



**PRESS ADVISORY  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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Interview:

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**Conference “Takes Stock” of Medicaid and Health Reform Implementation in Wisconsin**  
*2011 HealthWatch Award Winners Announced*

**Madison, WI** –The 5th Annual HealthWatch Wisconsin Conference convenes next week to take stock of Wisconsin’s proposed cuts to Medicaid and freezing of health reform implementation. The conference theme asks the question, “Waive goodbye to Medicaid?” to reflect Wisconsin’s recent federal waiver request to dramatically change eligibility and coverage under the state’s popular BadgerCare and Medicaid programs. “Suddenly, health reform questions abound in Wisconsin, with emergency rules, executive orders, and money returned to Washington,” noted Public Interest Attorney Bobby Peterson. The conference will include policy-makers, health care advocates, and consumers to share information and learn about emerging new policies and the latest strategies to help guide people to the health care and coverage they need and deserve.

The HealthWatch Wisconsin Conference is February 27 & 28 at the Best Western Inn on the Park in Madison. The event will begin at 1:00pm on Monday with keynote speaker United States Department of Health and Human Services Regional Director **Ken Munson**, Midwest regional representative for Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. He will introduce the session called “Health Reform Implementation in Wisconsin.” Following Mr. Munson is Wisconsin Department of Health Services Secretary **Dennis Smith**, who will provide another perspective on health reform. Other panels include, “Health Reform Exchanges in Wisconsin: Contrasting Viewpoints,” “Identifying Medicaid Fraud,” and “Fighting Back: Strategies Insurers Don’t Want You to Know.” HealthWatch also brings back its very popular legislative panel and public hearings where the people of Wisconsin can share their health care stories. In addition, the conference presentations will include startling new information on infant mortality and birth cost recovery. “We will look at unique policies in Wisconsin and challenges faced by low-income pregnant women seeking prenatal health care,” says Peterson. **An embargoed copy of the latest HealthWatch Reporter “Is Birth Cost Recovery the Missing Piece of the Infant Mortality Puzzle?” is available to the press upon request** (Email Adam for your copy: [avanspankeren@safetyweb.org](mailto:avanspankeren@safetyweb.org)).

**2011 HealthWatch Wisconsin Award Winners:** The annual event also includes an awards luncheon, Tuesday, February 28 at 12:15pm that honors this year’s awardees including: Advocate of the Year: **Susan Garcia Franz**, WI Well Woman Program; Outstanding Outreach Effort of the Year: **The Save BadgerCare Coalition**; and Outstanding Media: **Shawn Doherty**, The Capital Times. “We honor and celebrate those who work hard to inform educate and advocate about access to health care and coverage for the people of Wisconsin,” said Peterson.

**Public Hearing:** HealthWatch Wisconsin will sponsor a public hearing on the impact of BadgerCare and Medicaid programs on the people of Wisconsin. The hearing is free and open to the public, running Tuesday, February 28 from 2:30 to 4:00pm, also at the Inn on the Park in





Madison. HealthWatch staff will record participant's testimony and share these perspectives with Wisconsin's elected officials.

**If You Go:**

**What:** The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual HealthWatch Wisconsin Conference

**Date:** Monday, February 27, 2012, 1:00pm-4:30pm; Tuesday, February 28, 2012, 9:00am-4:30pm

**Place:** Best Western Inn on the Park (22 S. Carroll St., Madison)

**Register:** There is a cost to attend the full conference, but the public hearing on Tuesday is free and open to the public. Space is limited, but there is an opportunity to register at the door.

**Online:** Conference agenda and registration information is online: [www.healthwatchwisconsin.org](http://www.healthwatchwisconsin.org)

*HealthWatch Wisconsin is a project of ABC for Health, Inc., a Wisconsin-based, nonprofit, public interest law firm dedicated to linking children and families, particularly those with special health care needs, to health care benefits and services. ABC for Health's mission is to provide information, advocacy tools, legal services, and expert support needed to obtain, maintain, and finance health care coverage and services.*

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