



**PATIENTS FIRST**  
**WISCONSIN**



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## Koreen's Law Receives Strong Bipartisan Support from 81 Wisconsin State Lawmakers

**Madison, Wis., Dec. 20, 2021**—Patients First Wisconsin, a coalition of state and national patient and provider organizations, applauds the introduction of Koreen's Law with an impressive 81 legislative co-sponsors, including 20 members of the Senate and 61 members of the Assembly. Koreen's Law, introduced as Assembly Bill 718 and Senate Bill 753, prohibits the practice of insurer-mandated white bagging and prevents patients from being left behind with no choice but to pay for care from their own provider completely out-of-pocket.

"While our story was unfortunate, I'm glad that so many Wisconsin lawmakers have acted to prevent another family from going through this," said Koreen Holmes, an Eau Claire mom with triple-negative breast cancer. "To those lawmakers that signed onto this bill: Your actions will make a difference in the lives of people like me." The bill's 81 sponsors span the political spectrum, representing urban and rural legislative districts and includes the most conservative of Republicans and the most liberal of Democrats.

"Koreen's Law is receiving such strong support from Republican and Democratic lawmakers because protecting high quality, accessible care for some of our sickest patients is not a partisan issue," said WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding. "Legislative sponsors of this bill have demonstrated true leadership on an issue that will protect patient care."

But action cannot wait, as a growing number of insurance companies are attempting to mandate white bagging. While this bill was circulated, another health insurance company announced it will unilaterally mandate white bagging at the start of 2022. No negotiation. No patient choice.

"Swift action on Koreen's Law is necessary before more patients are impacted by policies that bypass health-system pharmacists' safety checks and care planning processes," said Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin Executive Vice President Sarah Sorum. "White bagging heightens the possibility of drug spoilage and wastage, and delays time-sensitive treatment."

Hospital and physician offices across the state have patients impacted by white bagging. Here are just a few examples of what provider and patient groups have to say about white bagging and Koreen's Law:

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- “White bagging creates significant patient safety issues and causes significant delays in providing patients with their medications,” said Dr. Dan Malone, President of the Wisconsin Rheumatology Association, which is a member of the Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations (CSRO). “These problems are especially risky for patients with chronic autoimmune disorders.”
- “White bagging is a confusing and disruptive process for patients. It puts an insurance company between providers and their patients,” said Rob Gundermann of the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups. “One of CWAG’s primary missions is to ensure that patients receive medication when they need it. That is exactly what this bill achieves. Once Koreen’s Law passes, hundreds of thousands of seniors across the state will know that they do not have to worry about safeguarding themselves from white bagging.”
- “Wisconsin has a well-deserved reputation for being a high-quality, high-value state for health care,” said Tom Kraus, vice president of government relations at the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. “Rather than dismantling the positive aspects of integrated care that have made Wisconsin a model for the rest of the country, Koreen’s Law will preserve the quality care patients deserve when they need it most. White bagging legislation is rapidly coming to fruition across the country, and Wisconsin is now among the handful of states leading the way.”
- “Shared decision-making between provider and patient is paramount when people need infusions to manage or treat debilitating and life-threatening conditions,” said Brian Nyquist at the National Infusion Center Association. “White bagging essentially allows insurance companies to disrupt that crucial relationship by dictating where and how patients can get their medications. We think that needs to stop.”
- “Separating patients from their providers during cancer treatment causes confusion for patients and, worse yet, fragmented care during one of the scariest moments in our patients’ lives,” said Dr. Kurt Oettel, Past President of the Wisconsin Association of Hematology and Oncology. “Fighting cancer is a true battle, but one that many are successful in because of their own determination, advancements in therapeutics and high-quality health care providers. White bagging puts even more hurdles in the way during a patient’s battle with cancer – and at the worst time in their life to do it.”
- “We’ve seen clearly that no condition is immune from the negative impacts of white bagging. Dermatologists are being forced to deal with the negative impacts of this practice, costing patients more money and wasting valuable time for providers and patients alike,” said Dr. Julia Kasprzak, past president of the Wisconsin Dermatological Society.

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## **ABOUT PATIENTS FIRST WISCONSIN**

Patients First Wisconsin is a coalition-led initiative aimed at educating health care stakeholders, lawmakers and the general public about the threat to health care quality, safety and affordability posed by insurance companies requiring drugs to be purchased through their exclusive specialty pharmacies, a practice known as “white bagging.” The coalition includes the Wisconsin Hospital Association; the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin; the Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative; the Wisconsin Dermatological Society; the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging & Health Groups; the Wisconsin Association of Hematology and Oncology; the American Society of Health System Pharmacists; the National Infusion Center Association; the Infusion Access Foundation; the Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations; the Association of Community Cancer Centers; the Wisconsin Organization of Nurse Leaders; the Wisconsin Association for Home Health Care, Inc.; and the Wisconsin Medical Group Management Association.

Learn more about the detrimental effects of white bagging on patient care and hear from Wisconsin patients affected by the practice at [PatientsFirstWI.com](http://PatientsFirstWI.com).