Expanding Medicaid Would Lead to a Healthier, Happier Wisconsin

Posted on Mar 10, Posted by Jennifer Shilling, State Senator Dist 32 (B) Category Wisconsin

An overwhelming 70% of Wisconsinites support accepting the federal funds for Medicaid expansion. It's time to move forward.

LA CROSSE, WI - With the 2020 presidential election just around the corner, the topic of health care is more hotly-contested than ever. While each candidate has their own opinions on how it should be reformed, there's one theme that weaves through each debate: our system is broken, and we need to fix it.

While we can't control what happens at the federal level, there is something we can do right here, at home, in Wisconsin – expand Medicaid.

For eight years, the Walker administration refused to accept federal Medicaid dollars that would extend coverage to tens of thousands of our state's most vulnerable citizens. Putting politics before the needs of our people, he chose to appeal to the far-right and reject the Affordable Care Act. And in the past year, legislative Republicans have kept up with Walker's ideological

agenda, and removed Medicaid Expansion from Governor Evers' state budget proposal on the first day of deliberation.

Bottom line, these political games are just irresponsible, and they're costing taxpayers money. In fact, in this budget cycle alone, accepting the Medicaid funding would've saved $324.5 million in state taxpayer money, and brought in over $1.6 billion in additional federal dollars for health care services.

What's worse is Wisconsinites are already paying for the expansion, without reaping the benefits. According to the Department of Revenue, without expansion, Wisconsin taxpayers will pay more than $2 billion over the next two years in federal income taxes for other states like Illinois and New Jersey to expand their Medicaid programs.

Why wouldn't we work to keep those dollars in Wisconsin?

With that money, we could increase affordable and accessible health insurance to 80,000 residents. We could increase provider reimbursement, tackle workforce shortages and provide coverage for additional services and benefits. We could even increase state funding for other priorities, like education and local government. And, perhaps most importantly, we could do the work the people of Wisconsin are asking us to do.

An overwhelming 70% of Wisconsinites support accepting the federal funds for Medicaid expansion – and it's not too late. Republicans should do their jobs and act on stand-alone legislation introduced by Democrats that would allow us to join the 37 other states that have expanded their programs.

Every person in Wisconsin deserves access to affordable healthcare. Unfortunately, on this issue, Republicans are still stuck in the past. It's time to move forward and build healthier, happier communities, together.

Tags: Untagged

Tags: Untagged