Federal Funds for BadgerCare Plus
Medicaid is the most important state program for mental health care because it provides a broad array of recovery-oriented mental health services, some of which are not available through other types of coverage. Under our state’s alternative to accepting federal funds, current data from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services shows that approximately 40% of people who were notified that they would lose their BadgerCare eligibility remain uninsured.

What are your views on accepting federal funds to make BadgerCare available to people earning up to 138% of the federal poverty level?

Mental Health Care Parity
With federal rules for mental health and substance use parity now in effect, it is crucial to make sure that health insurance plans fully comply with federal and state requirements to provide equal access to care.

What are your plans to make sure that health insurance plans comply with parity requirements for mental health and substance use care?

Criminal Justice System
Too many people with mental illness are in our criminal justice systems, often due to untreated mental illness. Nationwide, our jails and prisons now house well over 350,000 inmates with mental illness. Wisconsin has developed effective programs to divert people with mental illness from jails and prisons (Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD) program) and make re-entry into the community a smoother transition to prevent recidivism (Disabled Offender Economic Support (DOES) program and the Opening Avenues to Re-entry Success (OARS) program).

What will you do to reduce the numbers of people with mental illness in our criminal justice systems?

Stigma and Discrimination
People living with mental illness in Wisconsin face major barriers to care in many respects. One of the largest barriers to care continues to be stigma (pervasive negative stereotypes about mental illness). Stigma has very real consequences, including discrimination in housing, employment and medical care.

What are your views on stigma and discrimination and what are your plans to reduce these barriers in WI?

Employment
Only one in five adults receiving public mental health services is employed. 70% report wanting to work. Employment services have been developed and proven to meet their needs, such as the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) program. Yet these services are only available to a tiny fraction of those who could benefit.

What will you do to increase access to effective employment assistance to help people with mental illness return to work?

Mental Health Care for Veterans/Service Members/their Families
America’s service men and women including the National Guard and Reserves are struggling with psychological wounds and mental illness. Far too many go without the care and support they need. They suffer, their families suffer and far too many are taking their own lives.

What will you do to provide excellent, timely mental health care for our country’s service men and women and their families?

Public Mental Health Funding
Public mental health programs provide vital services, including crisis response, intensive services and supports to children and adults who are uninsured or who need services not covered by private health plans.

What will you do to provide stable and adequate funding for public mental health programs?

Greatest Challenge?
There are many barriers to quality mental health care for children and adults living with mental illness: housing, health insurance, employment, stigma, lack of recovery-oriented services, lack of access in rural areas and many more.

What do you view as the most significant barrier to effective mental health care in Wisconsin and how would you propose addressing this barrier?