

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

BUDGET

SPECIAL COMMITTEE
ON AGING

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

August 29, 2014

Marilyn Tavenner
Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Administrator Tavenner,

I write concerning the Wisconsinites who lost their BadgerCare coverage under Governor Walker's plan to refuse a federal investment in Wisconsin's BadgerCare program through the Affordable Care Act. On July 16th, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services released a report showing that the Governor's plan to terminate BadgerCare coverage for approximately 63,000 Wisconsinites has resulted in a gap in coverage. This report reveals that the Governor failed to transition almost 38,000 individuals to coverage in the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) Marketplace, as promised. Health care policy experts project that many of these Wisconsinites formerly served under BadgerCare are now likely uninsured. As such, I request that you immediately grant a new Special Enrollment Period to give former BadgerCare recipients currently in a coverage gap another opportunity to receive health insurance by enrolling in the Affordable Care Act's federal Marketplace.

The Walker Administration had contended that 90 percent of former BadgerCare recipients would successfully transition off BadgerCare to plans in the federal Marketplace. However, this promise was not kept for 60 percent - almost 38,000 - of those terminated from BadgerCare coverage who were not successfully transitioned to Marketplace coverage by the Governor.

The fact that Governor Walker was unable to transition nearly 38,000 people to the federal marketplace is extremely troubling. Fortunately, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) has the authority under the Affordable Care Act to initiate a "Special Enrollment Period" to fill this coverage gap. Without the chance to enroll during a Special Enrollment Period, these individuals would have to wait until 2015 to receive federal Marketplace coverage. Therefore, I ask that you use your authority to open a new enrollment period immediately so that these Wisconsinites can receive health insurance as soon as possible.

Wisconsin is paying a steep price for our Governor's insistence on putting politics ahead of progress. And, I continue to believe that he has taken our state down a fiscally irresponsible path by pursuing a plan that has not only created a gap in coverage and newly uninsured Wisconsinites, but also covers fewer people at a higher cost to taxpayers. Indeed, last week the nonpartisan Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau released a new report showing that the negative consequences of the Governor's decision to reject the federal investment in our BadgerCare program have been significantly underestimated, and is exposing state taxpayers to higher costs.

The severe consequences of Governor Walker's plan make the urgency for action clear. I urge you to continue your efforts to help vulnerable Wisconsinites access the full benefits of the ACA by immediately granting the 38,000 individuals terminated from BadgerCare coverage a Special Enrollment Period to enroll in Marketplace coverage. In turn, I will continue to work with the Governor to ensure that Wisconsin families receive the quality, affordable health coverage they deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tammy Baldwin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "T".

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator