



REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS NELSON ASSEMBLY MAJORITY LEADER

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CONTACT: REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS NELSON
608/266/2418

REPRESENTATIVE NELSON ANNOUNCES BADGERCARE PLUS EXPANSION ENROLLMENT NOW OPEN FOR ADULTS WITH NO DEPENDENT CHILDREN

MADISON -- Representative Tom Nelson (D-Kaukauna) announced today that the BadgerCare Plus Core Plan is now accepting applications from income-eligible adults with no dependent children. BadgerCare Plus is Wisconsin's program that provides affordable health care coverage to chronically uninsured populations in the state: children, farm families, the self-employed -- and now -- lower-income Wisconsinites without dependent children. The earliest enrollment date will be July 15, 2009.

"With more Wisconsinites out of work now than at any other time in the past 25 years, the BadgerCare Plus expansion is incredibly important. With the loss of a job often comes the loss of health benefits, and BadgerCare Plus will help to ensure that lower-income Wisconsinites have access to basic health care coverage," said Rep. Nelson.

In 2008, Wisconsin consolidated its Medicaid, Healthy Start and BadgerCare programs to create BadgerCare Plus. The program provides uninsured Wisconsinites with affordable health care coverage including primary and preventive care and generic prescription drugs. All children under 19 are eligible for the program, regardless of income level, and parents and caretakers of children under 19 with incomes of up to 200% of the federal poverty level may also enroll. The expansion extends eligibility to lower-income adults without dependent children, making affordable health care available to many more farm families and self-employed Wisconsinites.

"In the face of an unprecedented budget deficit, we took common sense steps to ensure that basic priorities like health care are protected," continued Rep. Nelson. "The hospital assessment passed earlier this year will capture funding from the federal government, enabling the expansion of BadgerCare Plus when we most need it."

Limited-income Wisconsinites are encouraged to apply if they have been without health insurance for a year or more, or recently lost their health insurance through no fault of their own. Enrollment applications are available at www.badgercareplus.org.

"I proudly supported the creation of BadgerCare Plus two years ago, knowing that it would move Wisconsin closer to our shared goal of health insurance for everyone," said Rep. Nelson.

“That goal is still a long way off, but this expansion will provide Wisconsinites with an important safety net during these times of economic uncertainty.”

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