
BadgerCare Plus: Who's Eligible, for What, and at What Price?

August 16, 2011

This paper describes the BadgerCare Plus program as of August 2011 – focusing primarily on the coverage for children, parents and pregnant women. The state biennial budget gives the Department of Health Services broad authority to change eligibility, premiums and other cost-sharing. DHS will be requesting a waiver of federal maintenance of effort requirements to make these changes. Changes to existing state law will no longer need full legislative oversight, but will be referred to the Joint Finance Committee for 14-day passive review. As information about those changes becomes available, we will update this document.

Who's eligible for BadgerCare Plus?

The following groups of state residents are eligible for health care coverage in BadgerCare Plus:

- **Children** – Children under the age of 19 are generally eligible, regardless of income, if they meet both of these conditions:
 - + They are either a U.S. citizen or a legal immigrant.
 - + If the family income is above 150% of the federal poverty level, the individual must not have access to an employer sponsored insurance (ESI) plan for which the employer pays at least 80% of the premiums (except children with ESI can enroll in BadgerCare Plus if they have deductions for health care expenses that bring family income below 150% of poverty).
- **Pregnant Women** – Pregnant women are eligible, regardless of citizenship, if their income is below 300% of the federal poverty level (or if they have deductions for health care expenses that bring their income below 300% of poverty).
- **Parents (and caretaker relatives)** – Parents or other caretaker relatives are generally eligible if they meet the second condition of eligibility for children noted above, as well as all of the following additional criteria:
 - + They are either a U.S. citizen or a legal immigrant who has lived in the U.S. for at least 5 years. (There are also a few other narrow categories of eligible immigrants.¹)
 - + They must be living with a child under the age of 19 (except in cases where the child has been temporarily removed from the home by a Child Welfare agency and there is a reunification plan).
 - + Family income is not more than 200% of the federal poverty level (except in certain cases of self-employed parents, if the addition of depreciation to the adjusted gross income puts them over the 200% income limit).
- **Youths leaving foster care** – BadgerCare Plus extended eligibility to youths who leave the foster care system (including court-ordered kinship care) when they turn 18. They remain eligible until they turn 21.

- **Childless adults** – People who are 19 or older and are not a caretaker of a child living in the home may be eligible for the BadgerCare Plus Core Plan if their income is less than 200 percent of the poverty level (see Table 1), but it is not an entitlement program. As of the end of July 2011, the program was serving about 34,000 childless adults, enrollment was frozen, and there was a waiting list of more than 100,000 adults.

Who isn't eligible?

Undocumented immigrants (adults or children) are generally ineligible, as are other non-citizen adults, except: a) pregnant women, and b) lawfully residing parents who have lived in the U.S. at least 5 years. (See footnote 1 on p. 8 regarding other narrow categories of eligible immigrants.)

There are also restrictions on eligibility for children and parents over 150 percent of the poverty level who have access to employer-sponsored insurance, if the employer pays at least 80 percent of the cost of the coverage. Those restrictions are somewhat complicated and will be explained in a future paper on the WCCF website.

As noted above, childless adults are theoretically eligible for the BadgerCare Plus Core Plan, but the spending level is capped and only a small percentage of those who meet the eligibility criteria are currently enrolled.

What are children and parents eligible for?

A key step in determining whether your family or someone you know is eligible for BadgerCare Plus, and to determine what the family would be eligible for, is to figure out how the family's monthly income compares to the federal poverty level. Go to the column for the family size, and determine which income range the family is in.

Table 1: Monthly Family Income – Compared to the 2011 Federal Poverty Level (FPL)

