



**PRESS RELEASE  
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**“BadgerCare Minus” Proposal Unveiled by Wisconsin’s Department of Health Services**

**Madison, WI** – On a Friday afternoon, on the cusp of one of the busiest sports weekends in Wisconsin history, the Department of Health Services led by Secretary Dennis Smith released details on new, drastic cuts and myriad red tape to BadgerCare Plus and Medicaid. The proposal drew harsh reactions. Bobby Peterson, public interest attorney and Executive Director of ABC for Health called the proposal “BadgerCare Minus.” He continued, “The Smith proposal could result in tens of thousands of Wisconsin families and children becoming uninsured and tens of millions of dollars in new uncompensated health care expenses. This ‘socialized medical debt’ will drive up the cost of health care for everyone and is a very irresponsible direction for the state of Wisconsin.”

Peterson continued, commenting on the tagline slogan of the Department’s proposal, “fair and focused. “Dennis Smith and the administration have transformed the progressive BadgerCare Plus program into BadgerCare minus. A so called ‘fair and focused’ proposal is, in sad reality, ‘flawed and foolish’ and a raw deal for the people of Wisconsin,” said Peterson.

HealthWatch Wisconsin discussed the proposal and waiver request in an edition of its popular web show, the “HealthWatch WatchDog.” The show is available to the public and media at the following link: <http://96.60.62.171/mediasiteabc/Viewer/?peid=d16d05f7807649bb883eabfa12144da4>

“The proposal is a futile attempt to drive people to private insurance markets that have largely failed or are in the last stages of a death spiral. People need large risk pools and public private partnerships that are a hallmark of the BadgerCare Plus program that serves over 770, 000 friends neighbors and relatives. Large pools help spreads risk and lowers costs. Here, Smith proposes to rip holes in the BadgerCare pool to revive some dried up puddles,” quipped Peterson.

Once submitted, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services have 90 days to review some of the requested cuts and changes. If a decision is not made by December 31, 2011, Wisconsin law, part of the budget, directs the state to drop some 53,000 parents on BadgerCare Plus and enrollees in the BadgerCare Plus Core Plan. “Dennis Smith and his leadership team really fumbled the ball with this proposal. People need to recognize the political fingerprints that are all over this proposal. This proposal is a high-stakes chess game between the Walker Administration and Obama Administration. Sadly 53,000 real people across Wisconsin are the political pawns,” concluded Peterson.

ABC for Health, Inc. is 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.