



ADVOCACY & BENEFITS COUNSELING FOR HEALTH, INC.
32 N. Bassett St. • Madison, WI 53703 • 608.261.6939 • fax: 608.261.6938 • www.abcforhealth.org

**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 30, 2010

Interview: Bobby Peterson (608) 261-6939 ext. 201 (office) or (608) 444-7197 (cell)
Brynne McBride (608) 261-6939 ext. 210 (office) or (608) 279-2426 (cell)

HealthWatch Wisconsin: A Year in Review 2010

From the final votes on Health Reform to the Blue Cross Blue Shield Fund Audit, HealthWatch Wisconsin Re-Caps a Year of New Programs, Projects and Possibilities

Madison, WI – “Health reform was the big story of 2010,” said Bobby Peterson, public interest attorney and Executive Director of ABC for Health, Inc (ABC). “It was a monumental event. We didn’t get everything we wanted; there were both problems and strong benefits.” HealthWatch Wisconsin, a project of ABC for Health, evaluated the hot topics of 2010 in a “Year in Review” episode of the popular web cast, “The HealthWatch WatchDog,” produced by ABC for Health and made available to the media and the public at this link:

<http://96.60.62.171/mediasiteabc/Viewer/?peid=39c67b56489441ba8b3aad0449b868e>

Following health reform’s progress throughout early 2010, Peterson commented on the November elections and the national attention it received. “The election of 2010 was a big change, causing diverse reaction in Wisconsin, most notably, the forming of the Save BadgerCare Coalition which garnered national attention on the PBS NewsHour in late December,” continued Peterson.

“This past year, we spent a lot of time looking at the Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) report and how it scrutinized the oversight of the Blue Cross-Blue Shield conversion funds,” says Peterson. The LAB report questioned whether the state’s medical schools, who oversee what is now over \$700 million in conversion funds as the result of a 2000 Insurance Commissioner Order, were spending the funds as the Order intended. Peterson continued, “The LAB report raised concerns about supplanting, and we must make sure this rare public health money is not replacing other medical school or foundation money. We spent a long time talking about the distribution of funds between public health and medical education and research. We know ‘blurring the line’ between public health and research too much shifts money toward the power base of the two schools, which is research and not public health. Public health needs resources now.”

HealthWatch Wisconsin made New Year’s Resolutions. Peterson continues, “We want to improve access to health care and coverage in Wisconsin. It’s something that’s part of our fiber at HealthWatch Wisconsin and ABC for Health. We’re going to keep working to connect people to coverage whatever the political climate is in Wisconsin. To do that, we will continue to reach more people, and grow HealthWatch Wisconsin. Finally, we want to promote the profession of health benefits counseling. As health care changes and the dynamics change, consumers require sophisticated assistance. A professional curriculum, training and support are necessary to help effectively help people.”



ADVOCACY & BENEFITS COUNSELING FOR HEALTH

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.

###