



WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON

**children
& families**

Raising Voices to Make Every Kid Count

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Opportunity to Cover Wisconsin Kids in State Capitol Right Now: BadgerCare Plus

Covering the Uninsured Week April 23-27 – Cover Wisconsin Kids

Madison –The Covering the Uninsured Week kick-off event will be held in Madison **Monday, April 23rd at 12:30pm at the Harambee Center, 2202 S Park St.** The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (WCCF) will participate and speak to the benefits of the BadgerCare Plus budget proposal. Cosponsors include: Health Watch Wisconsin and Covering Kids and Families.

“Wisconsin has always been a national leader in providing innovative health care solutions for our children and families, but with BadgerCare Plus we could cover nearly every child,” said Charity Eleson, executive director of Wisconsin Council on Children and Families. “Access to health care coverage is not only the right thing to do for Wisconsin, but it also a wise financial decision for the future of everyone’s health care.”

Wisconsin enjoys a relatively high rate of health insurance coverage, though in 2005 there were still about 110,000 children in our state who were uninsured for at least part of the year.

“BadgerCare Plus, will make health insurance available to virtually all children in our state, with little or no increase in state funding. Health insurance for children costs just \$63 per month per child and is one of the most cost effective investments we can make in our health care system,” Jon Peacock, research director for WCCF said. “Preventative health care means fewer expensive visits to the emergency room and treatment of childhood illnesses before they become acute.”

BadgerCare Plus would expand coverage to:

- All children whose coverage is eligible for federal cost-sharing (which excludes undocumented immigrants);
- Pregnant women between 185 and 300 percent of the poverty level;
- Farm families and other self-employed parents with incomes up to 200 percent of poverty (many of whom are currently excluded because BadgerCare and Medicaid use a less generous definition of income than is used for tax purposes);
- Youths who have to leave the foster care system when they turn age 18;
- Parents with children in foster care; and
- Caretaker relatives with income less than 200 percent of poverty.

The proposal also contains other improvements that would help reach the large number of uninsured families who already meet eligibility standards but are deterred from BadgerCare participation by red tape or premiums. These enhancements include:

- Replacing the current employer verification requirements with a less burdensome process for verifying income and health insurance status;
- Streamlining the enrollment process for children (by adopting presumptive eligibility); and
- Revisions to the current premiums in order to lower costs for families if the coverage is only for the children.

“We are at a crossroads with our health care system. Making the choice to cover nearly all kids and expand the successful current BadgerCare program is a wise investment that will benefit all of us,” Eelson said.

For more information on health care proposals affecting children and families in Wisconsin visit: www.wccf.org

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