



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P. O. Box 7882 Madison, WI 53707-7882

May 18, 2017

Wisconsin Department of Health Services
Division of Medicaid Services
RE: Public Comment on BadgerCare Reform Demonstration Waiver

To Whom It May Concern:

I strongly oppose the harmful, punitive measures contained within your BadgerCare Reform Demonstration Waiver. They will increase the number of uninsured Wisconsin residents, make our state less healthy, and adversely impact our economy.

What you have done is create four new ways to take BadgerCare away from Wisconsin's low-income residents. Some of these changes are provisions that have not been approved in any other state. This is not an area where Wisconsin should be a leader, this is not the Wisconsin Way.

Establishing monthly premiums on those whose income is already below the poverty level will likely cause low-income participants to lose their coverage. Let me remind you that in order to qualify for BadgerCare, a person already has to make less than \$15,060 per year. When people become uninsured, the impact is felt in Wisconsin's emergency rooms and hospitals who are already footing a \$1 billion bill for uncompensated costs.

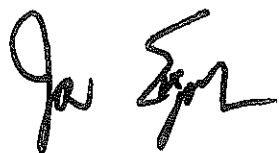
Adults with chronic conditions, including those with substance use disorders are some of the people who need health care the most. Chronic conditions don't magically go away after 48 months. Imposing a time limit on our most vital safety net program doesn't make fiscal sense and it makes our state less healthy.

Instead of further stigmatizing low-income people by labeling them as drug users, and spending millions testing those using safety net programs like BadgerCare, we could invest our tax dollars to increase access to treatment programs and reimburse our mental health and substance abuse providers at a level appropriate to the crisis facing our state.

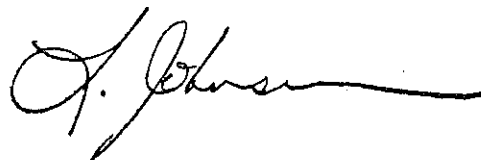
The additional bureaucracy and cost involved with creating health risk assessments and healthy behavior incentives will far outweigh any benefit. It is administratively burdensome and unlikely to produce any changes in behavior. Using sanctions to accomplish these goals has not proven effective in other states that have experimented with it.

Your waiver is a short-sighted effort to score political points. It is offensive, and your time should be spent addressing the real problems facing the people of Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Jon Erpenbach in black ink.

Jon Erpenbach
State Senator
27th District

Handwritten signature of LaTonya Johnson in black ink.

LaTonya Johnson
State Senator
6th District