Democrats renew push for legislation to expand health coverage.

MADISON – As public support and momentum grows for expanding affordable health coverage for 82,000 Wisconsinites, Senator Jon Erpenbach (D-West Point) and Representative Daniel Riemer (D-Milwaukee) are introducing legislation that would accept federal dollars to expand Medicaid. A similar proposal included in Gov. Tony Evers' original budget proposal was estimated to save taxpayers $324.5 million, but was blocked by Republicans. Additionally, a report by the Wisconsin Office of the Commissioner of Insurance found that premiums were lower in states that expanded Medicaid than in states that did not.

"Democrats are committed to improving access to quality and affordable health care for children, families and seniors across Wisconsin," said Senate Democratic Leader Jennifer Shilling (D-La Crosse). "For years, Democrats have fought to accept Medicaid funds that would save taxpayers millions, direct more money to additional health initiatives, and free up state resources for schools, roads and job training. Without Medicaid expansion, Wisconsin taxpayers will pay more than $2 billion in federal income taxes over the next two years for other states like New Jersey to expand their Medicaid programs. These are Wisconsin tax dollars that should be invested in Wisconsin, not New Jersey."

States that have accepted federal dollars to expand Medicaid saw positive impacts on their

economies including: an increase in providers in rural areas, reductions in uncompensated care, reductions in medical debt, and better reimbursement rates to attract and retain medical professionals. Additionally, a recent study showed that states that expanded Medicaid saw a significant decrease in infant mortality rates. In the latest Marquette Law Poll, 70% of Wisconsin residents approve of accepting federal funds to expand Medicaid.