

ASSEMBLY REPUBLICAN

PATIENTS FIRST



HEALTHCARE REFORM AGENDA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ASSEMBLY REPUBLICANS WILL PUT PATIENTS FIRST

Madison – Patients, not bureaucrats, will be in charge of their health care under the Assembly Republicans health care reform agenda. On Wednesday, Assembly Republicans unveiled “Patients First” a series of market based reforms that put consumers in charge of their own health care decisions. Assembly Speaker Mike Huebsch (R-West Salem) says health care reform needs a dose of competition.

“Health care is failing in American because it’s no longer an American system,” Huebsch said, “Reforming health care means once again making it an American system; one that empowers consumers and fosters competition. Wisconsin has the unique opportunity to provide a solution to a national crisis and our history shows we are up to the task.”

Giving individuals control of their health care dollars and decisions is already working in Wisconsin – and the results are staggering. Manitowoc County saves \$2,600 each time an employee enrolls his or her family in a personal health plan. Three companies, Bellin Health, KI and American Foods Group have saved millions of dollars by putting employees in charge of their own health care decisions with similar personal health plans. The chair of the Assembly Health Committee and a nurse by trade, Representative Leah Vukmir (R-Wauwatosa) says Patients First provides more options for consumers.

“Patients First’ unleashes the power of consumerism and competition,” Vukmir said, “When individuals have information and tools to make wise health care decisions we all win. Not only will this encourage healthier lifestyles, but it will also drive down health care costs.”

Another common sense health care reform is helping people stay healthy. “Patients First” features tax incentives to Wisconsin businesses to provide employees with wellness programs. Representative Terry Moulton (R-Chippewa Falls), who is authoring the tax credit, says wellness works.

“Companies who invest in the health and well being of their employees not only see an improvement in the health and productivity of their workers,” Moulton said, “They see an improvement on their bottom line.”

“Patients First” will give consumers more and better access to health care information. Providers all across the nation are already moving from an outdated paper system to a

more efficient “real time” digital system. Representative Brett Davis (R-Oregon) says improving technology will give families the information they need to make informed decisions about their health care.

“Health care is the only major expense families make where they don’t know how much something costs or where to get the best care,” Davis said, “‘Patients First’ will change all that by allowing each of us to research and save just like we do when we buy a car or a house.”

Assembly Republicans’ Patients First Health Care Reform

- **Health Savings Accounts:** Removing the state tax on HSA contributions so Wisconsin residents can have greater control of their health care dollars and decisions. Wisconsin is one of only four states that still taxes these contributions.
 - **Health Insurance Premium Deductibility:** Making health insurance premiums tax-deductible has a direct impact on the affordability of health care. When fully implemented, this reform will save Wisconsin families \$147 million per year.
 - **Encouraging Workplace Wellness:** Health Care costs go down when you live a healthier life. Private companies are finding real savings for investing in the health and wellness of their employees; we should encourage these programs with tax breaks.
- Improving Transparency of Health Care Costs:** Electronic medical records save hospitals money, and Internet-based price comparisons prevent cost inflation. The “Patients First” agenda provides incentives and assistance for both.

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