Percentage of the FPL	Family Size					
	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six
100%	\$908	\$1,226	\$1,544	\$1,863	\$2,181	\$2,499 or less
100-150%	908 - 1,362	1,226 - 1,839	1,544 - 2,316	1,863 - 2,795	2,181 - 3,272	2,499 - 3,749
150-160%	1,362 - 1,452	1,839 - 1,961	2,316 - 2,469	2,795 - 2,981	3,272 - 3,489	3,749 - 3,997
160-170%	1,453 - 1,543	1,962 - 2,083	2,470 - 2,624	2,982 - 3,166	3,490 - 3,707	3,998 - 4,247
170-180%	1,544 - 1,633	2,084 - 2,206	2,625 - 2,778	3,167 - 3,352	3,708 - 3,925	4,248 - 4,497
180-190%	1,634 - 1,724	2,207 - 2,328	2,779 - 2,933	3,353 - 3,539	3,926 - 4,143	4,498 - 4,747
190-200%	1,725 - 1,815	2,329 - 2,451	2,934 - 3,087	3,540 - 3,725	4,144 - 4,361	4,748 - 4,997
200%	1,816	2,452	3,088	3,726	4,362	4,998
200-210%	1,816 - 1,906	2,452 - 2,574	3,088 - 3,241	3,726 - 3,911	4,362 - 4,579	4,998 - 5,247
210-220%	1,907 - 1,997	2,575 - 2,696	3,242 - 3,396	3,912 - 4,098	4,580 - 4,797	5,248 - 5,497
220-230%	1,998 - 2,087	2,697 - 2,819	3,397 - 3,550	4,099 - 4,284	4,798 - 5,015	5,498 - 5,747
230-240%	2,088 - 2,178	2,820 - 2,941	3,551 - 3,705	4,285 - 4,470	5,016 - 5,233	5,748 - 5,997
240-250%	2,179 - 2,269	2,942 - 3,064	3,706 - 3,859	4,471 - 4,657	5,234 - 5,452	5,998 - 6,247
250-260%	2,270 - 2,360	3,065 - 3,187	3,860 - 4,013	4,658 - 4,765	5,453 - 5,670	6,248 - 6,496
260-270%	2,361 - 2,451	3,188 - 3,309	4,014 - 4,168	4,766 - 5,029	5,671 - 5,888	6,497 - 6,746
270-280%	2,452 - 2,541	3,310 - 3,432	4,169 - 4,322	5,030 - 5,215	5,889 - 6,106	6,747 - 6,996
280-290%	2,542 - 2,632	3,433 - 3,554	4,323 - 4,477	5,216 - 5,402	6,107 - 6,324	6,997 - 7,247
290-300%	2,633 - 2,723	3,555 - 3,677	4,478 - 4,631	5,403 - 5,589	6,325 - 6,539	7,247 - 7,496
300%+	> 2,724	> 3,678	> 4,632	> 5,589	> 6,540	> 7,497

Please note that determining family size and income can be complex for some households. As a result, a potential enrollee should check with a caseworker or use the online application process to confirm eligibility and premium levels. Someone with Internet access can apply online for BadgerCare Plus and other benefits or find more detailed information by going to: <https://access.wisconsin.gov/>. The “Am I Eligible” feature at that “Access” website is a very efficient way of determining whether a real or hypothetical family is likely to be eligible and approximately what their premium would be (or if they even need to pay a premium). This document allows you to do the same thing, but it doesn’t take you through the steps of determining family size and monthly income.

Once you have determined what income range the family is in, Table 2 shows you if children and parents or pregnant women in the family are eligible for BadgerCare Plus and whether they will have to pay a monthly premium. It refers to two BadgerCare Plus coverage plans: the Standard Plan and the Benchmark Plan. The latter plan has narrower benefits and more cost-sharing, comparable to private insurance. It primarily applies to children and pregnant women (and certain self-employed parents) in families above 200% of the poverty level. A detailed comparison of the two plans can be found in Appendix 1.

Table 2: Income Levels for Different Types of BadgerCare Plus Eligibility

	Income Category (relative to the 2011 federal poverty level)			
	Less than 150%	150%- 200%	200%-300%	300% or higher
	Who’s Eligible, and How?			
Children (& youths aging out of foster care)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pregnant women	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Parents & caretakers	Yes	Yes	Certain self-employed parents/caretakers *	
Benefits plan (see Appendix 1)	Standard Plan		Benchmark Plan	
Premiums (See also Tables 3 & 4)	None	None for kids or pregnant women. Sliding scale premiums for parents & caretakers	Sliding scale premiums for kids** 5% of family income for eligible self-employed parents/caretakers * (and their kids). None for pregnant women.	\$97.53 per child per mo. (full cost of coverage)
Crowd-out restrictions	None	Children ² and parents are ineligible if they have access to employer coverage that pays at least 80% of premiums.		

