



**PRESS RELEASE
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ABC for Health Submits Comment on Wisconsin's Proposed BadgerCare Plus Waiver

Madison, WI – On May 17, ABC for Health, Inc. submitted comments and concerns in a letter to Wisconsin's Medicaid Director Michael Heifetz on the state's Section 1115 Demonstration Waiver seeking changes to the BadgerCare Plus program. ABC's letter is available in its entirety online: <http://safetyweb.org/news.html>

ABC for Health, Inc. Executive Director Bobby Peterson says, "Our comments reflect ABC for Health's unique perspective on serving low-income, health disparity populations as clients access both health care and coverage in Wisconsin....Sadly, the Wisconsin waiver request is hardly an improvement, but rather seeks punitive changes that affect adults, many of whom are sick or suffering chronic health conditions that may not yet meet the level of a disability determination."

ABC for Health opposes the premium, work, and drug testing requirements the waiver would inflict on childless adults, and questions the constitutionality and authority of the federal government to approve such requests. The Wisconsin waiver fails to recognize that for some individuals BadgerCare Plus coverage provides the opportunity to create or update a medical record, to help support a future finding of disability that may include an opportunity to work, like available with the Medicaid Purchase Plan (MAPP), or for treatment. Creating obstacles to care violates the letter and spirit of 1115 waivers to demonstrate program improvement to support better care and services for enrollees.

ABC for Health rejects the state's proposition that the waiver requests would be more effective in meeting drug treatment needs. ABC maintains that instead of conditioning care and coverage on being "drug free," improve the ability of childless adults to find treatment and basic income support. Increase health coverage to more individuals. Make treatment widely accessible. Help people get healthy so they can find work. Eliminate administrative hoops and hurdles standing in the way of accessing coverage and care. "The result will be an improvement in health outcomes and a reduction in uncompensated care," continues Peterson.

ABC for Health has made a video available that explains the state's waiver, available online: <http://bit.ly/section1115>

Peterson concludes, "Expand Medicaid to these populations instead. Take a wise, proactive step to help avoid tens of thousands of people in Wisconsin losing coverage. Wisconsin should stop restricting coverage and leaving the taxpayers holding the bill and should accept federal Medicaid Expansion money to cover both childless adults and parents at the intended 138% FPL."

The state is accepting public comment through May 19. ABC for Health encourages people to weigh in on this important conversation. Instructions on where to send comments are online: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/badgercareplus/waivers-cla.htm

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.