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SeniorCare anniversary a reminder of program's success *Dems urge legislative action to protect and extend popular Rx drug program*

MADISON – On the 16th anniversary of Wisconsin's wildly popular and cost-saving SeniorCare prescription drug program, Democrats are urging legislative action to protect senior citizens and extend access to affordable prescription drugs. The SeniorCare Protection Act (Senate Bill 8), authored by Sen. Tim Carpenter (D-Milwaukee) and 33 other Democratic lawmakers, would support the continuation of SeniorCare and prevent future raids on Wisconsin's prescription drug care funding.

“SeniorCare benefits thousands of older residents in Wisconsin who otherwise might not be able to afford their prescriptions,” said Senate Democratic Leader Jennifer Shilling (D-La Crosse). “By negotiating lower prices with pharmaceutical companies, our state has saved taxpayers millions and increased access to prescription drugs for thousands of seniors living on a fixed income.”

The SeniorCare program, created on August 31, 2001 with bipartisan support, has provided prescription drug assistance to thousands of Wisconsin residents age 65 years or older who meet certain eligibility criteria. Currently, over 87,000 Wisconsin residents rely on SeniorCare for prescription drug assistance.

“After Gov. Walker's repeated attempts to cut SeniorCare and increase prescription drug costs, we need to stand up for seniors and stop future funding raids,” added Shilling. “I encourage my legislative colleagues to join me in supporting the SeniorCare Protection Act and work to prevent future raids on Wisconsin's popular and cost-saving prescription drug program.”

Gov. Walker's previous efforts to cut SeniorCare funding and force older adults into Medicare Part D were overwhelmingly opposed by lawmakers due to the increased costs for taxpayers and program participants. Under SeniorCare, Wisconsin is able to negotiate lower prescription drug prices with pharmaceutical companies and pass those savings along to seniors and taxpayers. Wisconsin's current SeniorCare waiver is set to expire December, 31, 2018 unless an extension is approved.

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