

BadgerCare Plus: Using Online Tools for Enrollment

Under the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (DRA), states have flexibility to modify Medicaid benefits and cost-sharing requirements without the cap on federal financial participation that accompanies §1115 waivers. The flexibility granted by the DRA, coupled with long-standing Medicaid authority to expand eligibility by disregarding income, allows states to file state plan amendments in order to expand coverage to higher income populations in plans that charge limited premiums and look more like commercial insurance. (For additional information on this topic, see “Financing State Coverage Expansions: Can New Medicaid Flexibility Help?” This document is available in the publications section of the NASHP website at www.nashp.org.)

In 2006, Wisconsin introduced a BadgerCare Plus module within the state’s online tool, “ACCESS Wisconsin,” with the goal of maximizing enrollment of eligible beneficiaries in BadgerCare Plus. One year after implementation, 32% of applications for Wisconsin’s benefit programs come through ACCESS Wisconsin. This allows enrollment staff to spend less time on data entry. The ACCESS Wisconsin website is accessible at <https://access.wisconsin.gov/>.

What is ACCESS Wisconsin?

ACCESS Wisconsin is a website that serves as a central point for information about the state’s health, nutrition and other low-income assistance programs. ACCESS Wisconsin includes modules that allow users to learn about the following state benefits and find out if they might qualify:

- *Health services:* BadgerCare Plus (Medicaid and CHIP); Senior Care; Medicare Part D low-income subsidy; Medicaid Family Planning Waiver
- *Nutrition services:* SNAP (food stamps); WIC; and other nutrition supplement programs
- *Other low-income assistance:* Tax credits; Home energy assistance

Individuals and families can use ACCESS Wisconsin to apply for:

- *Health services:* BadgerCare Plus; Medicaid; Medicaid Family Planning Waiver;
- *Nutrition services:* SNAP

What does the ACCESS Wisconsin BadgerCare Plus module do?

ACCESS Wisconsin can be used to determine eligibility for BadgerCare Plus and other government assistance programs, to apply for benefits, to check benefits, and to report changes.

- The “Am I Eligible?” application allows users to get a preliminary determination of eligibility within an average of 15 minutes.
- The “Apply for Benefits” feature makes it easy for users to apply for benefit programs. Users can complete an application, including an on-line signature, in one sitting or store information for completion at a later time.
- The “Check my Benefits” tool allows current beneficiaries and new applicants to check the status of their applications.
- The “Report my Changes” application enables users to easily report changes to their local agency.

About the National Academy for State Health Policy

The National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP) is an independent academy of state health policy makers working together to identify emerging issues, develop policy solutions, and improve state health policy and practice. As a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to helping states achieve excellence in health policy and practice, NASHP provides a forum on critical health issues across branches and agencies of state government. NASHP resources are available at: www.nashp.org.

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