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Joint Finance Committee proposal to remove Medicaid expansion jeopardizes critical investments for disability, older adult, caregiver communities

People with disabilities and families across Wisconsin are pleading with state lawmakers to reconsider their proposal to remove Medicaid expansion from the state budget. On Tuesday, May 7 people from Eau Claire to Milwaukee to Janesville are sharing their stories about how the savings from Medicaid expansion is essential. (Press Conference at 9:30 AM, Room 330 SW).

Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Organization members have consistently supported Medicaid expansion; many people with disabilities, older adults, family caregivers, and almost 30% of the homecare workforce are in BadgerCare.

Medicaid provides access to critical services for many people with disabilities which are not available at all or to the degree needed in private insurance. Allowing people to earn more while keeping their health care lets people, including caregivers, work more hours.

Savings from the proposed Medicaid expansion leverage an estimated \$1.6 billion of new federal funding; the budget proposes to reinvest in programs and services critical to people with disabilities and older adults.

Speakers at the Wednesday press conference include:

- Jason Endres and Amber Wesely of Eau Claire – people with disabilities advocating for higher wages and benefits for direct care workers.
- Cheryl Homiak of Madison is the primary caregiver for her adult daughter Rachel. She will address the importance of personal care services for Rachel and the many challenges /joy as a family caregiver.
- Cindy Bentley of Milwaukee and Erin Miller of St. Francis – advocating for increased funding to improve dental care for people with disabilities who now must have their teeth pulled.
- Cassandra Boehlen of Janesville - sharing her story of fighting for supports for her child with a disability who was on a waiting list.
- Mary Neubauer of Cudahy – speaking about living with mental health needs and advocating for investments in critical mental health and crisis services and supports.
- Anna Stevens of Madison – advocating for better healthcare options for low income people and families

Removing Medicaid expansion removes the funding source for critical investments for people with disabilities and their families (see below).

Federal funding allows Wisconsin to do much more for far less state taxpayer investment due to the 90% in federal matching funds which has been sustained over time in other states. Disability advocates ask: without federal dollars, how will services for people with disabilities be fully funded as proposed?

Wisconsin has a long proud history of broad bipartisan support for services and supports for people with disabilities. As the Joint Finance Committee begins deliberation on the budget, we ask that policymakers come together to support these important initiatives that are vital to the lives, health, and independence of Wisconsinites with disabilities.

Survival Coalition fact sheets on how Medicaid Expansion impacts the disability and older adult communities:

- [Medicaid expansion directly supports people with disabilities, older adults, and caregivers](#)
- [Medicaid expansion means money to reinvest](#) into Medicaid services—including the direct care workforce, dental care, mental health and crisis services, children’s wait list for people with disabilities and older adults
- [Facts on how Medicaid expansion will impact the state economy](#) and budget, private insurance costs, sustainability, and helps support low income workers

Survival Coalition members are sharing the following facts about Medicaid expansion derived from more than 200 studies of the 37 states already participating in expansion programs; These states draw down a 90% federal match (compared to Wisconsin’s 60% match currently).

- States expanding Medicaid realize budget savings, revenue gains, and overall economic growth.
- States that took expansion dollars did not see significant increases in spending of state funds or significant reductions in other areas, like education or transportation.
- In some states, expansion resulted in state savings by offsetting state costs in other areas, including behavioral health services, the criminal justice system, and Supplemental Security Income program costs.
- Studies also show that Medicaid expansions in states result in reductions in uncompensated care costs for hospitals.
- Expansion states experienced more job growth, including in health sector jobs.
- People in expansion states are healthier than those in states that didn't take expansion.
- Private insurance rates did not go up in expansion states: in fact, there was evidence of a 7% rate decline because the healthiest, youngest people stayed in the marketplace while those more likely to drive up costs (sicker people) were more likely to get Medicaid coverage.
- Rural areas experienced the most gains in overall insurance coverage in expansion states.
- Expansion states have fewer unpaid medical bills.
- People covered by expansion experienced less out-of-pocket costs and had fewer worries about paying medical bills.

Survival Coalition asks legislators to listen to their constituents, consider the facts and reconsider the proposal to remove Medicaid expansion from the state budget.

Critical investments for people with disabilities funded with Medicaid Expansion Savings

Critical Investment	Governor's proposal to reinvest expansion funds
Wage increases for direct care workers in Family Care	\$17 M (fed) \$12 M (state) Total: \$29 million all funds
Wage increases for personal care workers	\$10 M (fed) \$7 M (state) Total: \$17 million all funds
Increased reimbursements for dentists, including those that serve people with physical and developmental disabilities	\$24.8 M (fed) \$23.2 M (state) Total: \$48 million all funds
Serving the 1000+ children currently waiting to access the children's long-term services and supports waiver	\$44.5 (fed) \$29.7 (state) Total: \$74.2 million all funds
Increased mental health and crisis services and supports	\$56.8 M (fed) \$56.9 M (state) Total: \$113.7 million all funds
Lead Exposure and poisoning prevention	\$30.9 M (fed) \$21.1 M (state) Total: \$52 million all funds