

Secretary Kitty Rhodes, cc: Al Matano
Wisconsin Department of Health Services,
Division of Health Care Access and Accountability
P.O. Box 309
Madison, WI 53707-0309

Dear Secretary Kitty Rhodes,

We, the below signed county leaders, are writing to you in regards to Wisconsin's waiver to the federal government to apply the BadgerCare changes approved in the 2013-15 state budget. With the federal Affordable Care Act encouraging innovation in states, provided the goal is to ensure a greater level of health coverage, we request a demonstration pilot project be included in the waiver request that would allow interested counties the opportunity to access these federal enhanced Medicaid funds.

In 2014 thousands of Medicaid recipients will be placed in private health insurance exchanges and required to pay premiums. The transition from Medicaid to private insurance and the premium cost could result in the loss of health care due to confusion and inability to pay. Being underinsured and uninsured impacts County Human Services Departments because it can lead to untreated mental health or substance abuse, increases in uncompensated costs. Also leads to a lack of preventive health care that can lead to loss of jobs, the inability to function and loss of self-sufficiency.

County boards in thirteen counties in Wisconsin have passed resolutions calling for accepting the federal funds at the state level, or, failing that, to allow for a mechanism for counties to access these federal funds in the interest of covering our citizens. Additional counties are currently considering resolutions in light of the availability of these federal funds in the future.

Because the federal matching rate for Medicaid is 100% early on, we request that the waiver for BadgerCare include a provision for a demonstration project allowing counties who opt in to access these enhanced Medicaid funds through the Department of Health Services. If at which time this project is deemed unfeasible the opportunity would remain for counties to opt out, as is the ability of states to do under the full Medicaid expansion. Wisconsin already utilizes a Medicaid program that is administered on a county-by-county basis, FamilyCare, and could be a model for low income individuals slightly over the federal poverty line in need of affordable healthcare. This model could be administered at a county level or through a consortium of interested counties.

While this approach is, admittedly, a transition from the state's plan for BadgerCare, we believe it provides an additional opportunity to provide needed coverage to the individuals under 133% of the federal poverty line that are not eligible for Medicaid while seeking to gain full access to our tax dollars. A county-based waiver has been approved for Cuyahoga county in the state of Ohio in collaboration with their public hospital, a state that shares our Midwestern values and our economic strengths.

The 1115 demonstration waiver, Cuyahoga county in Ohio was granted by CMS an early coverage Medicaid waiver demonstration expansion. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA), which was signed into law in April 2010, allows states to cover uninsured individuals up to 133 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). The Medicaid Waiver Demonstration will cover uninsured adults, mainly individuals without dependent children, residing in Cuyahoga County with income up to 133 percent of the federal poverty line who are ineligible for Medicaid today. Because Ohio has not currently taken advantage of the federal enhanced Medicaid funding at a state level, this local effort will continue to provide access to care to an estimated 30,000 citizens. In light of this existing county waiver precedent, and the demonstrated actions and interests of numerous counties in Wisconsin, we request that the Department of Health Services' demonstration project allow counties to opt in to access federal Medicaid funds or that a similar alternative be included.

Signed Supervisors from the following 20 Counties:

- Dan Robinson, Brown County
- Sue Bradley, Columbia County
- Melissa Sargent, Dane County*
- Tom Quinn, Dunn County*
- Gerald Wilkie, Eau Claire County*
- Tom DeLain, Iowa County*
- Jim Schroeder, Jefferson County*
- Dayvin Hallmon, Kenosha County
- Monica Kruse, La Crosse County*
- Jim Alber, District 13, Lincoln County*
- Rita Metzger, Manitowoc County*
- John Robinson, Marathon County*
- David Bowen, Milwaukee County*
- Candy Sorensen, Oneida County*
- Kathy Groat, Outagamie County
- Ken Hall, Racine County
- Tom Crofton, Richland County*
- John Diets, Sauk County
- Larry Lautenschlager, Winnebago County*
- Jim Baumgart, Sheboygan County

** - notes a county that has already voted in favor on a resolution in support accepting federal Medicaid funds*