

Spring 2013

FamilyVoices of Wisconsin

*The Home of Wisconsin's Family to Family Health Information and Education Network
in Partnership with the Wisconsin Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Program*

Investing in Health Care and Medicaid Coverage for People with Disabilities and/or Special Health Care Needs



Wisconsin currently faces an important decision about the future of health care for all Wisconsin residents, including people with disabilities and special health care needs. The Wisconsin Legislature and the Governor will soon determine if BadgerCare eligibility will change and how many people will be covered by Medicaid. Governor Walker has submitted his budget proposal (2013-2015 biennial budget) as summarized below. As part of the biennial budget process (read more about this on page 2), the Legislature will be considering the Governor's recommendations and may make recommendations of their own.

The Governor's Medicaid Proposal

Included in the state biennial budget proposal, Governor Walker has recommended that Medicaid eligibility be set at 100% of the federal poverty level (FPL), currently \$23,550 for a family of 4. He chose not to expand Medicaid to 133% FPL (currently \$31,320 for a family of 4) and accept federal funding under the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

For those with incomes above 100% FPL who do not have access to employer-based coverage, insurance will be available through an exchange. The exchange will offer private insurance plans to individuals and small businesses. Those enrolled will be responsible for paying premiums, co-pays and deductibles. Those with incomes below 133% FPL will receive significant financial assistance to pay for their plan. Limited financial help will also be available for others at higher incomes.

The Governor's plan is expected to expand coverage for an estimated 84,000 people (e.g., adults below 100% FPL who do not have dependent children) and will cost the state \$14.4 million during the next 2 years.¹ The proposal will, however, make 100,000 Wisconsinites above 100% FPL who are covered by BadgerCare ineligible for continued coverage.

The Legislature Considers Medicaid Expansion Options

The Governor and Legislature can still choose to expand Medicaid under the ACA. If they do, the federal government will pay 100% of the cost for the next three years to provide care for people under 133% FPL and then phase-down to paying 90% of the total costs of coverage in 2020. If Medicaid Expansion was enacted, Wisconsin could receive \$675 million in federal funds each year for the next six years.

A Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB) analysis indicates that Wisconsin could cover more uninsured adults (84,000 vs. 175,000) if Medicaid was expanded. The analysis also found that the Governor's proposal will cost the state significantly more than expanding Medicaid under the ACA and accepting federal funds. See page 2 under **Web Watch** for a link to the LFB analysis.

Why is This Important for People with Special Needs?

While some children and adults with disabilities and special health care needs qualify for Medicaid programs because of the severity of their disability, many others with chronic conditions or less severe disabilities struggle to afford private health insurance premiums and high copays and deductibles. Medicaid expansion under the ACA would allow these adults to qualify for Medicaid. This could be very helpful for young adults with special needs if they do not qualify for Supplemental Security Income (which makes them Medicaid eligible).

A Department of Health and Human Services sponsored report estimates that one-quarter of the adults who would be covered by Medicaid under the ACA plan have mental health disorders and other disabling conditions. The expanded Medicaid plan will allow these individuals to get the health care services they need covered by Medicaid.

For more information on Medicaid Expansion and the ACA, refer to the resources listed under **Web Watch**.

¹ Legislative Fiscal Bureau Analysis of the Governor's Budget Proposal (see **Web Watch**, p. 2)



WEB WATCH

For additional resources related to the articles in this newsletter, you can visit the following sites:

National Office of Family Voices
www.familyvoices.org

Family Voices of Wisconsin
(budget resources)
fvofwi.org/public-policy/state-budget/

WI Council on Children and Families
(health care resources)
www.wccf.org/proj_health.php

Legislative Fiscal Bureau (Governor's Budget Analysis)
legis.wisconsin.gov/lfb/publications/budget/2013-15%20Budget/Pages/Governor.aspx

Families USA
(Medicaid Expansion)
www.familiesusa.org/issues/medicaid/expansion-center/

Did You Know? Now You Know!

The State Biennial Budget Process

The state Legislature is in the midst of budget deliberations. We encourage you to learn more about the budget process and how to communicate your thoughts to legislators.

What is the Budget Process in Wisconsin?

Every two years (in the odd numbered years) the Wisconsin Legislature considers and passes a two year (biennial) budget. The process starts with state agencies submitting their budget requests. These requests are then reviewed and a budget bill is developed as the Governor's biennial budget bill.

This year, the Governor addressed the Legislature in mid-February and a bill was introduced. The 2013-2015 budget bill is **AB 40**.

The legislature first sends this bill to the Joint Committee on Finance. This committee is made up of 16 members, representing both Republicans and Democrats from the Senate and Assembly. These members are critical decision-makers on the budget bill. To find out who sits on this committee go to:

<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/lfb/jfc/>

This year the Joint Finance Committee held hearings in four locations during April to seek input on the budget. They heard from hundreds of individuals, including those representing the disability community, about how this budget will impact them and their communities. The Committee then adjusts the budget bill and sends it to the full legislature for their approval. After each chamber debates and adopts their version of the budget

bill, a conference committee meets to work out the differences between the two bills. The final budget bill is brought back and voted on and then sent to the Governor for his signature. Most years this is done by July 1.

While the Joint Finance Committee has already held their public hearings, it is not too late to submit comments directly to the Committee or contact your Representatives to let them know how the budget will impact your family and your ability to care for your child.

