

Labor Forum on Self Insurance

WHEN: Thursday, March 23, 5:30 – 7:00 PM
WHERE: Madison Labor Temple, 1602 S. Park St., Room 201 C

Panel discussion with representatives from:

- POWRS (Protect Our Wisconsin Retirement Security) <https://www.powrs.org/>
- ACE (Association of Career Employees) <https://associationcareeremployees.org/>
- and other labor representatives.

The moderator will be David Nack, Professor with the UW School for Workers.

Your health insurance benefits may be at risk! Join us to learn the outlines of this proposed change to Self Insurance, ask questions, and engage in discussion with labor friendly people who have been observing this proposal as it moves through the decision process. We will describe what we know, and what is still unknown.

Currently, state and UW employees, retirees, and their families have health insurance through the Group Health Insurance Plan (GHIP). There is a proposal as part of the state budget to convert this system to a different model called a Self Insurance (state self-funded). This is a major change. The GHIP directly affects 250,000 people in the health insurance pool, and many more indirectly. The state says their employees' health insurance cost and quality will not change, but we are skeptical. Estimated savings to the state budget for this change are surprisingly small for such a large potential disruption. The estimated \$60 million savings is only two percent of total premiums over the biennium, but these savings are very uncertain and could even be negative by some actuarial estimates. Savings are particularly uncertain because of rising uncertainties in health insurance markets now with the changes in the Affordable Care Act.

Some information on the official proposal is available at the ETF web site: <http://www.etf.wi.gov/>

Observe that the 17 HMOs and health insurance plans currently available to state and UW employees will be changed. Instead, there will be only two choices in each region. Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield will be a major player. Other networks are unfamiliar and appear to be amalgamations of providers existing under other names.

The process for making this decision on Self Insurance has been non-transparent with too little analysis. Neither those directly affected nor the public have had sufficient opportunity to have input on the proposal.

The Group Insurance Board has already voted to enact Self Insurance by January 2018. Now the proposal goes to the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee (JFC). The JFC will have the final say, probably in April 2017. The Governor's proposed budget as written suggests the decision around Self Insurance may also determine whether state

or UW employees get raises, and whether other education items in the budget are funded.

Join other public employees, retirees, and interested citizens to learn about this key benefit program. Another benefit of this discussion is that as the health insurance debate heats up nationally, we can be better prepared for our long-term struggle to get a Single Payer system so that all can be covered and receive proper medical care. Workers need to cooperate in these tough times to share information, push for a fair deal at every decision point, and let other citizens know what public policy is being established on their behalf. Join your union, or a labor-allied organization, if you do not have a union.

See you on Thursday, March 23rd at the Labor Temple!

This event is sponsored by the Wisconsin Science Professionals, AFT 3732.