



555 West Washington Ave, Suite 200
Madison, WI 53703

www.wccf.org
☎ 608-284-0580
✉ 608-284-0583

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Contact: Bob Jacobson, 608-284-0580, ext. 303

Feds Say They Need More Time to Review Proposed BadgerCare Changes

(Madison)--Federal officials at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced today that they probably won't be able to act as quickly as the Walker Administration had hoped on a complex set of federal waivers that would allow the state to make sweeping changes to BadgerCare. However, the letter sent today to Dennis Smith, Secretary of the Department of Health Services, gives the state the green light to proceed with some portions of its proposals.

Ken Taylor, executive director of the Wisconsin Council for Children and Families, applauded the decision by CMS not to rush the agency's consideration of the state's complex, 221-page waiver request.

"The changes in the waiver request would harm at least 168,000 Wisconsinites. A decision this big shouldn't be rushed through just to meet the state's arbitrary December 31 deadline. Granting the waiver would also send the message to other states that they can drop millions of people from Medicaid. The Affordable Care Act was designed to protect people from that, and we shouldn't encourage states to undermine this important piece of health care reform."

Taylor urged state lawmakers to pass legislation removing or postponing the deadline to allow a wider range of options to be considered.

"It's a big mistake to force CMS to choose so quickly between approving the entire proposal and kicking 53,000 adults off of BadgerCare. State residents deserve a more thoughtful process."

A recent WCCF publication provides a side-by-side comparison of the consequences of those two options: http://www.wccf.org/pdf/MOE_fallback_comparison.pdf.

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