



## **BRAD PFAFF** **STATE SENATOR**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Sen. Pfaff Column: Affordable Healthcare is Long Overdue**

When a mother in La Crosse makes the difficult decision between refilling her child's insulin and putting food on the table, or a farm family in Cashton has to pay out of pocket for mental healthcare, something needs to be done. Business-as-usual partisan politics is not good enough.

We are fortunate to have many options to access quality healthcare in our community. Western Wisconsin is blessed to be on the cutting edge of healthcare innovation, providing holistic and patient-centered care. Our health systems attract top professionals from all over the country, create thousands of jobs, and provide state-of-the-art service. But to unlock their full potential—we need to make sure every resident from Prairie du Chien to Mindoro has a healthcare plan that works for them.

According to the [Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#), 408,000 Wisconsinites were without health insurance for all or part of 2019. COVID-19 almost certainly exacerbated this figure.

If there is ever a time when affordable, accessible, and high-quality healthcare is necessary for families in our state, it's right now. That's why earlier this month, President Biden issued an Executive Order to allow millions of people to obtain health insurance through the online marketplace beginning February 15th.

When the marketplace reopens on February 15th, you can visit [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov) to determine if you're eligible for coverage and shop for new plans available near you. The website also includes useful tools like a [savings calculator](#), a [healthy living guide](#), and a [local help directory](#).

COVID-19 has impacted all of us differently. Some folks lost their jobs and now have to resort to expensive temporary coverage, while others may be stuck in a plan that doesn't work for them or without a plan entirely.

Despite what you may be hearing about the partisan gridlock here in Wisconsin, we can work together. In the state legislature, we are crafting a bipartisan bill to lower the cost of prescription drugs that we hope to have on the Governor's desk in the coming weeks. The Governor has also announced a [budget proposal](#) to invest \$150 million toward expanding access to mental health services, which I hope we can reach a consensus on as well.

There is always more work to be done. Wisconsin is one of only twelve states in the US not accepting Medicaid expansion. Getting the federal money available to us would make about 90,000 more people eligible for the program while saving \$643 million in state tax revenue.

Wisconsin could use the money we save by joining most of the nation in expanding Medicaid to improve health services, lower prescription drug costs, and increase grant funding for rural and tribal health clinics.

Here in Wisconsin, we're nothing if not resourceful. When we come upon hard times, we adjust, innovate, and build for a better future. I will continue doing my job in the State Senate, working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to find long term, adaptable solutions for our health care system. As we continue to get vaccines distributed across the state, it's essential to stay healthy. If you and your family need coverage, I encourage you to visit [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov) before May 15th to determine if you're eligible.

Please stay safe, healthy, and optimistic.

***MEDIA NOTE: See email attachment for an official photo of Sen. Pfaff***

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*Senator Brad Pfaff represents the 32nd Senate District, which includes La Crosse, Vernon, Crawford, and southern Monroe County.*