

## We Can Lower Health Insurance Costs and Meet the Healthcare Needs of Waukesha County

### **The Need for Health Insurance**

Medical bankruptcy is the leading cause of personal bankruptcy in the U.S. today.<sup>1</sup> Health insurance is vital to your health of your family and one way to avoid financial disaster.

For the past 15 years, incomes have barely kept up with inflation and insurance premium costs have more than tripled. At the same time many low income residents within Waukesha County still lack access to basic affordable health care.

A number of factors influence health insurance cost. The two most important are the cost of health care and the health of the community.

### **The Money to Improve Health and Lower Health Insurance Cost is Already Available**

Participating in the full federal Medicaid program and accepting the additional federal funds for BadgerCare will not only insure more people, it will save the state over \$215 million dollars per year<sup>2</sup>.

Doing this will reduce the number of uninsured using hospital emergency rooms and immediately improve the health of the private insurance "risk pool".

The savings to the State can then be used to fund new and already identified programs that will further lower health care costs and promote better health throughout the community.

By meeting the health care needs of the community we can also lower health insurance cost for everyone.

### **The Affordable Care Act is Here to Stay**

Most Americans now believe that although not perfect, the Affordable Care Act provides many worthwhile benefits.

Benefits such as:

- Elimination of preexisting conditions as a reason for refusal to insure.
- Limits on out of pocket costs.
- Standardized features that allow you to compare one insurance plan to the next.
- No copayment for wellness exams.
- Young adults can stay on their parent's plan until they are 26.

It is time to end the political debate and work together to make the Affordable Care law better for everyone.

### **It is the Moral Thing to Do**

Although we live in one of the richest counties in Wisconsin, 12% of households in Waukesha County have annual incomes less than \$25,000<sup>2</sup> and there currently are **18,700 uninsured people** living in Waukesha County.

Charity and volunteering can only do so much and unfairly places the responsibility on those compassionate volunteers and donors who care enough to become involved. We need good government to take responsibility for fulfilling the critical needs of our community.

Accepting the additional federal funds for BadgerCare not only makes sound economic sense, it is the moral thing to do.

1 Olga Khazan, The Atlantic, 'Why Americans Are Drowning in Medical Debt', October 4, 2014

2 Legislative Fiscal Bureau, December 3, 2015

3 US Census Bureau, A.C.S., 2014