How Do I Submit Comments?

You can submit your comments directly to the Joint Finance Committee via email at **BudgetComments@legis.wisconsin.gov** or via mail to **Joe Malkasian, Room 305 East, State Capitol, Madison, WI 53702**.

How Do I Find Out Who Represents Me?

If you do not know who your state Representatives are go to the Legislature's website and go to "Who Represents Me?" **<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/pages/waml.aspx>** You can then link to your Representative's home page which provides their telephone number, email and mailing address.

If you would prefer to call, the **Legislative Hotline is 1-800-362-9472**. You will be given the names and contact information for your legislators.

Why Telling Your Story to Legislators Is So Important

During the state budget deliberations, it is CRITICAL that families communicate with their state legislators and tell them how the budget will impact them and their ability to care for their child with special needs.

Below are a few reasons why communicating your family's story is so important:

Why Tell Stories?

- ◆ Stories are what people (including legislators) remember.
- ◆ Stories make the issue real.
- ◆ Stories deepen their understanding of issues for children and families
- ◆ Stories help legislators relate to what families experience and challenges we face.

The only way legislators will know what is important to you is if YOU TELL THEM!

Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs News

Family Voices of Wisconsin Training Schedule

Did You Know? Now You Know! Training - a training that provides a comprehensive overview of health care, community supports and services and resources for children and youth with disabilities and special health care needs from birth through young adulthood.

Trainings are being planned for Columbus, La Crosse and Milwaukee next fall.

What's After High School - a training on transition to adult life for youth with disabilities and/or special health care needs. Topics include: envisioning a youth's future in the community; the role of schools; long term supports; vocational resources; transitioning to adult health care; guardianship and other legal options; advocacy; and the fundamentals of self-determination.

Medford, May 21st, 5:30 - 8:30pm, Medford Area School District Office
To register call Luanne at **715-748-4620 ext 534** or e-mail **olsonlu@medford.k12.wi.us**

Wausau, May 22nd, 1:00 - 3:30pm, Marathon County Health Department
To register contact the Northern Regional Center at **1-866-640-4106** or email Julia at **Julia.Stavran@co.marathon.wi.us**

Policy Update

New Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation Provider Announced

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services recently announced that a new contractor for non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) has been selected. The Department will be signing a contract with Medical Transportation Management (MTM), a privately held business based in Lake St. Louis, Missouri. According to their website at **www.mtm-inc.net/transportation-management/** MTM is one of the largest and most experienced medical transportation companies in the US. It currently has contracts in 28 states and its call center schedules over 7 million rides per year. Stay tuned for more details on when MTM will begin providing transportation services in Wisconsin.

PLEASE NOTE: LogistiCare will continue to coordinate all non-emergency rides for Medicaid/BadgerCare covered appointments until MTM takes over. If you need to schedule a ride, call the LogistiCare hotline at **1-866-907-1493**.

Lifetime and Annual Limits Prohibited under ACA

Starting January 1, 2014, all annual dollar limits on insurance benefits will be prohibited. Lifetime dollar limits on insurance benefits are also prohibited (this has been in place since September 2010). Before the health care law, many health plans set an annual limit - a dollar limit on their yearly spending for your covered benefits. Many plans also set a lifetime limit - a dollar limit on what they would spend for your covered benefits during the entire time you were enrolled in that plan. You were required to pay the cost of all care exceeding those limits. *This provision of the ACA is critically important for families who have children (or other family members) with chronic health care conditions.*

To learn more about the ACA, go to **www.healthcare.gov** or go to the Catalyst Center website at **www.hdwg.org/catalyst/publications/aca** and view their informative documents on the ACA and children with special health care needs.



Children and Youth with
Special Health Care Needs

CYSHCN REGIONAL CENTERS

**Call with your
questions!**

Northeast Region

Children's Hospital of
Wisconsin - Fox Valley
1.877.568.5205

Northern Region

Marathon County Health
Department
Wausau
1.866.640.4106

Southeast Region

Children's Hospital
Milwaukee
1.800.234.5437

Southern Region

Waisman Center
Madison
1.800.532.3321

Western Region

Chippewa County Dept of
Public Health
Chippewa Falls
1.800.400.3678

Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council (GLITC)

Lac du Flambeau
1.800.472.7207



Family Voices of Wisconsin

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About Family Voices of Wisconsin

Family Voices of Wisconsin is the home of the Wisconsin Family to Family Health Information and Education Network. Family Voices of Wisconsin is part of a national grassroots network of families and advocates who support children with disabilities and/or special health care needs. We provide information, training and support around health care and community supports to families throughout Wisconsin, including the well received "Did You Know? Now You Know!" training program. Family Voices is dedicated to strong collaborative partnerships between families and essential allies to improve the systems of supports and services for children. A core commitment of Family Voices is to involve and support parents in decision making roles that affect program design and policy recommendations on local, regional and statewide levels.

Feedback Welcome

We want to make sure that this newsletter is an effective resource for you. If you have any comments, or wish to provide news and information for us to publish, please contact Lynn at Lynn@fvofwi.org. We look forward to your ideas and suggestions!

Would you prefer to have this newsletter emailed you? If so, contact the Family Voices newsletter editor at Lynn@fvofwi.org.