



Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

February 28, 2024

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE:

I have approved Senate Bill 1015 as 2023 Wisconsin Act 97 and have deposited it in the Office of the Secretary of State. I have exercised the partial veto in sections 1 [as it relates to s. 20.435 (1) (bd)], 2, and 4.

This bill would transfer \$15,000,000 SEG from the state building trust fund to the general fund for fiscal year 2023-24. In addition, the bill would eliminate a \$15,000,000 SEG appropriation for a Building Commission grant made during the 2021-22 fiscal year. Further, the bill would increase the supplemental appropriation to the Joint Committee on Finance by \$15,000,000 GPR for fiscal year 2023-24 to fund grants to support hospital emergency department services. Finally, the bill would create a Department of Health Services appropriation for hospital emergency department services grants.

I am partially vetoing sections 1 [as it relates to s. 20.435 (1) (bd)], 2, and 4 to remove the specific references to emergency department services within the broader category of hospital services. I object to unnecessarily restricting crisis funding intended to address urgent healthcare access needs in Western Wisconsin that exist well beyond hospital emergency departments.

The Hospital Sisters Health System's (HSHS) closure will result in, for example, a disruption of care for patients with ongoing needs, pregnant women, and those with mental health, behavioral health, and substance use disorders, among others. The state's response to this crisis must consider and be responsive to meeting the entire continuum of healthcare services that will be impacted in communities across the region, not just hospital emergency departments. Through my broad, constitutional veto authority, I am ensuring these resources have the flexibility necessary to be used to meet healthcare access needs for Western Wisconsin. These partial vetoes will broaden the scope of the grants, allowing the Department of Health Services to submit a plan for funding any hospital services meeting the area's pressing healthcare access needs. These crisis resources, due to my partial vetoes, will now also be available to support urgent care services, OB-GYN services, in-patient psychiatric services, and mental health and substance abuse services in the Chippewa Valley.

Under Senate Bill 1015, which I am approving with partial vetoes today, \$15,000,000 in emergency resources are readily available and now have the flexibility necessary to meet the broader healthcare access needs of the Chippewa Valley region. The Department of Health Services has submitted an official request to the Joint Committee on Finance, asking the Committee to release these funds without delay. I urge the Joint Committee on Finance to work expeditiously to do so.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Tony Evers'.

Tony Evers
Governor