http://newiprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/affordablecareact-s5.jpg

LFB report also shows that by June 30, 2020, this failure will cost Wisconsin more than $1 billion. Wisconsin has missed out so far on more than $1.7 billion in federal dollars available under the Affordable Care Act.

MADISON - A new report released Wednesday from the Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB) found that, by the end of this budget cycle, refusing BadgerCare expansion will have cost Wisconsin taxpayers nearly $700 million. By June 30, 2020, this failure will cost Wisconsin more than $1 billion.



“It makes little sense to leave federal money on the table as this puts Wisconsin taxpayers on the hook to make up the difference,” said Assembly Democratic Leader **Peter Barca** (D - Kenosha) who released the report. “Gov. Walker and legislative Republicans’ refusal to expand BadgerCare has cost Wisconsin taxpayers nearly $700 million so far. By July 2020, he will have cost taxpayers alone more than $1 billion in state dollars.”

“It is inexcusable that Gov. Walker and the Republicans put the health of our citizens at risk and cost taxpayers by still refusing to accept federal dollars to expand BadgerCare,” Rep. Barca said.

The LFB report also found that Wisconsin will have missed out on more than $1.7 billion in federal dollars available under the Affordable Care Act. By June 30, 2019, the LFB concludes that Wisconsin taxpayers will lose out on more than $2.7 billion by not fully expanding BadgerCare.

Tuesday afternoon, on a bipartisan basis, the Assembly discussed why it is important to expand access to opioid treatment and resources. But Republicans still refuse to take the one step that would make the biggest impact – expanding BadgerCare for 87,000 Wisconsinites.

“Wisconsin taxpayers could be $380 million ahead in the next budget cycle, which helps the state pay for substance abuse treatment and other important medical programs," said Barca. "Republicans are putting their political ideology over people.”

It is clear that the federal government will continue to fund Medicaid expansion – Medicaid funding was included in the final Trump-Ryan health care package. Thirty-one states and 62 senators have made it clear that they do not want their states to lose this funding.

Many Republican-led states that initially did not accept expansion dollars are changing course. In Kansas, a state lead by Republicans, substantial steps were taken recently aimed at expansion. A majority of Republicans in Kansas’ Senate attempted to pass Medicaid expansion and a veto override in the Kansas House came close to victory. Even Georgia’s Republican Governor Nathan Deal is exploring this option. Yet, not one Wisconsin Republican will consider accepting federal money to help tens of thousands of Wisconsinites. This shows how extreme they truly are.

***

Legislative writer Olivia Hwang contributed to this story. The LFB memo is here .