



FORWARD
WISCONSIN

**MEDICAID EXPANSION
ORGANIZING TOOLKIT**

Welcome to Forward Wisconsin!

We are taking the fight for Medicaid expansion statewide, because it affects every part of the state! Forward Wisconsin is designed to uplift and amplify your voices -- the voices of the people -- in support of the Medicaid expansion and the People's Budget.

70% of Wisconsinites agree -- Wisconsin needs the Medicaid expansion. But to make it happen, we need to reach people across Wisconsin and make it clear to legislators that we won't stop fighting for the Medicaid expansion. With your help, we will be meeting, organizing, and talking to people across the state to make sure that every representative hears your voices as they vote on the budget.

This organizing toolkit is designed to help you bring the #Fight4Medicaid home. From press outreach tools to petitions to social media samples, you'll find materials to help share your story, educate your neighbors, and hold your legislators accountable.

It's critical that your legislators hear how access to quality, affordable care affects you personally. We are asking you to share your stories on Facebook and Twitter with the hashtag #Fight4Medicaid. You can write a post with your story or record a short video -- every voice has an impact in this fight.

We're excited to have you on the team! Let's bring the #Fight4Medicaid home!

Action Checklist

❑ Get Involved Online

- ❑ Sign up with us at ForwardWisc.com
- ❑ Like Forward Wisconsin's social media for real-time updates (and invite your friends to like us too!)
 - ❑ Facebook: [Facebook.com/forwardwisc](https://www.facebook.com/forwardwisc)
 - ❑ Twitter: [Twitter.com/forward_wisc](https://twitter.com/forward_wisc)
- ❑ Post about how you are taking action (use the #Fight4Medicaid and #ForwardWI hashtags)
- ❑ Share your story about why the Medicaid expansion is important to you and your community with a post or short video and the #Fight4Medicaid hashtag.

❑ Take it to the Capitol

- ❑ Send your legislators a letter. Use our easy form letter at <https://actionnetwork.org/letters/tell-your-legislators-to-fight-for-the-medicaid-expansion> or use the templates below to personalize it!
- ❑ Call your legislators and ask where they stand in the #Fight4Medicaid at 800-362-9472.
- ❑ Ask your legislators for a meeting in the district and attend their local office hours or listening sessions.
- ❑ Follow up! If your legislators don't have a position, don't answer your letter, or say they don't support the Medicaid expansion, write back and take it to the public.

❑ Take it to the Press

- ❑ Write your local paper or community newsletter about the importance of the Medicaid expansion to your community (and about your legislator's opinion). Check out the sample letter to the editor and op-ed below -- feel free to use or customize it for your area!

❑ Take it to the Streets

- ❑ Organize a petition drive with friends! Print the petition and use it as a tool to talk to people in your community about the importance of Medicaid expansion. Return completed sheets to us for delivery.
- ❑ Email us at fwdwisconsin@gmail.com to register your petition drive if you would like others to join!

Letters to Legislators

Legislators receive less calls, letters, and emails than most constituents expect. Letters, emails, and phone calls to legislators are some of the most effective ways to have your views heard. Each letter, email, or call requires individual attention from a legislator and their staff, who must log and respond to the contact.

As few as ten form letters can have a major effect on a legislative office, and letters sharing personal experiences are particularly impactful. Consider organizing a letter-party, where you and friends or neighbors all write to your legislators on the same topic. It's a great way to add pressure ahead of a critical vote!

Sample letters for you to use or adapt on key Forward Wisconsin issues are below, or draft your own to share your personal experiences.

Find your legislators' contact information at [maps.legis.wisconsin.gov!](https://maps.legis.wisconsin.gov/)

Sample 1:

Dear [Legislator],

Everyone deserves access to quality and affordable healthcare. The people of Wisconsin overwhelmingly support the expansion of Medicaid, which will give more people healthcare and save the state money.

Accepting the Medicaid expansion would reduce insurance costs for everyone, provide health coverage for an additional 82,000 low-income people in Wisconsin and save the state an estimated \$324 million over the biennium. It brings \$1.6 billion in new healthcare investments to our state.

Wisconsin needs the Medicaid expansion. Do you support expanding Medicaid and helping working families afford care?

Sincerely,

[Constituent]

[Address]

Sample 2:

Dear [Legislator],

Everyone deserves access to quality and affordable healthcare. The People's Budget provides ways to make healthcare in Wisconsin more affordable and accessible.

The people of Wisconsin overwhelmingly support the expansion of Medicaid, which will give more people healthcare and save the state money. Accepting Medicaid reduces private insurance premiums for everyone -- in states that have accepted the Medicaid expansion, consumers see 7 to 11% lower private premiums.

Expanding Medicaid would provide health coverage for an additional 82,000 low-income people and save the state an estimated \$324 million over the biennium. These savings can be reinvested into programs to help improve birth outcomes and support the "Healthy Women, Healthy Babies" initiatives and reduce disparities in our healthcare system.

