



BRAD PFAFF

STATE SENATOR

Protecting Medicaid Protects Wisconsin's Kids and Seniors

State Senator Brad Pfaff

The term *Medicaid* has been thrown around an awful lot lately. Some may be thinking, “what does this have to do with me?” Medicaid is health insurance, and cuts to Medicaid, as being discussed in Washington, would harm the people we love most—our parents, our kids, and our neighbors. Medicaid currently provides quality, affordable health coverage to more than one million residents, including seniors and children across our communities.

Here in Western Wisconsin, nearly one in three children depend on BadgerCare, our state’s Medicaid program, for healthcare. Additionally, Medicaid covers four out of every ten births in the state, supporting mothers and babies before, during, and after delivery. Cutting this critical support jeopardizes the health of our children and the well-being of mothers.

Medicaid is also essential for seniors. Contrary to common belief, it is Medicaid, not Medicare, that provides coverage for many individuals in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and those receiving home and community-based care. Many of us know someone in one of these settings, and we’ve seen how hard these places work to provide compassionate, quality care with already limited resources. Medicaid cuts would devastate an already overburdened and underfunded system, jeopardizing the security and safety of our elderly neighbors and parents.

Rural hospitals in our region, like Vernon Memorial Hospital in Viroqua and Gundersen St. Joseph’s in Hillsboro, are vital for our rural communities. With one in five rural Wisconsinites relying on Medicaid, these hospitals utilize Medicaid funding to maintain their operations and provide accessible care. Cuts could reduce benefits, lower reimbursement rates, and force some residents to go without needed care.

Instead of weakening this vital program and compromising patient care, we should be reinforcing Medicaid by expanding access and increasing reimbursements to the hospitals and clinics that care for our most vulnerable.

Here in the Coulee Region, we look out for one another and we take care of our neighbors. We know the difference between right and wrong, and we recognize that access to quality healthcare is essential for strong families and strong communities. Trading that away for tax breaks for the ultra-wealthy, as some in Congress have proposed, is simply wrong. We deserve better.