<h1 style="text-align:center;color:maroon;">WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE</h1>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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COMMENTS IN SUPPORT OF SENATOR GROTHMAN'S PROPOSAL TO RAISE THE AGE OF ELIGIBILITY FOR THE MEDICAID FAMILY PLANNING WAIVER PROGRAM

The following remarks were offered by Kathy Markeland, Associate Director for Respect Life and Health Care for the Wisconsin Catholic Conference, the public policy voice of Wisconsin's Roman Catholic bishops, at a press conference today announcing the introduction of legislation to remove 15 to 17 year olds from the state's Medicaid Family Planning Waiver program:

There is general agreement in this society that we want teens to delay sexual activity. And for good reason. All of the measurements tell us that teens who abstain from sex are healthier, more productive members of their communities in the short and long term.

Yet the Medicaid Family Planning Waiver sends a much different message.
- A message that says teen sexual activity is unavoidable.
- A message that says parents really don't understand.
- A message that says the values of a teen's family and their faith community can't withstand the pressure of peers.

When it comes to human sexuality, we should avoid the mistake of thinking that *information* can be a substitute for *formation*. Formation is primarily the right and responsibility of parents. We are better served by assuming they will exercise that responsibility then by assuming they won't.

Removing minors from the Family Planning Waiver program won't assure that parents have more information about their child's sexual development. But it will remove one of the publicly funded activities that dilute the message many parents want to send.

Young people do not grow into people of character in a vacuum. They must be guided and formed. They need help to make good decisions. They need the security of knowing that we are proud of the person they are and the person they are becoming. When we send mixed messages to young people, we rob them of that security.

That's why we support this proposal.