



SUE JESKEWITZ

State Representative • 24th Assembly District

Date: May 31, 2005
To: Co-Chairmen Representative Dean Kaufert and Senator Scott Fitzgerald and
Republican Members of the Joint Committee on Finance
From: Representative Sue Jeskewitz
Re: Making Medicaid Funding a Priority in the Budget Deliberations

Rising health care costs are a problem for families and employers all over the state, but they are particularly problematic for the people of southeastern Wisconsin, where my district has experienced some of the highest health insurance rates in the country.

Many things driving up the cost of health care, and while the Legislature has no control over factors like our aging population, there is one area we can do something about to help slow down the escalating costs. The state needs to begin to more adequately fund health care programs like Medicaid.

Both constituents and employers are contacting me and have said that the government's underfunding of Medicaid results in rising health insurance premiums. Providers have to recoup costs from those who can pay in the private sector and this cost shifting means increased costs to families and businesses and stymies job creation and expansion efforts.

That is why I agree with the Wisconsin Hospital Association and support making Medicaid funding one of our priorities in this budget by increasing payments to hospitals. Inadequately funding Medicaid and only paying hospitals \$.55 cents for every \$1.00 it costs to see a Medicaid patient and knowing that hospitals by definition treat everybody who walks in the door (regardless of ability to pay) is just plain wrong.

We made a commitment to serve Medicaid recipients, and we need to follow through on the promise and the payment.