* *Farmers and other self-employed parents/caretakers remain eligible if the addition of depreciation (for their business) to their adjusted gross income puts them over the 200% income limit.*

** *Youths aging out of foster care are eligible for the Standard Plan regardless of income and have no premiums.*

To use Table 2, start by finding which of the four columns applies to the family, based on how their income compares to the federal poverty level for their family size (see Table 1). In that column you can see which family members are eligible, which plan they are eligible for, and whether access to employer-

sponsored coverage is a bar to eligibility. Additional information about the premiums is found in subsequent tables. Examples of eligibility and premiums can be found in Appendix 2.

How Much Does BadgerCare Plus Cost?

Most families participating in BadgerCare Plus have to pay at least a small co-pay for health care services, though there are a few exceptions:

- For children there are no co-pays for well child check-ups and other preventive services (in either the Standard Plan or Benchmark Plan).
- There are no co-pays for any services for kids below the poverty level or for children who are tribal members (regardless of income).

For families under 200 percent of the poverty level, the co-pays are very modest. Appendix 1 compares the co-pays for various services in the Standard Plan and Benchmark Plan.

Monthly premiums apply to coverage of parents over 150 percent of the poverty level and children over 200 percent of the poverty level. Table 3 illustrates the BadgerCare Plus premiums for several different family sizes. To use that table, you need to begin by checking Table 1 to see how the family’s income compares to the poverty level.

Table 3: BadgerCare Plus Premiums

Federal Poverty Level	Maximum Per Person			Examples of Full Family Premiums (capped at 5% of income)			
	Child	Parent	Pregnant Woman	1 parent	2 parents	2 parents	2 parents
				2 kids	1 child	2 kids	3 kids
< 150%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
150-160%	0	\$10	0	\$10	\$20	\$20	\$20
160-170%	0	\$27	0	\$27	\$54	\$54	\$54
170-180%	0	\$68	0	\$68	\$131	\$136	\$136
180-190%	0	\$122	0	\$122	\$139	\$168	\$196
190-200%	0	\$188	0	\$147	\$147	\$177	\$207
200%	0	\$268	0	\$154	\$154	\$186	\$218
200-230%	\$10	NA	0	\$20	\$10	\$20	\$30
230-240%	\$15	NA	0	\$30	\$15	\$30	\$45
240-250%	\$23	NA	0	\$46	\$23	\$46	\$69
250-260%	\$34	NA	0	\$68	\$34	\$68	\$102
260-270%	\$44	NA	0	\$88	\$44	\$88	\$132
270-280%	\$55	NA	0	\$110	\$55	\$110	\$165
280-290%	\$68	NA	0	\$136	\$68	\$136	\$204
290-300%	\$82	NA	0	\$164	\$82	\$164	\$246
300%+	\$97.53	NA	NA ³	\$195	\$97.53	\$195	\$293

Standard Plan
Kids and Parents

Benchmark coverage
Kids

The columns on the left side of Table 3 show the maximum that is charged for a child or parent in that income range, regardless of family size. However, multiplying that figure times the number of people covered won’t necessarily yield the correct amount for the full family because premiums are capped at 5 percent of family income. The four columns on the right half of the table show the actual premium for a particular family, assuming all family members are enrolled. For example, in a 3-person family with an income between 180 and 190 percent of the poverty level, the maximum premium per parent is \$122 per

month (and there is no premium for children). If it is a family with one parent and 2 children, the family's monthly premium will be \$122. If, on the other hand, it is a family of 2 parents and one child, the family's premium isn't \$244 (2 times \$122) because the 5 percent cap limits it to \$139.

Premiums for Farmers and Other Self-employed Parents

Table 4 applies in situations where a family with a self-employed parent or caretaker has depreciation that – when added back to adjusted gross income – puts the family over 200% of the poverty level. If their income is below 200% of poverty, even with depreciation added back, or if only the children are enrolled, use Table 3. However, if their income is above 200 percent of the poverty level even when depreciation is subtracted, the parents are ineligible.

