

**Medicaid is a vitally important safety net for over 1.1 million Wisconsinites including working families, older adults, and adults and children with disabilities including mental illness, developmental disabilities, and physical disabilities.**

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## **THE ISSUE**

The Budget Repair Bill being discussed in the Legislature has focused on employee benefits, but includes a sweeping shift of authority for setting Medicaid policy. If passed, this unprecedented seizure of legislative authority would put critical decisions affecting the lives of 1.1 million Wisconsinites in the hands of unelected bureaucrats, with minimal public and legislative involvement. This bill would give the Department of Health Services the ability to rewrite Medicaid policy related to benefits, reimbursement, eligibility, and a wide range of other important aspects. It could impact BadgerCare Plus, Core and Basic as well as Family Care, SeniorCare and Children's Waivers, among other programs vital to families' lives.

## **WHO DOES THIS IMPACT?**

- 775,000 children and adults have basic medical coverage in BadgerCare
- 90,000 Wisconsin children and adults with severe mental illness use Medicaid services
- 9800 children and young adults (0-21) with severe disabilities utilize Medicaid community based supports and medical coverage
- 20,509 people with developmental and physical disabilities stay independent at home and in their communities with Medicaid funded supports
- 18,000 seniors stay independent at home and in their communities with help from Medicaid
- 90,000 Wisconsin seniors rely on SeniorCare for affordable prescription drugs

## **TALKING POINTS**

- This proposal would open the door to far-reaching changes in Medicaid under the guise of a 'budget repair bill'.
- This proposal would yield NO savings to the state budget in this biennium.
- Major Medicaid decisions that affect families' lives should not be made behind closed doors.
- The proposal would give the Administration the authority to implement emergency rules making critical changes that supersede current statutes.
- The Administration would be able to extend the emergency rules for as long as four years, with no obligation to define the emergency.
- This proposal severely limits the debate on this very important issue, silences the voices of families and individuals and weakens the legislative branch of government.
- A system that supports 20% of Wisconsin's population deserves to have open public hearings when rules are changed.

## **ACTION STEPS**

Contact your elected officials and explain how important your input is to changes in the Medicaid program. We should not be making decisions about people's lives without full knowledge of the impact. To find your legislator call the legislative hotline at 1-800-362-9472. Contact Governor Walker at 608-266-1212.