is not a dependent (individuals caring for

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promotions requiring additional time commitments. For those with disabilities on BadgerCare Plus who lack any official determination, it may be difficult, if not impossible, to take on additional work hours.

The Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, Inc. (GWAAR) encourages policy makers to oppose these bills and to support Medicaid expansion, paid family and medical leave, caregiver tax credits, and the elimination of benefit cliffs to further strengthen Wisconsin's workforce.

About GWAAR

The Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, Inc. is a nonprofit agency committed to supporting the successful delivery of aging programs and services in 70 counties and 11 tribes in Wisconsin. We provide lead aging agencies in our service area with advocacy support, training, and technical assistance to ensure the availability and quality of programs and services to meet the changing needs of older people in Wisconsin.

Working together to promote, protect, and enhance
the well-being of older people in Wisconsin.

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