I strongly urge you to support these popular healthcare provisions in the People's Budget and help ensure more Wisconsinites have access to healthcare.

Sincerely,

[Constituent]

[Address]

Sample 3:

Dear [Legislator],

I am hearing a lot about the Medicaid expansion, and how it will save money for our state and help more people get insurance. Do you support the Medicaid expansion?

Thanks,

[Constituent]

[Address]

Letters to the Editor and Op-Eds

Letters to the editor and op-eds (guest opinion columns) in your local newspaper are a great way to share your thoughts and get the word out to the community about legislative and policy issues. These columns give local community members the chance to inform the public, voice their opinions, and begin local discussions.

Letters to the editor are usually short. Most local papers limit them to between 150 and 250 words, so it is usually best to check your local paper's editorial policy. Op-eds are a little longer, often 300 to 500 words, and are an opportunity to get a little deeper into the policy and impact behind an issue.

You can also use Letters to the Editor and Op-Eds to keep your local legislators accountable. Many people do not follow the legislature closely, so these columns can be a good tool to inform the public about votes and positions your legislator holds that you oppose.

Below are tips, talking points, and samples of each format for you to use and adapt for your own letter to the editor or op-ed on the People's Budget!

Letter to the Editor/Op-Ed Tips

- **Make it local** -- How will the Medicaid expansion help your community? What will your neighbors identify with? (Check out this interactive map to see what expanding Medicaid would bring to your county: <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/democrats/media/1937/dhs.html>)
- **Make it relevant** - Tie your column to current events in the community or statewide to show why it is important to your readers.
- **Make it personal** - Share how this would affect you with personal stories and anecdotes.
- Remember to check your local newspaper or newsletter's opinion page to find the email or mailing address for where to send your letter or column.
- Don't be discouraged if it isn't printed -- follow up with the editorial board about whether changes are needed, and consider updating and resubmitting your letter as the legislature continues to vote on Medicaid expansion.

Medicaid Expansion Talking Points

Pick a few of the talking points below and use them to make a strong argument in support of the Medicaid expansion! Talking points work best when you combine them with local concerns, recent news, and/or personal stories to make them relevant to your readers.

- In states that have fully expanded Medicaid, private insurance premiums are 7 to 11% lower on average.

- The full Medicaid expansion (as opposed to Gov. Walker’s partial expansion) saves Wisconsin taxpayers \$324.5 million, while insuring more people.
- Expanding Medicaid covers 82,000 more low-income people across the state.
- The Governor’s Budget leverages the \$324 million saved into \$1.6 billion federal dollars in new healthcare spending.
- Expanding Medicaid increases access to opioid addiction treatment, dental care, mental health care, and more.
- Expanding Medicaid supports rural hospitals, young parents and families, Alzheimer’s patients, and increases wages for personal care workers.

Letter to the Editor: It’s Time to Expand Medicaid (199 words)

To the Editor:

Over the last two months, the Wisconsin Legislature’s Joint Finance Committee has repeatedly voted along party lines to eliminate the proposed Medicaid expansion from the 2019-2020 State Budget. While this is not the end for the Medicaid expansion, this continued rejection of a fiscally and morally responsible policy is deeply disappointing.

Families in our community are struggling to find qualify, affordable health care. If we are lucky enough to have health insurance, our premiums and deductibles keep rising. The Medicaid expansion is a fiscally responsible proposal that would increase healthcare access and quality of care for all Wisconsinites.

Expanding Medicaid saves \$324 million each biennium in overspending from Gov. Walker’s previous partial expansion, helps 82,000 people to afford health insurance, and reduces private insurance premiums by 7 to 11% (based on studies of other states that have expanded Medicaid).

We can leverage those savings into \$1.6 billion in new federal dollars for healthcare investments across Wisconsin, including opioid treatment, programs supporting new moms, and Alzheimer’s care.

No family should need to worry about whether a medical bill will break the bank. 70% of people in Wisconsin support the Medicaid expansion. Why don’t our legislators?

Sincerely,
[Name]
[Address]

Op-Ed: The People's Budget and Healthcare (371 words)

For too long, Wisconsin families like mine have struggled to find quality, affordable health care. 70% of Wisconsinites support expanding Medicaid, according to the Marquette University Law School Poll. So why haven't we done it?

The formula is simple: expand Medicaid, cover more people, save taxpayer money. Expanding Medicaid would reduce private insurance premiums for everyone by 7 to 11%, according to a recent OCI report. It would insure an additional 82,000 people. And it would save \$324 million in taxpayer money over the biennium.

Right now, the state carries the burden of paying for former Gov. Walker's partial expansion. We are wasting money and getting worse results. However, if Wisconsin completes the full Medicaid expansion, the federal government would reimburse 90% of the costs, instead of Wisconsin carrying the entire burden. (This is where we save \$324 million!)