Unless they decide to only enroll the children, the premium for families with self-employed parents will almost invariably be 5 percent of income⁴ (calculated after depreciation has been added back to their adjusted gross income). For example, the monthly premium for a four-person family with an income between 200 and 210 percent of the poverty level will be \$186. That will be the premium regardless of whether the coverage is for just one parent (and no other family members) or for everyone in the family. On the other hand, if only the children are covered, use Table 3.

Table 4: Monthly Premiums for Families with Self-employment Income & Depreciation

(The following premiums apply regardless of whether coverage is for one parent or the entire family. However, if only the children are being enrolled, use Table 3.)

Federal poverty level	Family Premium (approximately 5% of income)				
	Family Size 2	Family Size 3	Family Size 4	Family Size 5	Family Size 6
200-210%	\$122	\$154	\$186	\$218	\$249
210-220%	128	162	195	228	262
220-230%	134	169	204	239	274
230-240%	140	177	214	250	287
240-250%	147	185	223	261	399
250-260%	153	193	232	272	312
260-270%	159	200	242	283	324
270-280%	165	208	251	294	337
280-290%	171	216	260	305	349
290-300%	177	223	270	316	362
300-310% ⁵	184	232	279	327	375

Benchmark coverage

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Appendix 1: Standard and Benchmark Plans

Services	Standard Plan	Co-pay (\$s)	Benchmark	Co-pay (\$s)	Limitation
Prescription Drugs	Full Coverage with Preferred Drug List	OTC = \$0.50 Generic = 1.00 Brand = 3.00	Generic Only – Formulary	Generic = 5.00	Brand = discounted purchase
Physician Visits, Lab and X-ray	Full Coverage	.50 – 3.00, capped at \$30 per provider per month	Full Coverage	15.00 (Emergency Services, Preventive Care, Anesthesia, and Clozapine Treatment = no co-pay)	
Prenatal Care/Maternity	Full Coverage + PNCC	No co-pay	Full Coverage + PNCC	No co-pay	
Inpatient Hospital	Full Coverage	Per Day = 3.00, capped at \$75 per yr	Full Coverage	Medical Per Stay = 100.00 Mental Health Stay=50.00	
Outpatient Hospital	Full Coverage	3.00	Full Coverage	15.00	
Emergency Department	Full Coverage	No co-pay	Full Coverage	60.00 if not admitted	
Nursing Home	Full Coverage	No co-pay	Full Coverage for SNF	No co-pay	30 days per year
Physical, Occupational & Speech Therapy	Full Coverage	Per provider, per date of service = .50 – 3.00 Limit first 30 hours or 1,500	Full Coverage	Per Visit = 15.00	20 visits each per year
Home Health	Full Coverage	No co-pay	Full Coverage of most services	Per Visit = 15.00	60 Visits per year
Durable Medical Equipment (DME)	Full Coverage	Various 1.00 – 3.00	Full Coverage	Per Item = 5.00	Max. benefit \$2,500
Disposable Medical Supplies	Full Coverage	Per Item = .50	Selected items	No co-pay	Only Syringes, Diabetic pens, & items needed for DME
Transportation	Full Coverage emergency and non-emergency to BC+ provider, covered service	Non-Emergency Ambulance = \$2 SMV = \$1 per trip	Ambulance only	Per Trip = 50.00	No SMV. No Common Carrier.
HealthCheck for Kids	Full Coverage + “other services”	No co-pay, except \$1 per screening for those 18, 19, and 20	Full Coverage	No co-pay	“ Other Services” not covered
Dental	Preventive, Restorative, Palliative.	Various .50 – 3.00 per service	Children & Pregnant Women Only. Preventive, Diagnostic, simple restorative, surgical extractions, & periodontics	50% of Medicaid Rate	No Adult Coverage. Coverage limited to \$750 /year. A \$200 deductible applies to all except preventive and diagnostic.
Vision	Full Coverage, Eye glasses 1 per yr.	Various .50 – 3.00	One routine eye exam every two years, with refraction	15.00	No hardware.
Smoking Cessation	Full Coverage	See Drugs	Generic Prescription and over-the-counter products	See Drugs	
Hospice	Full Coverage	No co-pay	Full Coverage	Per day = 2.00	Lifetime max. of 360 days
Reproductive Health	Full Coverage- usual exclusions for infertility, etc.	No co-pay	Full Coverage	No co-pay	Usual exclusions for infertility, etc.
Chiropractic	Full Coverage	Various .50 – 3.00	Full Coverage	Per Visit = 15.00	
Podiatric	Full Coverage	Various .50 – 3.00	Full Coverage	Per Visit = 15.00	
Mental Health, and Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA) Treatment	Full Coverage w usual IMD & crisis rules	Outpatient (OutPt.) Visit = 1.00 Inpatient (InPt.) per Day = 3.00	Coverage (based on State Employees’ Health Plan) of inpatient and outpatient mental health and AODA treatment, and day treatment. Usual crisis rules.	OutPt Visit = 10.00 - 15.00 InPt per Day = 50.00	InPt.= 30 days per year; OutPt. community programs not covered. AODA limits = Total \$7000 per year; AODA InPt = \$6300 yr.; AODA OutPt = \$1800 yr. AODA Day Tx = \$2700 yr.

