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Wisconsin Council on Children and Families Backs Governor's Restoration of School Funding and Preservation of Health Care Coverage for Wisconsin's Kids

The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families reacted today to the Governor's signing of the 2005-2007 biennial budget, underscoring the organization's support of his preservation of funding for Medical Assistance and BadgerCare coverage for low income children and his vetoes to restore funding for K-12 public education.

"The Governor made investments in the care and future of Wisconsin's children a priority with his veto pen," said Charity Eleson, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families. "The Governor's vetoes balance the commitment to education with maintaining critical health care services and economic supports for low-income families."

The 2005-07 State Budget signed into law by Governor Doyle restores the state's commitment to funding two-thirds of every child's education. "Wisconsin truly values its quality public education system, and this budget will help ensure that our schools continue to have the resources to prepare our children for the future." Eleson said. "We were also pleased the Legislature and the Governor sustained the investment in 4-year-old Kindergarten which contributes significantly to children's school readiness and long-term achievement."

As modified by the Governor, the budget will also retain the state's highly successful SAGE program that promotes student achievement through smaller class size.

WCCF applauded the Governor's veto of the Legislature's 15 percent increase to Wisconsin Shares Childcare tuition assistance co-payments. "The Governor's veto eases the burden on low-income working families who are struggling to make ends meet and pay for child care," Eleson said.

"We are pleased the Governor and the Legislature could agree to maintain critical safety net services such as emergency assistance for homeless families and access to

essential health care services for children and families through Medicaid and BadgerCare,” said Eelson.

The Governor vetoed the Legislature’s increase in co-payments for generic drugs in the Medicaid and BadgerCare program. “Increasing co-payments for generic drugs undercuts efforts to promote the use of lower cost generic drugs and places a hardship on poor families, particularly those with chronic health conditions,” said Eelson.