



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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COWLES, LAZICH CALL FOR AUDIT OF MEDICAL ASSISTANCE GOP state Senators request audit be approved immediately

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MADISON – State Senators Rob Cowles (R-Green Bay) and Mary Lazich (R-New Berlin) are calling on the co-chairs of the Legislative Joint Audit Committee to immediately approve and schedule an audit of the \$5 billion state Medical Assistance program (MA). Cowles and Lazich are members of the committee.

“Just look at what the Legislative Audit Bureau was able to uncover about Wisconsin Shares,” said Cowles referring to the recent audit of the state’s \$380 million child care program. “The same problems could be occurring with Medical Assistance, but on a much bigger level. Hundreds of millions of dollars in cost overruns have already been found in the program in the last year. That’s why we need to let our auditors get their hands on this issue. ”

Lazich agreed, saying, “I suspect that given the horror stories that came out of Wisconsin Shares, there would be even more frightening revelations about Medical Assistance. Where there’s smoke, there’s fire. For the benefit of taxpayers, we need to turn the Audit Bureau loose and let them dig and see what they can uncover.”

The problem according to Cowles is that the co-chairs are holding back on a decision about an audit.

“What is the problem?” asked Cowles. “What are they afraid to find out? The state has a catastrophe of expenditures on its hands and a \$2.5 billion structural deficit going in to the next budget . We have to find ways to save money.”

Lazich considers an audit of MA a golden opportunity to protect Wisconsin taxpayers.

“The best auditors in the country will be able to find out if the program is being administered effectively and at the same time provide guidance to the Legislature so that taxpayers can be fully protected. The longer we delay, the longer it takes to determine the scope of our problems and the necessary solutions . ”

Both Cowles and Lazich say there is support on the Joint Legislative Audit Committee for an MA audit.