



# CITIZEN ACTION OF WISCONSIN

221 S. 2nd Street Milwaukee, WI 53204 PH 414-476-4501 Fax 414-476-4580

For Immediate Release-- July 5, 2017

Contacts: Robert Kraig, (414) 322-5324 robert.kraig@citizenactionwi.org

Kevin Kane (414) 550-8280 kevin.kane@citizenactionwi.org

## **New Legislation Creates BadgerCare “Public Option” to Immediately Lower Health Costs**

***Following insurance company threats to leave markets, legislation introduced to allow all Wisconsinites to purchase BadgerCare.***

**Madison** - At a Capital media event today, Citizen Action of Wisconsin and legislative allies announced legislation written by State Representative Eric Genrich and State Senator LaTonya Johnson that would allow all Wisconsinites the chance to purchase BadgerCare as a “public option”. The [proposed legislation](#) would allow Wisconsin residents, both individuals and small businesses, to enroll in BadgerCare at full price. **A BadgerCare Public Option would save consumers on average over 15% vs existing health insurance options in Dane County and 30% vs lowest silver plan on average statewide.**

Many Wisconsin counties have seen insurance companies drop out of the marketplace, as they seek to cherry pick consumers, with Anthem being the most recent example. Health leaders have called for a government run public option to compete with insurance companies and negotiate with pharmaceutical corporations. This legislation will expand BadgerCare to become a public option, to help both Wisconsin residents who have lost their coverage and residents struggling with medical costs.

BadgerCare currently enrolls over 700,000 children and moderate income residents in every community. If opened up for all, residents would have access to a public option with a long successful history of providing affordable quality care. Until then, Wisconsinites over the poverty line are at the mercy of private insurance threatening to exit following Donald Trump's sabotage of the marketplace. Already states like Nevada and Minnesota have made similar efforts to introduce public options at the state level.

A BadgerCare public option would save consumers immediately. The state [Legislative Fiscal Bureau estimates](#) that a BadgerCare “buy-in” would cost adults \$7,224 per year, while the lowest cost Silver plan in Dane County available through Healthcare.gov would cost a 40 year old applicant \$8,350 per year in premiums and deductibles. **That is 15% higher, or \$1,117 more, than BadgerCare.** BadgerCare does not have annual deductibles. Statewide, this would be on average 30% less, or \$2,162 less per person per year under this public option.

“Both Governor Walker and Republicans in Congress have sought to sabotage BadgerCare, failing to recognize it presents the best way to rein in skyrocketing health costs for consumers,” said Robert Kraig, Executive Director at Citizen Action of Wisconsin. **“With just one - word change in state law BadgerCare could become a public option that could compete with**

**insurers and negotiate with pharmaceutical corporations.**

“Under our plan, BadgerCare would be treated like any other health insurance plan available on the federal marketplace for individuals and small businesses”, said State Representative Eric Genrich, D-Green Bay. “It would be more affordable and more comprehensive than most other plans and it would be able to hold down the cost of prescription drugs that continue to skyrocket.”

“No matter who you are or how much money you make, under this plan, you would have the option to buy into BadgerCare—the state’s bipartisan plan that is popular, successful and cost effective”, said State Senator Dave Hansen, D-Green Bay. “The state can use its buying power to negotiate lower drug prices and services. This means lowers out of pocket costs and lower premiums.”