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WCCF Applauds Federal Approval of BadgerCare Plus

Madison - The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (WCCF) applauded the announcement Tuesday that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has approved the changes needed to implement the BadgerCare Plus program.

BadgerCare Plus, which is scheduled to begin in February 2008, will make health insurance available to nearly all Wisconsin children, as well as many more pregnant women, self-employed parents and farmers. Attached to this release is a chart showing the expanded categories of coverage.

“The Legislature’s bipartisan support for the Governor’s BadgerCare Plus plan and the approval this week by the Bush Administration put Wisconsin on the verge of a huge achievement,” said Jill Jacklitz, WCCF’s acting director.* “Beginning in February, thousands of parents of uninsured Wisconsin children will be able to enroll their children in an affordable, quality health care plan.”

Jacklitz added that there are still a couple of other important steps needed to close in on the goal of health care coverage for all children. “We need community and business groups to help spread the word that all citizen kids are eligible for coverage, and we need Congress and the President to reauthorize the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), which is a key source of financing for BadgerCare Plus,” Jacklitz said.

Jon Peacock, WCCF’s research director, noted that the level of federal funding is not the only issue in the CHIP legislation that will influence the effectiveness of BadgerCare Plus. He said one of the key decisions remaining to be resolved in the CHIP bill is whether it will eliminate or at least reduce some of the red tape that makes it difficult for families to enroll in health care programs.

“Two-thirds of Wisconsin’s uninsured children already meet the income eligibility standards for BadgerCare, but many parents can’t enroll their kids because of bureaucratic federal hurdles,” Peacock said. “Wisconsin has been a national leader on health coverage for children, but we need Washington to cut the red tape and allow us to reach the goal of covering all eligible kids.”

** Jill Jacklitz will be WCCF’s acting director for the next 7 months, while WCCF’s executive director, Charity Eleson, takes a leave of absence.*

Family Health Coverage -- Before and After BadgerCare Plus

