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## **WCCF Continues to Strongly Oppose Medicaid Changes in Budget Repair Bill** **Tiny Changes Do Little to Improve Measure**

Last night the Joint Committee on Finance approved an amendment to the Governor Walker's Budget Repair bill. Our opposition to the bill remains strong. We object to the sweeping shift of authority for setting Medicaid policy proposed in the bill, which would allow key decisions to be made behind closed doors. The Medicaid portion of the bill is non-fiscal policy, yielding no savings this biennium, and as such does not belong in this bill.

The amendment to sunset this provision in 2015 is a tiny improvement, but in no way resolves the fundamental concerns we have about allowing a state agency to rewrite Medicaid policy on eligibility, benefits and cost-sharing, without public input and with almost no legislative oversight. The amendment did nothing to address concerns raised by the attorney who drafted the Medicaid provisions, who said in her drafter's note that "the request would allow DHS to change any Medical Assistance law, for any reason, at any time, and potentially without notice or public hearing." She went on to state that "These changes, in addition to eliminating notice and publication requirements, would leave the emergency rules in effect without any requirement to make permanent rules and without any time limit, except that imposed by DHS, and with no indication in the statutes that the law has changed at the will of DHS." Sunsetting the rules in 2015 does not remedy these problems.

The Governor's Budget Bill will be introduced in five days. At that time, we will know how deep the proposed cuts to Medicaid will be. We believe that it is through the budget process, with the full involvement of the legislature and the general public, that the important decisions about the health care of hundreds of thousands Wisconsinites should be decided. These decisions are too important to be made in secret behind closed doors.

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