



Covering Kids & Families

Wisconsin

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BadgerCare Plus Core Plan for Childless Adults

Gov. Jim Doyle announced last month that his administration reached an agreement with the federal government on a waiver for the next important component of his BadgerCare Plus plan: expanding health coverage in Wisconsin to childless adults. Under the proposal, those who are uninsured and who do not have children under their care may now have access to primary and preventive care and generic drugs. The five-year federal waiver for BadgerCare Plus Core Plan for Childless Adults builds upon Wisconsin's existing BadgerCare Plus program. However, it is not a standard Medicaid benefit nor an entitlement program; instead it will offer a limited benefit due to strict state and federal budgetary limits.

Childless adults who may qualify for BadgerCare Plus:

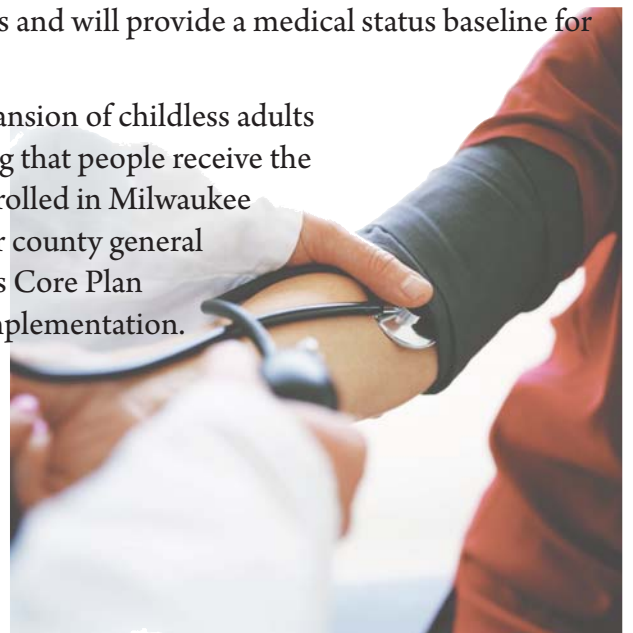
- Ages 19-64
- No dependent minor children
- Income at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (\$20,800 for a single person, \$28,000 for a married couple)
- Not pregnant, disabled, or qualified for any other Medicaid, Medicare or State Children's Health Insurance Program
- No private health insurance coverage now or in the previous 12 months

All BadgerCare Plus childless adults will have cost sharing. Members will pay an application processing fee and have modest co-payments for most services. Co-payments will be waived for preventive services.

Wisconsin will require that all applicants fill out a Health Needs Assessment (HNA) in order to complete their enrollment in BadgerCare Plus. The HNA will collect a brief health history that will be used to match applicants with health plans that can best meet their health needs. All childless adults will also be required to get a comprehensive physical exam within the first year of enrolling in BadgerCare Plus to ensure the establishment of a medical home. This exam will identify any untreated health issues and will provide a medical status baseline for each member.

Because of the recent downturn in the national economy, the expansion of childless adults will be implemented in phases. Wisconsin is committed to ensuring that people receive the health care they need. Approximately 7,500 individuals already enrolled in Milwaukee County's General Assistance Medical Program (GAMP) and other county general assistance medical programs will be rolled into the BadgerCare Plus Core Plan for Childless Adults on January 1, 2009 during the first phase of implementation. Further implementation will be discussed in the context of the Governor's budget early next year.

Covering Kids & Families would like to thank the Department of Health Services for providing information for this article. For more information about the BadgerCare Plus Core Plan visit www.badgercareplus.org.



Thanks to our Local Coalitions!

Covering Kids & Families does tremendous work thanks to an outstanding crew of outreach specialists based in our Madison office. But Wisconsin is a big place and our reach wouldn't be nearly as complete or effective were it not for numerous local coalitions with dedicated staff working in partnership with CKF.

As we moved off funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, two long-standing partnerships also shifted a bit and we'd like to thank them for their work.

