



**PRESS RELEASE
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Joint Finance Rejects Walker Centralized IM Plan: LAB Report Chills Privatization Efforts

Madison, WI—In an audit letter released June 2, the Legislative Audit Bureau expressed grave concerns about the Department of Health Service’s Enrollment Services Center, the agency charged with enrolling childless adults in the limited BadgerCare Plus Core Plan and FoodShare programs. Bobby Peterson, public interest attorney at ABC for Health, Inc., responded, “This audit came at a good time—on the eve of the Joint Finance Committee addressing Budget Paper 355, the Centralization of Income Maintenance. The bitter taste the audit left in legislators’ mouths may help explain why Joint Finance opted for a compromise position today in their executive committee meeting.” In fact, Joint Finance entertained a motion to establish a partnership between the state and counties to administer the income maintenance program instead of the more centralized approach Walker recommended.

Peterson continues, “ABC for Health provided real world input about the failures of the Enrollment Services Center to the Audit Bureau as they work on a more comprehensive audit of the Medicaid and BadgerCare programs in Wisconsin. Relevant to this “Phase 1” study of the Enrollment Services Center, ABC criticized the lack of accessibility and navigation within the Enrollment Services Center, errors made or lost applications, significant delays, and improper notices to enrollees.”

Today, Joint Finance announced a new “state-county partnership.” Peterson says, “I can make some recommendations, starting with a transparent process.” Peterson continues, “The partnership must contain proactive, locally-based consumer assistance, meaningful review of inappropriate bureaucratic barriers to coverage, a follow-up audit to monitor compliance, and most importantly, community input!”

In a special edition of the popular web show the “HealthWatch WatchDog,” Bobby Peterson and ABC for Health’s Brynne McBride respond to the audit letter and offer recommendations, based on the new Joint Finance motion to step away from the Enrollment Center model for all BadgerCare and Medicaid programs. The webcast is available to the media and the public at this link:

<http://96.60.62.171/mediasiteabc/Viewer/?peid=69f27eba93644fc892627bd5ca4a593c>

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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