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American Diabetes Association Urges Wisconsin Policymakers to Expand Medicaid Coverage to Benefit More Than 90,000

MADISON, Wisc. (May 24, 2021) – The American Diabetes Association® (ADA) applauds Gov. Tony Evers' call for a special session of the state legislature on **Tuesday, May 25, 2021** to expand BadgerCare. The outcome of that session will have a tremendous impact on more than 90,000 lives of Wisconsinites who would become eligible for affordable health care coverage. Access to adequate and affordable health coverage is critically important for the more than 2.1 million Wisconsin residents living with or at risk for diabetes.ⁱ

When people cannot afford the medication, supplies, and services necessary to manage their diabetes, they scale back, ration or forego the care they need, potentially leading to costly complications and even death. For low-income individuals, access to Medicaid coverage is essential to managing their health. Providing health care coverage for low-income Wisconsinites with diabetes and prediabetes before they develop disabling and costly complications not only helps those individuals maintain their health but is also cost-effective for the state in the long run. Early diagnosis is essential to avoiding severe consequences that can include kidney failure, cardiovascular disease, blindness, and leg and foot amputations.

States that have already increased eligibility for health coverage to low-income adults are closely watching the health outcomes for people with chronic diseases like diabetes. The results are promising: a study published in *Health Affairs* found that community health centers in states with expanded eligibility for health coverage had improvements in the quality of care for hypertension, asthma, and obesity—these are all risk factors for developing type 2 diabetes.ⁱⁱ

The path to a healthier Wisconsin is clear. We can empower our citizens to be proactive in seeking preventive care, early diagnosis, and regular treatment of chronic diseases like diabetes. Thirty-eight states and Washington, D.C., have expanded eligibility through their Medicaid programs, enabling them to receive federal funding to cover at least 90 percent of the costs. Wisconsinites must not be left behind as other states take action to give their citizens more choices and better access to health care.

On behalf of the ADA, I urge the Wisconsin State Legislature to embrace this commonsense approach on behalf of the more than 570,000 Wisconsinites with diabetes who simply want the opportunity for better health.

About the American Diabetes Association

Every day more than 4,000 people are newly diagnosed with diabetes in America. More than 122 million Americans have diabetes or prediabetes and are striving to manage their lives while living with the disease. The American Diabetes Association (ADA) is the nation's leading voluntary health organization fighting to bend the curve on the diabetes epidemic and help people living with diabetes thrive. For 80 years the ADA has been driving discovery and research to treat, manage and prevent diabetes, while working relentlessly for a cure. We help people with diabetes thrive by fighting for their rights and developing programs, advocacy and education designed to improve their quality of life. Diabetes has brought us together. What we do next will make us Connected for Life. To learn more or to get involved, visit us at diabetes.org or call 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383). Join the fight with us on Facebook ([American Diabetes Association](https://www.facebook.com/AmericanDiabetesAssociation)), Twitter ([@AmDiabetesAssn](https://twitter.com/AmDiabetesAssn)) and Instagram ([@AmDiabetesAssn](https://www.instagram.com/AmDiabetesAssn)).

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ⁱ http://main.diabetes.org/dorg/docs/state-fact-sheets/ADV_2020_State_Fact_sheets_WI.pdf

ⁱⁱ Cole, Megan B., et al, "At Federally Funded Health Centers, Medicaid Expansion Was Associated With Improved Quality Of Care," Health Affairs 36, No. 1: 40-48. Available at <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/pdf/10.1377/hlthaff.2016.0804>.