



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 26, 2021

Contact: Meghan Sovey
Meghan.Sovey@legis.wi.gov
608-266-8546

Sen. Smith, Legislative Democrats Introduce BadgerCare Economic Recovery Bill
Legislation would secure \$1.6 Billion for Economic Development Efforts

MADISON – Today, Sen. Jeff Smith (D – Brunswick) introduced The BadgerCare Economic Recovery Bill alongside his legislative colleagues, Sen. Jon Erpenbach (D – Middleton), Rep. Daniel Riemer (D – Milwaukee) and Rep. Sara Rodriguez (D – Brookfield). This legislation would expand BadgerCare and secure \$1.6 billion in additional funding allocated in the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

“Wisconsinites have waited on the Republican Majority for a decade to make healthcare more affordable for 91,000 more Wisconsinites and save taxpayer dollars,” said Sen. Smith. “The BadgerCare Economic Recovery Bill presents another opportunity for the legislature to expand BadgerCare.”

“It’s more urgent than ever to expand BadgerCare. We’ll be able to bring in an additional \$1.6 billion in federal funding to spur economic development, promote rural prosperity and help Wisconsin bounce back from the pandemic stronger than ever.”

The BadgerCare Economic Recovery Act would apply the \$1.6 billion in federal ARPA funds to economic development initiatives around the state including, but not limited to the following impacting the counties in the 31st Senate District:

- \$200 million in broadband expansion grants
- \$20 million for mental health beds in the Chippewa Valley and Wausau
- \$2 million to develop a Hmong Cultural Center
- \$400,000 toward construction of a Cranberry Research Center in Black River Falls
- \$100 million to replace lead laterals across the state

###

The 31st Senate District includes all of Buffalo and Pepin counties and portions of Trempealeau, Pierce, Dunn, Eau Claire and Jackson counties and very small portions of Chippewa and St. Croix counties.