

Lower Costs, Better Care for Wisconsinites

There is an urgent need to lower health costs, expand coverage, and reduce racial health disparities across Wisconsin. That is why it is essential to ensure critical health care measures supported by President Biden remain in upcoming budget reconciliation legislation, specifically empowering Medicare to negotiate for lower drug prices for all Americans, creating a federal solution to close the Medicaid coverage gap, expanding Medicare benefits to include dental, vision, and hearing, and making the premium reductions included in the American Rescue Plan permanent, so Wisconsinites can continue to access low-cost coverage.

Americans support bold action to lower health costs and curb soaring drug prices, with [88 percent](#) in favor of allowing Medicare to negotiate with pharmaceutical corporations to lower prices. President Biden is committed to tackling these issues head on, demonstrated by his commitment to expanding health coverage through [enhanced subsidies](#), closing the [Medicaid coverage gap](#), and [support](#) for Medicare drug price negotiation.

Wisconsinites depend on affordable health care, expanded access to coverage, and drug pricing reform to live healthy lives. Empowering the federal government to negotiate prescription drug prices would save Americans more than [\\$150 billion](#) at the pharmacy counter and create an additional [\\$500 billion](#) in savings for the federal government that could be reinvested to [reduce premiums](#), [expand Medicare benefits](#) to include dental, vision, and hearing, and close the Medicaid coverage gap in the 12 states that have [refused to accept expansion](#). We must act now.

The American Rescue Plan Has Helped 191,702 Wisconsinites Access Affordable Care

- **Strong Marketplace Enrollment.** More than [190,000](#) Wisconsin residents have signed up for coverage through the Marketplace in 2021.
- **Increasing Health Coverage Access For Thousands of Wisconsinites.** The American Rescue Plan has [reduced or eliminated](#) Marketplace premiums for thousands in Wisconsin. Under the plan, [51,900](#) uninsured Wisconsinites are newly eligible for health coverage tax credits and 31,600 individuals have access to coverage with zero dollar premiums.
- **Meaningful Savings On Premiums.** Premium savings under the American Rescue Plan benefit all Americans. For example, a 60-year-old couple with an annual income of \$75,000 will see their monthly premiums drop from \$1,941, to just \$531, saving more than [\\$1,410](#) each month.
- **Improving Maternal Health Access.** For new mothers, the American Rescue Plan has created a pathway to coverage, providing states the opportunity to extend [postpartum coverage](#) under Medicaid from 60 days to 12 months following birth.

Lowering Prescription Drug Costs

- **Drug Price Hikes Are Outpacing Inflation.** In 2019, American prescription drug spending soared to [\\$369.7 billion](#), an increase of 5.7 percent, more than [three times](#) the inflation rate for the same period.
- **One Quarter Of Americans Struggle To Access Essential Medications.** [Nearly one in four](#) Americans taking prescription drugs struggles to afford needed medications, with 29 percent reporting not taking medications as instructed within the past year due to cost.
- **Drug Price Negotiation Would Save Billions.** The single most effective measure to bring down drug costs is to empower Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices. Negotiation would save patients more than [\\$150 billion](#) and create [\\$500 billion](#) in savings for the federal government.
- **Reinvestment Of Savings.** When the federal government saves on drug costs, those funds become available to [reduce premiums](#), [expand Medicare benefits](#) to include dental, vision, and hearing, and close the [Medicaid coverage gap](#) in the 12 states that have [refused to accept expansion](#).

- **Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Is Overwhelming Popular.** [Nearly nine in ten](#) Americans support empowering Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices.

Drug Prices In Wisconsin

- In 2019, Wisconsinites spent [nearly \\$128 million](#) in cash on prescription drugs.
- In 2017, [22 percent](#) of Wisconsin residents reported that they stopped taking a medication as prescribed due to cost. Polling has shown that [53 percent](#) of Wisconsinites are concerned about the cost of prescription drugs.
- [More than one million](#) Wisconsinites have chronic conditions like cancer, diabetes, and asthma that require prescription drugs for treatment and management.
- Wisconsinites overwhelmingly support allowing Medicare to negotiate better drug prices. A 2020 poll from AARP found that [89 percent](#) of older Wisconsin voters were more likely to vote for candidates who support allowing Medicare to negotiate for lower prescription drug prices.

Expanding Medicaid Coverage

- **More Than 90,000 Wisconsinites Could Gain Coverage Through Medicaid Expansion.** An estimated [90,000](#) Wisconsinites would gain coverage if the state adopted expansion. Wisconsin pays more money to cover fewer people, because unlike other holdout states, Wisconsin allows adults without children living below the federal poverty line to enroll in Medicaid. Experts [note](#) this is a far more costly way to cover these individuals and thousands are still being barred from coverage.
- **Medicaid Expansion Saves Lives And Reduces Racial Disparities.** Between 2014 and 2017, Wisconsin's rejection of Medicaid expansion cost an estimated [576](#) lives among older adults aged 55 to 64. At the same time, states that expanded Medicaid saved 19,000 lives. According to a 2018 CDC report, [Wisconsin has the highest infant mortality rate for Black infants](#) in the nation, at a rate three times higher than that of white infants. Medicaid expansion has been proven to [reduce](#) infant and maternal mortality.
- **Wisconsinites Support Expanding Medicaid And Saving Taxpayer Dollars.** A 2019 Marquette Law School poll found [7 in 10](#) Wisconsinites favor expansion. A 2018 analysis estimated that expanding Medicaid eligibility to 138 percent of the poverty level would create an annual net savings of roughly [\\$185 million](#) for Wisconsin taxpayers.

