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WISCONSIN INSTITUTE
FOR LAW & LIBERTY

Get Ready for Tuesday's Healthcare Debate

WILL research on the cost of Evers' proposed plans, and common sense solutions.

On Tuesday, the Wisconsin Joint Finance Committee will debate and vote on a budget for the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. To be fully prepared with timely and comprehensive research you can trust, WILL has authored the following studies and articles to help guide you through the debate:

The Facts

- Wisconsin does not have a coverage gap. All low-income people are eligible for Medicaid or highly subsidized insurance through the Affordable Care Act exchange.
- Wisconsin has the [lowest uninsured](#) rate (5.88%) of states that did not take Medicaid expansion, and a rate better than many states that did take Medicaid expansion.
- Medicaid expansion is not free (see below) and has driven up costs across the country. [Our piece at The Hill explores this further.](#)
- According to the Maclver Institute, Governor Walker's [Reinsurance Program](#) has been effective at holding down skyrocketing premiums in the individual market, calling into question further the wisdom of forcing some of these individuals onto the Medicaid rolls.

The Cost of Medicaid Expansion

- [The Impact of Medicaid Expansion: Examining the cost to consumers and the net impact on Wisconsin](#): A WILL study concluded that Medicaid expansion would result in increased costs to Wisconsin families with private insurance. The study found that expanding Medicaid in Wisconsin would:
 - Increase the cost of healthcare on Wisconsinites with private insurance, on average, by \$177 per year – up to \$700 for a family of four,
 - Increase emergency room visits by over 52,000 per year, and
 - Cost Wisconsinites nearly \$1 billion per year. When savings to state government are factored in, expansion would still have a net cost of \$400 million per year.
- Upset by a WILL study that reveals nothing is “free,” [critics attacked the study](#). But our study is sound. The methodology is in-line with similar studies by academics and scholars across the ideological spectrum. It was endorsed by multiple UW professors.

Critics – which include a former Obama Administration official – just cannot accept the fact that moving a bunch of people from private to government-run healthcare will have a detrimental impact on those with private insurance.

- See our full [response to the critics](#).

Common Sense Solutions to Healthcare

- Rather than expanding government-run healthcare, WILL has recommended seven common sense solutions — many already with bipartisan support — that could lower costs and increase access to healthcare (for more read, our [Wisconsin State Journal op-ed](#)):
 - **Take full advantage of Short-Term Limited Duration Plans** that are a flexible, affordable option for consumers. The Affordable Care Act created uniform insurance regulations that eliminated much of the variety of insurance coverage. But not everyone needs, or even wants the same coverage. Wisconsin should follow the lead from the Trump Administration and allow consumers to purchase up to three years of coverage.
 - **Direct Primary Care** is one of the best avenues to cut out the costly insurance middlemen and allow patients and doctors to decide on care through transparent, up-front prices.
 - **A Dental Therapy License** (less than a dentist but more than a dental hygienist) could increase access and lower the cost of routine dental care, particularly in rural Wisconsin. WILL [joined a coalition of diverse groups](#) in support of state legislation to create a dental therapy license.
 - **Free Speech in Medicine** would knock down unnecessary, burdensome barriers between doctors and drug manufacturers. Doctors deserve to have all the information necessary, but the FDA prevents drug manufacturers from freely providing information on safe off-label uses of prescription drugs. Wisconsin should follow Arizona's lead and change that.
 - **Take full advantage of healthcare freedom outside Wisconsin.** One place the Affordable Care Act's onerous, one-size-fits-all insurance regulations do not apply are U.S. territories. Wisconsin citizens ought to be able to purchase those insurance plans outside of the Badger State if they fit their needs.

For more, read our full brief [here](#).