



**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Interview: Bobby Peterson (608) 444-7197; Brynne McBride (608) 279-2426 (cell)

Health Coverage in 2013: A Year in Review

Madison, WI - The health coverage landscape changed dramatically in 2013. In a year of reform, Wisconsin took a different path than most states, most notably in refusing what could have resulted in \$4.4 billion in federal Medicaid Expansion money. “We lost out on an opportunity to cover a lot of people and have federal money to support it,” says Bobby Peterson, public interest attorney and Executive Director of ABC for Health. On Monday, December 30, HealthWatch Wisconsin produced an episode of the HealthWatch WatchDog to look back at the tumultuous 2013 and make predictions for 2014. The web cast, titled “HealthWatch WatchDog’s 2013: A Year in Review” is available to the media and public at the following link: <http://mediasite.safetyweb.org/Mediasite/Play/8ac43f82fc684beebbc8ad8cb2281b9d1d>

Peterson continues, “Wisconsin’s leadership is pointing fingers at the federal government. And sure, the feds need to share in some of the blame. But Wisconsin’s leadership made the decision not to expand Medicaid and instead made things more complicated, more expensive, and more disappointing. And serve fewer people. For them to point fingers and not accept responsibility is embarrassing.”

Making predictions for 2014, Peterson says he anticipates Obamacare to continue to grow and rise in popularity. Peterson says, “The President is doing a little rope-a-dope and absorbing a lot of blows. As more people get coverage, we’re going to see rising popularity.” Peterson continues, “We’ll see more plans enter the Marketplace and more growth of Private Exchanges. This is the new way of doing business and businesses are going to start to demand it. The cost curve is going to continue to bend. The government and the private sector have to work together to deliver services to people.”

For 2013, the WatchDog sent Governor Walker to the “Dog House,” mostly due to his decision to refuse Federal Medicaid dollars. Peterson concludes, “It’s a common sense issue. When we leave billions of dollars on the table, we have to ask, ‘for what?’ It was a bad decision. People were hurt by that decision right now. It should be about helping people.”

HealthWatch Wisconsin is a project of ABC for Health, Inc., a Wisconsin-based, nonprofit, public interest law firm dedicated to linking children and families, particularly those with special health care needs, to health care benefits and services. ABC for Health’s mission is to provide information, advocacy tools, legal services, and expert support needed to obtain, maintain, and finance health care coverage and services.

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