



WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON

**children  
& families**

Raising Voices to Make Every Kid Count

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## **Wisconsin Patients' Bill of Rights Secures Key Consumer Protections for Children and Families**

*Statement of Ken Taylor, executive director*

Over the coming months the Legislature will have to make many choices made about how to implement the federal health care reform law. Some of those policy choices, such as whether to change Medicaid coverage for adults over 133% of the Federal Poverty Level, may generate significant differences of opinion between Democrats and Republicans.

This bill, the Wisconsin Patients' Bill of Rights, doesn't tackle those more difficult parts of the debate over health care reform. It looks for common ground by addressing the pro-consumer measures from the Affordable Care Act, on which there is very broad public support, and on which there should be broad bipartisan agreement in the Legislature.

Some of the key provisions of this bill for children in Wisconsin include the following:

- Immediately, insurers in all new health plans will not be able to deny coverage to kids under 19 because of a pre-existing condition, and in 2014 this benefit will be extended to all Wisconsinites.
- All new health plans will be required to cover preventive services for children, like immunizations, vision screenings, and depression screenings for teens, without a co-pay.
- The bill ensures that women and their newborns are covered for their hospital stay for no less than 48 hours after delivery and 96 hours after a cesarean section.
- Insurers are prohibited from imposing a lifetime limit on the dollar value of coverage, and in 2014 plans will not be able to impose an annual limit on coverage.

These popular and sensible measures from the Affordable Care Act should be incorporated into state statutes, so they have the force of law regardless of how federal judges rule on the Constitutionality of the federal law.

There has been a lot of talk since the recall elections, on both sides of the aisle, about a more bipartisan spirit in the Legislature. The Wisconsin Patients' Bill of Rights is a great place to start putting that talk into practice.

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