



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
ROBYN VINING
14TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT
WAUWATOSA • WEST ALLIS

Another Medicaid Miss

By State Representative Robyn Vining
May 30th, 2024

Arkansas. And us, the great State of Wisconsin. That's it. That's the list. And it is not a "good" list. This is not a good list for Wisconsin women.

What list is this? It's a list of the states that have refused to extend postpartum coverage for new moms on Medicaid from 60 days to a full year. This month, Idaho became the 48th state to extend coverage since the federal government made funding available to the states to do so in 2021.

Designed to increase maternal health outcomes and address racial disparities, this approach to supporting families is an example of good public policy with widespread, bipartisan support in communities across the country.

The 48 states that have already done so are a pretty good demonstration of that support. But so is the fact that the bill to authorize this extension in Wisconsin already passed the State Senate by a 32-1 vote! As a reminder, Republicans hold 22 seats in the State Senate, with Democrats holding the remaining 11. Put another way, this is an example of exactly the kind of bipartisan action so many Wisconsinites crave!

So, why is Wisconsin still on this very short list of two states that have yet to provide health- and life-saving support for new moms? Because Republican leadership in the State Assembly has refused to allow for a vote. And, we have the votes!

Two-thirds of the State Assembly are not just willing to vote for the bill—they're co-sponsors of it! If the bill (that already passed the Senate 32-1) were given a vote in the Assembly, it would pass and be quickly signed into law by Governor Tony Evers.

Instead, because of the refusal to allow for a vote, new moms and their babies will have a harder time accessing and affording healthcare. It is an absolute disgrace that this is the reality facing Wisconsin moms—Wisconsin families deserve better.

This is not the first time that Wisconsinites have missed out when it comes to Medicaid. We also find ourselves on the pretty short list—though not as short as the postpartum list—of states that have not accepted the federal expansion of Medicaid available under the Affordable Care Act.

Wisconsin and just nine other states have refused to accept broader expansion of Medicaid, which would expand coverage to about 90,000 state residents while saving the state more than a billion dollars. Medicaid expansion makes economic sense—cover more people as a state and the federal government will transfer more dollars to support the cost.





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Where would these tax dollars be coming from? These are your tax dollars you are already sending to Washington, D.C. Your tax dollars are being used to subsidize health care in 40 other states rather than support healthy communities right here in our state. In the last biennial state budget alone, expanding Medicaid would have brought an estimated \$1.6 billion back to Wisconsin.

That is a miss. So is failing to extend postpartum coverage for new moms on Medicaid. We are failing Wisconsin moms, we are failing Wisconsin families.

But it doesn't have to be this way. We can expand postpartum Medicaid. We can do better for Wisconsin women, and Wisconsin families. We have the votes. Mr. Speaker: let us take the vote.

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Wisconsin State Representative Robyn Vining represents the 14th Assembly District, which includes the people of Wauwatosa and West Allis. She lives in Wauwatosa with her husband (a professor), where they have raised two children.

