

Written by Citizen Action of Wisconsin, Robert Kraig
Thursday, 30 July 2015 11:44

<http://newiprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/medicare-patient-s5.jpg>



Local and Statewide Data Tell the Story

Statewide: On the 50th Anniversary of the signing of the Medicare and Medicaid into law, Citizen Action of Wisconsin released [statewide and local enrollment data](#) to paint a picture of the expansion of health care freedom the programs have enabled across Wisconsin.

“50 years ago today Medicare and Medicaid began to bend the arc of American history towards the freedom of every American to control their own health care decisions, and to be assured there is always somewhere to go to get affordable life-saving coverage,” said Robert Kraig, Executive Director of Citizen Action of Wisconsin.

The health care landscape before 1965 is almost unimaginable today. Before the passage of these landmark programs, there was no guaranteed source of health coverage for seniors, people with disabilities, and low income Americans. For example, before 1965 only 25% of American seniors had comprehensive health coverage, and were one major illness away from losing their health and their lifetime savings. Health insurance companies would not sell seniors affordable coverage because they have greater medical needs, and therefore were unprofitable.

The key insight behind both programs is that there are large groups of Americans without access to good health coverage at work who will not have the freedom to acquire affordable health coverage unless our democratic government steps in. The understanding that seniors, people with disabilities, and low income Americans could not acquire life saving coverage without government action has been expanded in this decade to include people with preexisting conditions, farmers, the self-employed, most people who work for small businesses, and all those without good employment-based health coverage.

“The expansion of freedom made possible by Medicare and Medicaid over the last 50 years reminds us that America can achieve great things when we work together to address our social and economic challenges,” said Robert Kraig. “Both programs grew out of the recognition that

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millions of Americans will be forced to go without vital health coverage unless our democratic government backstops the system. The passage of the Affordable Care Act in 2010 built on the lessons of Medicare and Medicaid, and is another landmark in creating an America where everyone has somewhere to go to get affordable health care, no matter what.”

Wisconsin Medicare & Medicaid Coverage By County

[A full list of counties can be found here](#)

Select Counties

Medicaid

Medicare

Statewide

1,080,546 residents

1,042,813 residents

Brown

43,461

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39,712

Chippewa

12,009

12,160

Dane

68,243

69,803

Douglas

9,206

9,121

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Eau Claire

18,845

17,776

Fond du Lac

15,361

19,601

Kenosha

36,091

26,153

La Crosse

48,195

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20,144

Manitowoc

12,660

17,729

Marathon

23,683

24,382

Milwaukee

317,051

150,340

Oneida

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6,624

10,688

Outagamie

24,157

28,346

Portage

10,829

12,038

Racine

42,418

36,196

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Rock

35,996

29,971

Sheboygan

18,956

21,882

Waukesha

31,393

73,083

Winnebago

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26,530

29,383

Wood

45,005

16,348

Note: Some residents are “dual eligible” and are covered by both Medicare and Medicaid

Medicare data source: Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services, [Medicare Aged and Disabled by State and County](#)

Medicaid data Source: Wisconsin Department of Health Service, [Members by County/Tribe for Each Month and Year, June 2015](#)

[A full list of counties can be found here](#)