Expanding Coverage

- **Millions Nationwide Would Gain Stable Coverage.** [4.2 million](#) uninsured people would gain coverage if the American Rescue Plan's subsidies are made permanent, and millions more would continue to save on health care costs.
- **Permanent Health Coverage Subsidies Would Benefit Older Wisconsinites.** More than 190,000 Wisconsinites selected a plan on the Marketplace in 2021, with older adults between [55 and 64](#) making up more than a third of enrollees. The American Rescue Plan offers [significant relief](#) for older individuals, including those at 400 percent of the federal poverty level.

Expanding Medicare Benefits

- **Nearly 650,000 Wisconsinites Would Benefit From Expanded Coverage.** Nearly [38 million](#) traditional Medicare enrollees would gain dental, vision, and hearing coverage if Medicare benefits were expanded. Due to lack of coverage, [nearly half](#) of Medicare beneficiaries did not seek dental care in the past year.
- **Medicare Beneficiaries Are 20 Percent Of Wisconsin's Residents.** In 2018, [one in five](#) Wisconsinites were Medicare beneficiaries. Recent reports have found between [47](#) and [64](#) percent of Medicare beneficiaries do not have dental coverage, [74 percent](#) lack vision coverage, and [76 percent](#) go without hearing coverage.
- **Income And Racial Inequity Increase Health Disparities.** Half of all Medicare beneficiaries live on annual incomes below [\\$29,650](#), pushing dental, vision, and hearing coverage out of reach. For [beneficiaries of color](#) or those living in [rural](#) areas, accessing these essential benefits has become increasingly challenging.

Senator Tammy Baldwin Is Standing Up For Wisconsinites' Care

Senator Baldwin Was An Enthusiastic Supporter Of The American Rescue Plan, Providing Relief For Thousands Of Wisconsin Families. Baldwin [voted for](#) the American Rescue Plan, historic legislation that includes measures to expand coverage and to dramatically lower health care costs for thousands of Wisconsin families. In addition to providing critical pandemic relief, the ARP lowers premiums for people purchasing coverage through the marketplaces and expands access to financial assistance for more middle-class families. Baldwin [praised the law](#), saying “The American Rescue Plan is the support Wisconsin needs right now to help us get past this public health crisis and move our economy forward.”

Senator Baldwin Has Championed A Federal Solution To Close The Medicaid Coverage Gap. Republican leaders in Wisconsin continue to reject Medicaid expansion, locking more than [90,000](#) out of Medicaid coverage. Senator Baldwin co-introduced [legislation](#) creating a federal solution to expand Medicaid coverage to millions of people stuck in the coverage gap. Baldwin demonstrated the [need for federal action](#), saying, “Republicans have refused to accept a federal investment in BadgerCare that would make 91,000 Wisconsinites eligible for high quality health care...That’s just wrong. Our legislation will open the door to those who have been shut out and expand access to affordable health care, including preventive care, that people want and need.”

Senator Baldwin Supports Efforts To Allow Medicare To Negotiate Drug Prices. Senator Baldwin is a [cosponsor](#) of the Empowering Medicare Seniors to Negotiate Drug Prices Act, legislation which would allow for Medicare to negotiate the best possible price of prescription drugs to cut costs.

Attorney General Josh Kaul Is Fighting To Lower Drug Costs

Attorney General Kaul Is Working To Address Prescription Drug Costs. Under Kaul, the Wisconsin Department of Justice joined an international working group to better understand the impacts of pharmaceutical mergers and address prescription drug costs. Of the group, [Kaul said](#), “We must use the tools at our disposal to work to lower the cost of prescription drugs. I’m proud that Wisconsin is part of this international effort to re-examine antitrust laws to better address consolidation in the pharmaceutical industry.”

Attorney General Kaul Is Holding Drugmakers Accountable. Kaul joined a 44-state coalition in a lawsuit against 20 of the nation's largest generic drug manufacturers, alleging they conspired to manipulate prices and

reduce competition for more than 100 generic drugs. [Kaul called for an end to anti-competitive behavior](#), stating, “We must not allow unlawful pricing practices to increase the cost of health care.”

Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley Is Working To Eliminate Health Disparities

County Executive Crowley Is Addressing Racial Health Inequities. Crowley released his vision for racial equity in Milwaukee County that would work to “Improve...[social health determinants](#) for everyone by dismantling racist, ineffective policies of the past, and ultimately improve health outcomes with an equitable distribution of services.” Crowley stressed the importance of addressing these disparities during the pandemic and beyond, [saying](#) “This work is personal. Racial equity will not only guide our response and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, but it will inform the way Milwaukee County does business moving forward.”

Senator Ron Johnson Is Part Of The Problem

Johnson Opposed The American Rescue Plan And Relief For Tens Of Thousand Of Wisconsinites

Senator Johnson Voted Against The American Rescue Plan And Relief For Thousands Of Wisconsin Families. Alongside all of his Republican colleagues, Ron Johnson [voted against](#) the American Rescue Plan, historic legislation that includes measures to expand coverage and to dramatically lower health care costs for thousands of Wisconsin families. In addition to providing critical pandemic relief, the ARP lowers premiums for people purchasing coverage through the marketplaces and expands access to financial assistance for more middle-class families.

Johnson Has Received Hundreds Of Thousands Of Dollars In Pharmaceutical Contributions

Senator Johnson Has Received Over \$300,000 In Contributions From Pharmaceutical Companies And Executives. Over the course of his career, Ron Johnson has received \$316,281 in [contributions](#) from pharmaceutical PACs and executives. During his 2020 reelection campaign, more than \$205,000 in contributions poured in from the pharmaceutical industry.