



**PRESS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Medicaid and BadgerCare Recipients Held Hostage?**

*Walker Says Medicaid Programs are "in Jeopardy" Without the Medicaid-Cutting Budget Bill*

Madison, WI—Governor Walker today issued as statement, supported by a brief DOA memo that says the “long term sustainability of Medicaid” is in jeopardy *without* the passage of the budget repair bill. Bobby Peterson, public interest attorney and Executive Director at ABC for Health, Inc., responded, “The Walker Administration is now using the 1.2 million individuals enrolled in BadgerCare and Medicaid as political hostages. The Walker Administration should stop scaring and threatening the people that need health care coverage in Wisconsin. Health care should be a right NOT a bargaining chip!!” Peterson summarizes the bill as allowing the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) to:

- Eliminate certain BadgerCare coverage for adults
- Limit coverage for certain BadgerCare-eligible infants and pregnant women
- Change current BadgerCare/Medicaid benefits by emergency rules
- Create different Medicaid/BadgerCare benefit packages for different people
- Restrict benefits to non-citizens, even those who live here legally
- Institute more frequent eligibility reviews
- Create more paperwork and red tape for enrollees

Peterson continues, “Walker’s shortsighted decisions will cost us all more money as health care costs skyrocket as the uninsured are forced to use expensive and inappropriate emergency room care where costs get shifted and insurance rates only increase. The budget repair bill allows DHS to make broad changes to BadgerCare/Medicaid eligibility and services behind closed doors with perfunctory legislative review by a politically stacked Joint Finance Committee.”

In a special edition of the popular web show the “HealthWatch WatchDog,” Bobby Peterson and ABC for Health’s Brynne and Erin McBride went "on location" to the state capitol, among the protesters to discuss the Walker Administration's budget repair bill and its potentially devastating effects on BadgerCare and Wisconsin's other Medicaid programs. The webcast is available to the media and the public at this link:

<http://96.60.62.171/mediasiteabc/Viewer/?peid=bef640458e1d4f09b69accf094c6d4f>

ABC for Health 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.

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