

Thousands still waiting for health care due to GOP rejection of federal MA funds.

MADISON - While acknowledging today's announcement that Family Care is expanding to include Northeast Wisconsin is a good thing, **State Senator Dave Hansen (D-Green Bay)** was critical of Governor Walker and Republican legislators for delaying the popular program's expansion.



"While I am pleased that Family Care will now provide families in Brown County and Northeast Wisconsin the economic freedom that comes with access to affordable long-term care, I cannot help but remain **troubled by the fact that this Governor and his Republican colleagues in the Legislature initially refused to provide access it in the first place** ," said Hansen.

Last year during the budget debate, Democratic members of the Joint Finance Committee introduced an amendment to increase access the program only to have all Republican members vote it down on partisan lines.

In response to the committee's actions legislators from both parties representing Northeast Wisconsin offered legislation to approve the expansion. (AB-299: Genrich and Hansen /SB-503: Cowles and Bies /AB-428: Bies and Cowles). **All three bills died after failing to receive a public hearing much less a vote in either house.**

"**Every Republican on that committee voted against expanding Family Care for families in northeast Wisconsin** . The delay of access to affordable health care for residents of Northeast Wisconsin only hurt thousands of seniors waiting in line for access to the care they needed. If the Republicans had a problem with something else in the amendment they could have simply done the expansion on their own in the budget or by passing separate legislation."

During the same time Governor Walker and legislative Republicans have continually rejected accepting the return of our own federal tax dollars to expand MA through the successful BadgerCare program.

Had Wisconsin opted to accept federal investment to strengthen our BadgerCare program, nearly 85,000 more Wisconsinites would be insured, taxpayers would have saved $119 million over the biennium, and we could have created over 10,000 Wisconsin jobs. Unfortunately, much to the surprise of Wisconsinites, Republicans rejected this opportunity.

“Much like they showed no interest in expanding Family Care until being forced to by the federal government, their decision to deny health care to 85,000 people and say no to 10,000 jobs is taking our state backwards. At some point people should demand that they focus on Wisconsin families rather than helping their Governor gear up for his presidential campaign. Reversing course and accepting the MA funds would be a good start.”