Under Gov. Evers' budget proposal, the state would reinvest those savings in evidence-driven health programs, helping people in communities across the state. From opioid treatment to Alzheimer's care to the Healthy Women, Healthy Babies program, we can invest in proactive care and make our families and communities stronger.

And these investments don't just mean better care for people in Wisconsin -- they also draw more funding to Wisconsin from out-of-state. The programs Gov. Evers wants to invest our Medicaid savings in are eligible to receive matching dollars from the federal government. These matches would multiply our \$324 million investment, resulting in an estimated \$1.6 billion flowing to health care providers and programs in every corner of the state.

Other states are already expanding Medicaid and receiving these funds, but Wisconsin is leaving money on the table. Fiscally and morally, expanding Medicaid just makes sense. Wisconsin can save \$324 million in overspending and multiply it with smart investments to bring back \$1.6 billion. This investment helps more Wisconsin families to get and stay healthy. And when more people are insured and healthy, costs go down for all of us.

In the end, the message is clear: it's past time for Wisconsin to expand Medicaid. I'll be asking my legislators to support the Medicaid expansion, and I hope you do the same. Let's get every family in Wisconsin the care they need.

Taking it to the Streets

Plan a petition drive in support of the Medicaid expansion! For issue advocacy like the fight for the Medicaid expansion, it is better to concentrate on having conversations with people about the importance of the issue, instead of focusing on the signatures. Someone may not be ready to sign a petition to their legislators, but the conversation about the petition can inform them about the impact of Medicaid expansion on their lives and community.

Step 1: Planning your petition drive

- Scheduling
 - What times work for me? (Pick a few -- you may need to change times and dates to accommodate your audience or your location)
 - What times will work best for my audience? (3pm on a Tuesday may work for seniors, third-shifters, or stay at home parents, but is not convenient for office workers; 9am on a Sunday may interfere with the church crowd)
- Location
 - Where will we collect signatures? Is there a particular neighborhood or area that might be persuadable or will be most helped by the Medicaid expansion?
 - Where will we meet? Is it convenient for my team?
 - Is the location near the neighborhood we are hoping to be in?
- Email us the information at fwdwisconsin@gmail.com so we can share it with the Forward Wisconsin network!

Step 2: Preparing for your petition drive

- Print your scripts and petitions. **Remember that the point of the petition is to support talking to people about the importance of the Medicaid expansion.** Collecting names is great, but the critical thing is to have the conversation.
- Debrief with your team after the petition shift -- what went well? What could be improved?
- Scan or mail the completed petitions to us using the fwdwisconsin@gmail.com email or the address on the petition page.

Script for Petition Signature Gathering

Download the #Fight4Medicaid paper petition from ForwardWisc.com!

Remember that the point of the petition is to educate people about the importance of the Medicaid expansion. Collecting names is great, but the critical thing is to have the conversation! You don't need to follow the script exactly, just focus on connecting on a personal level about the importance of quality, affordable healthcare.

Hi my name is _____. I'm out here talking to neighbors about what's going on with our healthcare in Wisconsin, specifically lowering insurance costs for everyone by accepting the Medicaid expansion at the state level. What have you heard about our healthcare system lately? [Listen]

[Acknowledge even if you don't agree or they say something incorrect] Thank you for sharing that, I've heard a lot of people say that. [Agree if you sincerely agree]

There is a proposal right now to expand Medicaid that your State Representative and Senator will be voting on in our state's budget. Do you know their position on this issue? [Listen]

[Acknowledge even if you don't agree or they say something incorrect] I've heard a lot of folks say that too. [Agree if you agree]

I'm knocking on your door today because thousands of people like us across the state need quality, affordable healthcare coverage in case we get sick or injured. It's especially important if we're struggling to make ends meet. Accepting the Medicaid expansion is fiscally responsible -- it saves our state \$324 million, covers more people, reduces private insurance premiums for all of us, and invests the savings back into necessary healthcare programs. Do you support accepting the Medicaid expansion?

[If no, end the conversation politely and acknowledge] Thank you for your time.

[If they aren't sure, don't argue or get into a debate. Ask more questions about why they aren't sure, or tell a personal story about healthcare. If it seems like they shift proceed with the conversation. If not, that's ok, wrap it up!]

[If yes] Your state Representative and Senator need to hear from you about your thoughts on this issue. Right now, they are hearing from interests that want to keep things the way they are. Are you willing to sign this petition in support of Medicaid expansion?

[If no, don't stress! The **most important** thing about this conversation is to educate your neighbors about Medicaid expansion, not to get a signature. Thank them for their time and let them know they can visit ForwardWisc.com with questions.]

[If yes, have them sign and proceed] Are you willing to write or call your legislators today and ask them about their position on this issue?

[If yes] Great! You can call them at 800-362-9472 or write a letter using ForwardWisc.com.

Thank you for your time! I so appreciate it.