In La Crosse County we've partnered with the Health Department's Community Liaison Program since 2003 to foster a local coalition and coordinate outreach and enrollment assistance. It has been a pleasure to work directly with Lindsey Schwarz-Nichols and Linda Lee to provide help to families in need throughout the Coulee Region. Among the most successful moments came as Wisconsin was transitioning away from BadgerCare and into BadgerCare Plus. Lindsey pulled together two extremely well-attended Eligibility Trainings that laid the groundwork for numerous organizations to begin helping families in the community. The audience challenged our trainers with their knowledge and enthusiasm, and showed the kind of intense interest in helping families that we need in every corner of the state. This La Crosse connection put us in prime position to work with four La Crosse County school districts to test the CHILD model of reaching families in need of health care coverage through school partnerships. The Health Department has given us a local base to work from and utilize as the project progresses. Thank you Lindsey, Linda, and all the others we've worked with!

In Dane County, ABC for Health has led the local HealthWatch/CKF coalition since 2003. As times and approaches have changed, ABC's effort to connect with children and families has grown. Bobby Peterson and his staff have led the way in developing a model where advocates, enrollment staff, and service providers come together to discuss particular cases, how they can be resolved, and how those approaches can be applied to similar circumstances statewide. They have expanded their HealthWatch Wisconsin reach while maintaining their own local base, and provide a premier venue for interested individuals and organizations to come together and truly work for health care for all Wisconsinites.

CKF has been proud to provide modest finances to these efforts over the past five and a half years. We congratulate them on their own sustainability as our funds have shifted into other directions. We eagerly look forward to on-going collaboration.

CKF continues to work via subcontracts with Community Advocates in Milwaukee and the South Madison Health & Family Center-Harambee in Madison on the CHILD project.

Hmong American Friendship Association's Outreach Event

On Oct. 18th the Hmong American Friendship Association held a health fair in Milwaukee. There were lead test screenings, help with SSI Applications, BadgerCare Plus information, HMO outreach and education on sleep and sleep studies, as well as some beautiful entertainment by members of the association. Community events such as this one are great venues to spread the word about BadgerCare Plus!



CKF Member Profile | UnitedHealthcare

UnitedHealthcare of Wisconsin (UHC)/AmeriChoice is one of Wisconsin's many providers of public sector health care programs.

The health plan has been providing HMO services to Wisconsin families and people with disabilities since 1986, and has a combined membership of more than 157,000 BadgerCare Plus and Medicaid SSI members in 24 counties throughout Wisconsin.

UHC members receive the support they need and deserve. Customer Care Representatives are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to answer questions about benefits and services, help members find or change a doctor, explain care management programs, and much more. Member Advocates are available to lend personal support and assist with complex issues. Members also have access to interpreter services and a bilingual staff to help them communicate with doctors and UHC.

A variety of health care programs and services are available to UHC members. The Care Management program helps members with disease or medical conditions receive appropriate care to maintain healthy lifestyles. Pregnant members are eligible to participate in the Healthy First Steps program, which provides the support and services members need for healthy babies. A newly implemented program, Diaper Rewards, provides new mothers with free diapers when important preventive exams are completed on schedule.

UHC is committed to supporting the communities it serves. Outreach workers frequently visit members in their homes to explain the special programs and services that are available to them. UHC participates in numerous community events throughout the year where members can obtain health information and learn about their benefits and services.

Visit www.americhoice.com or call Ginger Dzick at 414.443.4527 for additional information about available services.



Co-Chair Corner: CKF Membership

By Andy Heidt & Kathy Kaelin, CKF co-chairs



Covering Kids & Families (CKF) is a coalition committed to reducing the number of uninsured children and families in Wisconsin by making sure those without health

insurance know about and can easily enroll in BadgerCare Plus. CKF strives to function as a coalition not only in name, but in practice. As a member, we will certainly add your organization to our letterhead, but we are not driven by simply having a long list of participating organizations. We depend on our member organizations for their leadership, expertise, and energy. Periodically we check in with our member organizations to reaffirm their role in the coalition and to seek ways to share resources. We have checked in with our existing members, and are now in the process of encouraging others to join our coalition.

