



*Advocacy & Benefits Counseling for Health, Inc.  
Serving Wisconsin Families Since 1994*

## **Birth Cost Recovery Update - "The Birth Tax"**

**June 29, 2020**

Hello Partners,

ABC for Health continues to track birth cost recovery policy in Wisconsin. We call the policy the "birth tax," due to the harsh and often unexpected financial impact on unmarried pregnant women and families seeking BadgerCare Plus in Wisconsin. Counties have certain flexibility in implementing this policy and recently some, like Dane County, have abolished the practice. Others, like Milwaukee County, continue to debate the inequities and practice of collecting the Birth Tax.

The Milwaukee County Board Committee on Finance met on Thursday, June 18, but did not include the Birth Tax issue on the agenda. Chairman Haas of the Finance Committee failed to add the Birth Cost Recovery Resolution to his meeting agenda, and thus the issue will drag further into the summer.

### **Milwaukee County Board Pauses – No Decision on Resolution to Discontinue BCR**

The Resolution requesting the Milwaukee County Department of Child Support Services discontinue the discretionary practice of pursuing birth cost recovery collections in child support cases in Milwaukee County was before the full County Board for a vote on May 28. After short discussion, the motion to refer to Committee was approved 12-6 and the issue was sent to Finance Committee Chair Haas to add the resolution to an upcoming meeting agenda.

The next regular meeting for the Committee on Finance is **Thursday, July 16, 2020, at 9:30am.**

We will contact Chairman Haas and ask him to add the resolution to that July agenda. We will also inform and educate committee members on the issues by sharing our [informational sheet](#) on the Birth Tax, the impact on Milwaukee County, and a link to our compiled research on our [Birth Tax website](#).

ABC for Health created informational materials that stressed issues of racial and social justice, that should compel Milwaukee County Board members to eliminate this discriminatory practice. The policy only applies if an unmarried pregnant women enrolls in BadgerCare Plus. Data available shows that 78% of Medicaid births in Milwaukee County were to unmarried mothers - 77% were black, and only 22% were white. ABC for Health maintains that this policy harms Milwaukee's ability to address systemic racism, reduce black infant mortality, and lift families out of poverty.

### **Contacting the Committee:**

If you wish to contact the Committee Chair, Supervisor Haas can be reached at [jason.haas@milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:jason.haas@milwaukeecountywi.gov).

Typically, the Committee will receive public written comments submitted by email to all members of the Committee on Finance via [FINANCE@milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:FINANCE@milwaukeecountywi.gov) at least an hour before the scheduled start of the meeting.

This update is for informational purposes only.

Regards,

[Brynne McBride](#), ABC for Health, Inc.