



May 13, 2025
For Immediate Release

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WPHCA Urges Congress to Preserve Medicaid and Maintain Coverage for Wisconsinites

Madison, WI – On Sunday, the House Energy & Commerce (E&C) Committee released legislation proposing new Medicaid program requirements. The Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association (WPHCA), representing the state's 19 Community Health Centers, strongly urges Congress to reject these harmful changes and preserve Medicaid, which covers 55% of Wisconsin Community Health Center patients. These proposals—including mandatory work requirements, cost-sharing, and more frequent benefit eligibility checks—would create significant barriers to care, increasing the number of uninsured Wisconsinites and driving up long-term health care costs.

Today, most able-bodied adult Medicaid members are already employed, while many others are full-time students, caregivers, or individuals with health conditions that prevent them from working. By implementing complex and burdensome reporting requirements, many working adults could be disenrolled – not because they are idle, but because of administrative hurdles. Seasonal workers, service industry employees, and those with irregular work hours are particularly at risk, as they may struggle to consistently document their employment or secure exemptions, putting them at risk of losing vital coverage without realistic alternatives.

Community Health Centers are required by federal law to provide care regardless of a patient's insurance status or ability to pay, which means they will bear the financial and operational burden if these changes move forward. Without Medicaid coverage, patients are more likely to delay necessary care, resulting in higher long-term costs through avoidable emergency room visits and unmanaged chronic conditions. For many rural and underserved communities, this is not just a health care issue but a critical economic threat, as local economies often rely on CHCs as major employers and essential health service providers.

"Community Health Centers are more than just health care providers—they are a vital part of our communities and safety net system," said Scott Stewart, Chief Executive Officer of WPHCA. "Policies that restrict access to Medicaid coverage threaten not only the health of our patients, but the stability of our local economies and the long-term sustainability of our health care safety net. While these changes might offer short-term budget savings, they come at a significant human and financial cost—straining local health centers, worsening health outcomes, and ultimately driving up costs for everyone."

To learn more about the critical role Community Health Centers play in Wisconsin and find a center near you, please visit www.wphca.org.

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WPHCA is the member association for Wisconsin's 19 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs, or Community Health Centers). Community Health Centers are non-profit, community-directed medical, dental, and behavioral health clinics that provided care to 300,000 patients last year in underserved areas across the state.