Accepting Federal Funds for BadgerCare matters for mental health

SUMMARY

Under the Affordable Care Act, states have the option to accept federal funding for their Medicaid programs (BadgerCare). Governor Walker and the WI legislature opted not to accept the federal funding. In the 2014 general election, 20 communities decided to ask voters to weigh in on this issue by holding a referendum on accepting federal funds for BadgerCare. Although the referenda did not create immediate policy change, over one million Wisconsinites made their voices heard. 73% voted in favor of accepting federal funds for Medicaid. BadgerCare is an extremely important source of mental health care for thousands of Wisconsin residents!

DETAILS

WHAT IS BADGERCARE? BadgerCare is our state’s health insurance program for low-income individuals. Learn more (including about eligibility) at dhs.wisconsin.gov/forwardhealth.

WHY DOES IT MATTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH? BadgerCare is an extremely important source of mental health care for thousands of Wisconsinites. Nationwide, Medicaid is the most important source of financing for mental health (www.nami.org/medicaidexpansion). In Wisconsin, accepting federal funds could improve mental health services. Counties are financially responsible for some community-based Medicaid mental health services. If our state accepts federal funding for BadgerCare, counties could use the substantial savings to improve mental health services!

WHY SHOULD WISCONSIN ACCEPT FEDERAL FUNDS FOR BADGERCARE? As part of the Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”), the federal government designated funds for states to provide Medicaid coverage for people earning up to $15,521/year.

Instead, our legislature approved an alternative plan proposed by Governor Walker. Under this plan, BadgerCare now covers everyone who earns up to $11,770/year. But to balance the cost of the plan, the state removed over 60,000 parents and caretakers from BadgerCare. The idea was that these adults could get coverage on the federal insurance Marketplace (www.healthcare.gov). However, current data shows that roughly 40% of people who lost their BadgerCare coverage remain uninsured. By accepting the federal funds, we could ensure that every Wisconsinite has access to affordable coverage.

TAKE ACTION!

Reach out to your Governor and your legislators! Let them know that you support accepting federal funds for BadgerCare.

Governor Walker: 608-266-1212 ● Legislators: legis.wisconsin.gov ● Remember to be brief, concise and respectful.

www.namiwisconsin.org
NAMI Wisconsin works to improve the quality of life of people affected by mental illnesses and to promote recovery.