There is no cost to be a member, and benefits include, but are not limited to:

- Sharing resources, best practices, and networking vehicles while linking your efforts with others across Wisconsin
- Advancing your own goals by utilizing existing strengths and the statewide reach of other like-minded organizations
- Making your voice heard by policy makers who can affect positive change in Wisconsin's public health insurance program
- Benefiting from having coalition staff available to answer questions and share knowledge
- Having free access to our Benefit Brochures, Making a Plan (MAP) publications, and being a part of the CHILd project

We hope that you join us as we continue to work toward our goal of health insurance coverage for all children and adults in Wisconsin! For more information contact the CKF Office at: 608.261.1455, or to download membership materials visit: www.ckfwi.org/join.htm.



Strong BadgerCare Plus Growth Pushed Program Over Budget

Adapted with permission from Jon Peacock's article, Wisconsin Council on Children and Families

BadgerCare Plus enrollment has far surpassed expectations. According to Department of Health Services (DHS) figures (that measure growth compared to a low point in mid January 2008), total family coverage was up by more than 85,000 people at the end of September, an increase of 17.7%. Coverage of kids has grown by more than 55,000, or 18%.

Clearly, most of the increase in family coverage this year can be attributed to the creation of BadgerCare Plus; however, it would be interesting to sort out the effects of the economic downturn and the continued erosion of employer-sponsored insurance. According to the DHS data, the number of enrolled kids below the poverty level has grown by more than 25,000 since the end of February, yet all the other income categories for children have declined.

DHS announced last month that the success of BadgerCare Plus was pushing the program's cost over budget. According to a Sept. 23 article in the Wisconsin State Journal, DHS estimated that the cost in the current fiscal year would be \$25 million more than anticipated <http://www.madison.com/archives/read.php?ref=/wsj/2008/09/23/0809230024.php>.

A follow-up article in the Wisconsin State Journal a day or two later noted that: "state officials clarified that only \$16 million of that estimated increase was due to more children and parents receiving coverage through BadgerCare Plus, and the other \$9 million increase came from more families signing up for existing state health programs that were converted into BadgerCare Plus earlier this year."

As Jon Peacock with the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families has stated, \$25 million (or \$16 million) is a very reasonable cost for a program serving 85,000 people. However, some GOP legislators have complained about the added cost and have called for an audit of BadgerCare Plus <http://www.madison.com/wsj/home/local/306400>.

A New Mechanism for Outreach

CKF has put together a short BadgerCare Plus promotional PowerPoint presentation. The presentation is tailored to the county in which it is shown. It provides basic information about BadgerCare Plus such as who is eligible and what benefits may be included, and lists contact information of people in the community that can help families enroll in the program. This looping presentation is narrated, designed to run on its own, and each run-through lasts approximately 3 minutes. Some school districts in Wisconsin have set up this presentation during parent-teacher conferences. Either pencil pouches, bookmarks or other BadgerCare Plus handouts accompany it. If you have ideas for venues in which this could be run or would like to view the presentation, please contact Karen Odegaard at kodegaard@wisc.edu.

Would you like to get involved in reaching families in need of health insurance? Join Covering Kids & Families Outreach Committee! Contact Jeni Appleby (jlbingen@wisc.edu) for more information.

Did you know?

For every 1% jump in unemployment, about 1 million more people enroll in Medicaid AND the number of uninsured increases by 1.1 million (According to a Kaiser Family Foundation report, *Headed for a Crunch*).

Oops!

In the Birth Cost Recovery article (September Issue, 2008) we made an important error. We have learned that although Wisconsin state law currently requires courts to order recovery of birth costs from unmarried fathers, the federal government does not. In fact only about 50% of states do so. (This is based upon a July, 2000 publication of the Office of Inspector General, DHHS). We regret the error.