



REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS NELSON
ASSEMBLY MAJORITY LEADER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 13, 2009

CONTACT: REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS NELSON
608/266/2418

REP. NELSON ANNOUNCES BIG SENIORCARE SAVINGS
PROGRAM PROJECTED TO SAVE \$106 MILLION OVER NEXT TWO YEARS

MADISON – Representative Thomas Nelson (D-Kaukauna) announced today that new estimates show that Wisconsin’s prescription drug program **SeniorCare** continues to be a great value for Wisconsin seniors and taxpayers. According to the Legislative Fiscal Bureau, the program is projected to save taxpayers \$106 million over the next biennium thanks to negotiated drug company discounts.

“As the **SeniorCare** program continues to provide Wisconsin seniors with affordable prescription drugs, it is also becoming less and less reliant on taxpayer dollars,” said Rep. Nelson. “In these challenging economic times, a savings of \$106 million is something to get excited about.”

SeniorCare is Wisconsin’s prescription drug program, which serves as an alternative to Medicare Part D. An overwhelming percentage of participants – nearly 95% – pay less for their medications than they would under Part D. The program is paid for through a combination of state general purpose revenue, federal funding, and rebates from pharmaceutical companies.

“The number of participants in **SeniorCare** directly determines how big of a rebate we receive from drug companies,” Rep. Nelson explained. “The more participants, the stronger our position as we negotiate prices. The projected rebate of \$106 million reflects the widespread success of the program.”

SeniorCare is made possible through a waiver from the federal government, which was set to expire in the summer of 2007. The initial request for reauthorization was denied by President Bush, but strong citizen support and a campaign by state legislators saved the program. Rep. Nelson collected over 4,000 signatures for the “Save **SeniorCare**” campaign. Senator Herb Kohl and Wisconsin Congressional Democrats inserted a special provision in a supplemental spending bill that extended the program through 2009.

“The numbers once again prove that **SeniorCare** serves Wisconsin seniors and Wisconsin taxpayers better than the federal government,” continued Rep. Nelson. “Over the upcoming months we must continue to work with our Congressional delegation and the Obama administration to protect this extraordinarily successful program.”

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