Source: This table is primarily the work of Jennifer Winter, the Manager of Advocacy at Managed Health Services.

Appendix 2: Examples of Eligibility and Premiums *(and a potential increase in premiums)*

We've provided five hypothetical examples of BadgerCare Plus eligibility and premiums. These examples help illustrate how to use the tables in this document to determine if a family is eligible for BadgerCare, which family members are eligible, what benefit plan they would receive (Standard or Benchmark Plan), and what their premium would be.

We have also added examples of what the premiums would be if the Department of Health Services (DHS) gets federal approval for a waiver to change the premiums and decides to set the new premiums at 4.0 percent of family income. (That would give the state room to increase co-pays and deductibles to increase total cost sharing to 5 percent of income, which has generally been the maximum allowed for families with Medicaid-financed coverage.)

Example 1 – Two-parent family at about 130% of poverty: Ellen and Ed Jones have three children. Both parents are working full time at about \$8 per hour, yielding a combined annual income of \$34,000 (\$2,833 per month), which is almost 130 percent of the poverty level for a family of five. This provides a relatively easy example for using the tables in this paper. After using Table 1 to determine that the Jones' monthly income is between 100 and 150 percent of the poverty level, you can see in Table 2 that the family would be eligible for the BadgerCare Plus Standard Plan, with no premiums and no crowd-out restrictions (meaning that they are eligible for BadgerCare even if they have an offer of insurance from an employer).

If DHS gets broad discretion under federal law to increase premiums and decides to set premiums at 4 percent of family income, the Jones would have a premium of \$113 per month, an increase of \$1,360 per year.

Example 2 – Single-parent family below 200% of poverty: Sue Smith is a single mom with two kids. Her income (including child support) is \$2,700 per month or \$32,400 per year. Her employer offers health insurance, but only pays half of the premium. Table 1 shows that her income falls in the 170-180 percent range, relative to the federal poverty level. Table 2 shows that children and parents in a family in that income range are potentially eligible for BadgerCare Plus (Standard Plan coverage). The bottom row of Table 2 tells us that they aren't excluded by the "crowd-out" restrictions because the employer doesn't pay at least 80 percent of the cost of the premiums. Since they are eligible, look at Table 3, which shows that a single parent in the 170-180 percent income range will have a premium of \$68 per month. There is no premium for Sue's two children.

If DHS gets broad discretion under federal law to increase premiums and decides to set premiums at 4 percent of family income, Sue would have to pay a premium of about \$108 per month, which would be an increase of \$480 per year over her current \$68 monthly premium.

