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Senate Health Care Plan Builds on Efforts to Insure All Kids

Madison - The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (WCCF) applauded the Senate's approval of a plan this week that would extend access to health insurance to virtually all residents of Wisconsin.

"Because of the success of the BadgerCare program, Wisconsin has been a national leader in providing cost-effective health care services for low-income working families," said Charity Eleson, WCCF's executive director. "The new Senate plan builds on that success and on the Governor's budget proposals to close gaps in the current safety net programs."

The Senate's "Healthy Wisconsin" plan would augment Governor Doyle's BadgerCare Plus initiative, which would extend coverage to nearly all children in Wisconsin, as well as to many more farmers and pregnant women. BadgerCare Plus passed the Joint Committee on Finance earlier this month.

"By constructing a comprehensive health care plan that builds on the foundation of BadgerCare Plus, Wisconsin will maximize the federal matching funds the state can receive, while strengthening safety net programs for low-income families," Eleson said. "That is a great choice for Wisconsin children and a cost effective way to expand health care coverage to more residents."

WCCF will seek a small change to clarify that low-income families could not be charged significantly higher co-pays for services than they are currently assessed in Medicaid and BadgerCare.

"We hope that as debate on Healthy Wisconsin proceeds, legislators don't lose sight of the strengths of BadgerCare Plus as the foundation for reform," said Eleson. "BadgerCare Plus is an extremely cost-effective plan, and most of it can be implemented without any net increase in state spending."

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*Wisconsin Council on Children and Families
Celebrating 126 years Raising Voices to Make Every Kid Count*