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**HEADLINE:** BadgerRx offers help for all state residents

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Access to affordable prescription medication is one of the state's biggest health care concerns. Throughout northcentral Wisconsin, seniors and families struggle to afford the skyrocketing cost of medicine and many often are forced to choose between the food and shelter they need to live and the medicine they need to live healthily. Luckily, programs such as BadgerCare and SeniorCare exist to help those seniors and families most in need of help.

What many fail to realize, however, is that the high cost of prescription drugs affects many more Wisconsin residents.

Across the state, 1.1 million people lack prescription drug coverage, and an additional 300,000 have no health insurance whatsoever. That means that one out of every six Wisconsin citizens is forced to pay for medicine out of his or her own pocket. For too long, these residents have been ineligible for help because they weren't old enough or earned too much money.

Thanks to BadgerRx, a new prescription drug program announced by the governor earlier this month, these people now have someplace to turn.

Under the program, anyone in Wisconsin who either lacks prescription drug coverage or has insufficient coverage can obtain a **BadgerRx Gold Card**. For a low annual fee of \$25 per individual or \$75 per family, enrollees can receive savings of 25 percent to 40 percent on their prescription purchases. The program also offers a \$5 discount on the annual premium for those who sign up online.

BadgerRx is administered through the Madison-based Navitus Health Solutions and acts as a statewide purchasing co-op. It is patterned after a similar successful program for state employees enacted as part of the 2003-2005 budget. That program, also maintained by Navitus, saved 235,000 employees an average of 25 percent on their purchases and saved the state \$25 million.

This program does not cost the state a dime and delivers significant savings to tens of thousands of Wisconsin citizens. Under the new initiative, those lacking health care, those whose health care does not include prescription coverage and those with high deductibles all are eligible. BadgerRx also will cover citizens with pre-existing medical conditions who may be screened out of private plans.

BadgerRx also benefits local pharmacies by reducing the need to buy medication online. Because more than 700 of the more than 880 pharmacies across the state have signed up for the program, enrollees will be comfortable in the knowledge that their **BadgerRx Gold Card** can be used in a local drug store.

Unfortunately, many people are not aware of this new program, so it is important to spread the word. I encourage anyone who is in need of affordable, reliable prescription drug coverage to enroll in BadgerRx today by visiting [badgerxgold.com](http://badgerxgold.com) or contacting my office at 888-534-0085.

Donna Seidel, D-Wausau, represents the 85th Assembly District.