Example 3 – Two-parent family below 200% of poverty: Bob and Julie Jackson have an income of \$3,100 per month (\$37,200 per year) from Julie's job. (Bob stays home and cares for their two young children.) Table 1 shows that their income is between 160 and 170 percent of the poverty level for a family of four. Julie's employer offers health insurance for employees only (not for other family members) and pays 80 percent of the premiums for that insurance. As Table 2 shows, that makes Bob and the two kids eligible for the BadgerCare Plus Standard Plan, but Julie is ineligible because she has access to the employer sponsored insurance. In Table 3 you can see that the premium for a family in the 160-170 percent range is \$27 per month for the coverage of one parent (with no additional amount for the children).

If DHS gets broad discretion under federal law to increase premiums and decides to set premiums at 4 percent of family income, the Jacksons would have to pay a premium of \$124 per month, which would be an increase of \$1,164 per year over their current premium.

Example 4 – Self-employed parent with family income over 200% of poverty: Janet Brown is a single mom with two children. She owns a catering business and has an income of about \$3,600 per month. For tax purposes she can subtract expenses for depreciation of equipment used for her business, and that brings her adjusted gross income down to \$2,700 per month. Table 1 shows that \$3,600 per month for a 3-person family is in the range of 230 to 240 percent of the poverty level, but \$2,700 per month is in the range of 170 to 180 percent of the poverty level, and that makes her eligible for BadgerCare Plus. Because her total income without subtracting depreciation exceeds 200 percent of poverty, Janet is eligible for the Benchmark Plan, rather than the Standard Plan. Her premium is determined based on the higher (gross) income figure. Table 4 illustrates that for a family that size and in that income range (230 to 240% of poverty) the premium is \$177 per month.

If Janet's ex-husband has health insurance that covers the children and Janet is the only person in her family enrolled in BadgerCare Plus, her monthly premium would still be \$177, which is 5 percent of family income.

If DHS gets broad discretion under federal law to increase premiums, the cost-sharing might stay the same for families over 200 percent of the poverty level, but it's difficult to predict whether there will be changes for families made eligible by the subtraction of depreciation from their income.

Example 5 – Family sizes not shown in Table 3: Table 3 shows just a few examples of different family configurations. Let's take an example not shown in Table 3 – a two-person family. Beth Young is a single mom with one child. She has an income of \$2,300 per month, which is between 180 and 190 percent of the poverty level. Her employer offers health insurance but only pays for 70 percent of the cost. Table 2 shows that Beth and her son are both eligible for BadgerCare Plus (the Standard Plan). Table 3 shows that the maximum premium for a parent in the 180 to 190 percent range (relative to the poverty level) is \$122 per month, but the right hand side of the table does not include 2-person families, so it does not show the 5 percent cap for that family size. That cap is determined by multiplying 0.05 times the income for the lower end of that range (180% of poverty) – which Table 1 shows is \$2,207. Five percent of that monthly income is \$110, and since that is less than \$122, Beth's premium is \$110.

If Beth's income rises a little above 200 percent of the poverty level, she will no longer be eligible for BadgerCare Plus, but her son will still be eligible (for the Benchmark Plan). You can use Table 3 to see that the premium for a child in that income range is \$10 per month.

If DHS gets broad discretion under federal law to increase premiums and total cost-sharing to 5 percent of income, there would probably be little change for the cost of Beth's coverage.

Endnotes

¹ Other immigrants who do not have to live in the U.S for 5 years before they become eligible include refugees, asylees, persons granted withholding of deportation, Amerasians, and certain non-citizen American Indians.

² The crowd-out restrictions do not apply to youths aging out of the foster care system or children who qualify because deductible health care expenses bring their income below 150% of the poverty level.

³ Pregnant women with incomes above 300% of the poverty level are eligible if they have deductible health care expenses that bring their income below 300%.

⁴ For families over 300% of the poverty level, if at least one member of the enrolled family members is eligible as a self-employed adult, the premium will be either 5% of income or the sum of the child premiums for all the enrolled children, whichever is greater. Only in the case of some fairly large families will the premiums exceed 5% of income.

⁵ For the families in the last row of Table 4, the premium could depend on how many children are covered. As that table shows, a five person family with two parents/caretakers and three children will have a premium of 5 percent of income, which is \$310. However, if it is a 5-person family with just one parent in the household and 4 children who are enrolled, the premium would be 4 times the amount of \$97.53 for each child, or about \$390. (See previous footnote.)