



Advocacy & Benefits Counseling for Health, Inc.
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PRESS ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 16, 2024

Interview: Bobby Peterson, Executive Director ABC for Health, Inc. (608) 261-6939 x201

ABC for Health & HealthWatch Wisconsin Present a Medical Debt Symposium in Milwaukee

Milwaukee, WI – A [Medical Debt Symposium](#) will convene in Milwaukee on **Thursday October 17, 2024**.

The event, running from **8:30am-noon at the Zoofari Center**, will spotlight research, policy, and direct client work of nonprofit, public interest law firm ABC for Health, and its education, policy, and outreach subsidiary HealthWatch Wisconsin.

Symposium Highlights: ABC for Health calls medical debt a public health crisis in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and across the country. Bobby Peterson, Public Interest Attorney and Executive Director of ABC for Health will kick off the symposium with a presentation on Milwaukee County medical debt, uncompensated care, and hospital financial assistance policies and practices.

The 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment in Milwaukee County will help frame our efforts to promote and improve access to health care coverage and services. To that end, we will ask Milwaukee County hospitals to improve access to health coverage and care issues to justify extensive tax breaks and better serve patients affected by health disparities and medical debts. Nationally, hospitals dedicated on average about 2.3% of revenues to charity care, while Milwaukee hospitals struggle to even reach 1%. Speakers will share findings from a recent report on Milwaukee County hospitals, released earlier this month by ABC for Health, titled: "[Access to Health Care & Coverage: ABC for Health, Inc. Recommendations for Milwaukee County Hospitals.](#)"

We also welcome Julie Margetta Morgan, Associate Director for Research, Monitoring, and Regulations at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) to present on the burden of medical debt and solutions proposed by the CFPB. After her remarks, Brynne McBride, Public Interest Attorney and COO at ABC for Health will join Julie in a "fireside chat," to discuss how the agency is cracking down on illegal medical debt collections, working to eliminate credit reporting of debt, and pushing to eliminate a "doom loop" for consumers.

We also welcome Milwaukee's Director of Health and Human Services Shakita LaGrant-McClain and Milwaukee County Board Supervisor Caroline Gomez-Tom to join a collaborative conversation on the elimination of \$67 million in medical debt collections actions in Milwaukee County by ending the Birth Tax.

We will share pre-recorded patient stories of Wisconsin families burdened by medical debt collections, wrongful denials, and credit reporting of debt, assisted through legal help.

The event registration has closed. Media are welcome, but please provide notice if they want to ask questions as we seek to avoid disruptions to our timeline and speakers.

[ABC for Health, Inc.](#), is a Wisconsin-based, nonprofit, public interest law firm that promotes health equity and social justice. ABC for Health helps clients impacted by health disparities due to income, race, or poverty to connect to health care coverage and services in Wisconsin. 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.

Phone: (608)261-6939
Fax: (608)261-6938

ABC for Health, Inc.
32 N. Bassett St.
Madison, WI 53703

Email: info@safetyweb.org
Online: www.safetyweb.org