



*State Senator
Jon Erpenbach*

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Erpenbach: Healthy Wisconsin is Back and Even Better

Madison – The much anticipated Healthy Wisconsin was re-introduced by Senator Jon Erpenbach (D-Waunakee) today. Healthy Wisconsin is a comprehensive health care reform plan dedicated to addressing cost, access, and quality.

“Wisconsin has great health care providers, unfortunately people and businesses are being priced out of that great system of care. This is the biggest issue our constituents face, it’s never too late to fight for affordable health care for all,” Erpenbach said. “We can’t afford to wait any longer for change.”

The Healthy Wisconsin plan, Senate Bill 562, will look similar to what was introduced as part of the 2007-2009 Biennial Budget, with two improvements. In addition to delaying the start of the program one year from the original plan, Healthy Wisconsin 2008 includes the following changes:

1. A small-employer phase-in. Employers with 10 or fewer employees will have a three year phase-in. The first year they will pay only 1/3 of the cost, the second year they will pay 2/3 of the cost, and the third year, they will pay the full cost. Any business that starts up within the first three years of the program will also have a three year phase-in.
2. A cap on the amount that dual-income households are assessed. Dual-income households will pay a maximum of 4% of the Social Security max, which is \$102,000 in 2008.

“I’ve had the opportunity to talk about Healthy Wisconsin around the country,” said Erpenbach. “This plan has drawn national attention. Wisconsin is again at the forefront of innovation.”

Under Healthy Wisconsin people will have a guaranteed choice of health care providers, coverage they can count on. Healthy Wisconsin will force insurance companies to play fair. We need to stop them from gaining massive profits by denying coverage based on pre-existing conditions or any other reason they can find. Most importantly, it will rein in the ever-increasing costs of health care. The changes made to Healthy Wisconsin were based on feedback from business groups and citizen forums around the state.

“I don’t want to stop talking about health care because we are about to end session. “This issue doesn’t go away when we walk off the Capitol steps. Every Legislator in this building that does doors this summer will hear about health care. I want people to ask them what they are going to do about this epidemic and I want the answer to be Healthy Wisconsin”, Erpenbach said. “Legislators always come back with renewed commitment to their constituents at the beginning of a new session and Healthy Wisconsin will be waiting on their desk when they come back. Maybe we will even see a few new faces willing to think without the shackles of special interest; I always remain hopeful.”

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