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Information for E-news is compiled from several sources, including web sites and lists from *The Wheeler Report*, Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Kaiser Family Foundation, Commonwealth Fund, *Milbank Quarterly*, *Health Affairs*, Urban Institute, *Wisconsin Medical Journal*, Wispolitics.com, Handsnet, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, *The New York Times*, *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*, *Milwaukee Business Journal*, *Wisconsin State Journal* and others.

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STATE NEWS

Federal Waiver Extends WI SeniorCare Program Until 2007

Wisconsin's SeniorCare prescription drug program has been extended by 18-months under its current authorizing waiver, which will expire on June 20, 2007. During this time, Federal officials consider whether they will allow states to continue to get federal assistance for such programs after the Medicare Part D prescription drug program begins in January 2006.

Governor Doyle said the 90,000 enrollees in SeniorCare will not face any penalties if they decide after the federal Part D enrollment period ends to switch from the state program to the federal program. Also, federal DHFS Secretary Leavitt has agreed to consider a state request for a waiver to continue the state program beyond June 2007.

Governor Doyle also says that Secretary Leavitt will work with Wisconsin to develop an

enhanced new Medicare Part D benefit program through a state-specific "wrap-around" program. The goal of that program would be to provide enhanced benefits to seniors that choose the Medicare Part D program.

Governors press release:

<http://www.thewheelerreport.com/releases/Oct05/Oct11/1011govseniorcare.pdf>

Malpractice Task Force Recommendations Released: Legislation Underway

The Assembly Medical Malpractice Task Force was created by Assembly Speaker Gard to review the Supreme Court decision voiding caps on non-economic damages in medical malpractice suits. But instead of coming up with a specific recommendation for a new cap, the committee recommended three alternative proposals:

- Establish a two-tiered system under which injured minors have a higher cap than injured adults.
- Set a cap that is the greater of either a base-level figure or a set amount times each year of life expectancy of the injured patient.
- Cap non-economic damages at a specific dollar amount.

The recommendations include methods for determining an appropriate cap, including considering what other states use as a limit on non-economic damages. Other proposals include an actuarial audit of the Patients Compensation Fund, and steps to reduce the incidence of medical malpractice. The task force suggested that other committees address legislative oversight of medical malpractice insurance premiums and establishing health courts to deal exclusively with medical malpractice cases.

Now, the Assembly is moving to pass several bills developed by the Speaker's task force on medical malpractice. The three bills are:

- AB 764 - Awards to persons suffering damages as the result of medical malpractice and evidence of compensation for those damages. <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/2005/data/AB-764.pdf>
- AB 765 - Coverage under the injured patients and families compensation fund of medical school graduates engaged in postgraduate training. <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/2005/data/AB-765.pdf>
- AB 766 - Capping non-economic damages in medical malpractice cases.

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/2005/data/AB-766.pdf>

The most controversial of these is AB 766, which caps non-economic damages at \$450,000 for adults and \$550,000 for those injured while under the age of 18. An article in the Oct. 20 Journal Sentinel discusses some of the arguments pro and con, including concerns raised by the Governor about whether the bill resolves the issues that caused the WI Supreme Court to declare the previous cap to be unconstitutional. <http://www.jsonline.com/news/state/oct05/364367.asp>

Health Care Workforce Report Released

The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) has issued the first Wisconsin Health Care Workforce Annual Report. The purpose of the report is to illustrate:

- Expected growth in the health care field and related projections for occupation demand

- Graduation numbers for students in key health care fields;
- Statewide and regional innovative approaches currently being taken to address the shortage; and
- Focus areas identified by the Select Committee on Health Care Workforce Development.

The report says that total jobs in WI are projected to increase 13.3% by 2012, while growth in health care jobs is expected to be 30.3% - or more than 10,000 health care jobs annually over the next ten years for both new and replacements jobs. Nationally, the health care industry could add 3.5 million new jobs by 2012, an increase of 30%. http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/healthcare/pdf/healthcare_annual_report2005.pdf

Democrats Call for WI Health Care Reform Plan by 2008

Senate and Assembly Democrats have introduced bills that call for the Legislature to pass a comprehensive health care reform plan by 2008. SB388, the "Health Care Security Act," was introduced by Senator Miller (D-Monona) and Rep. Benedict (D-Beloit). <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/2005/data/SB-388.pdf>

The Capital Times described a similar plan offered by fellow Democrats: <http://www.madison.com/tct/news/stories//index.php?ntid=57604&ntpid=2>

Employers Lean Toward Health Account Options

The Business Journal of Milwaukee reports that, according to the 2005 Employer Health Care Benefits Survey, health reimbursement arrangements and health savings accounts are becoming more prevalent among Milwaukee-area businesses as they look for ways to shift more health care costs to employees.

The Greater Milwaukee Annual Report on Health Care conducted the survey, finding that 11% of the 178 companies responding to the online survey implemented a health reimbursement arrangement or health savings account for 2005, and 35% have a definite interest in doing so. A total of 28% of the respondents said they offer a health savings account or health reimbursement arrangement option for their employees.

http://milwaukee.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/stories/2005/09/26/story3.html?hbx=e_sw

Debate Over Future Home of Wisconsin's First School of Public Health

The Board of Regents approved the UW Medical School's name change to the School of Medicine and Public Health effective November 11, pending Regent review of a report on collaborations with agencies in the Milwaukee area. The Board will require that UW-Madison officials initiate a "good faith" dialogue with officials in the city of Milwaukee and the Chancellor of UW-Milwaukee toward future collaborations on public health research, education and service. This follows a plea by Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett to the Board to consider locating the school of public health in Milwaukee, citing the city's public health problems.

<http://www.wisconsin.edu/news/2005/r051007.htm>

Readings on the debates:

<http://www.madison.com/archives/read.php?ref=wsj:2005:10:07:530202:LOCAL/WISCONSIN>

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/metro/oct05/361411.asp>

Board of Regents Resolution:

http://www.wisconsin.edu/news/2005/10-2005/res_MedicalSchool10-7-05-4.pdf

UW Madison Named One of the Vanguard Centers for the National Children's Study

The National Children's Study, the largest study ever undertaken to assess the effects of the environment on child and adult health, awarded contracts to six Vanguard Centers to pilot and complete the first phase. UW Madison is one of the six funded sites; Waukesha County is the study location for the project.

The study will follow over 100,000 children from before birth and until the age of 21.

Researchers will examine food, air, schools and neighborhoods, household dust and other environmental factors influencing human health and relating to genetic constitution. The goal in Waukesha County is to start recruiting women of childbearing age in 2007, with the hopes of tracking some children from pre-conception. Of particular interest are the environmental and genetic determinants that lead to diabetes, asthma, premature birth, obesity, and other childhood diseases.

Partners include the Medical College of Wisconsin and the Waisman Center at UW-Madison will be supported by WI-DHFS, the National Opinion Research Center, Marquette University, UW Marine and Freshwater Biomedical Sciences Center/ Institute for Environmental Health, the Children's Research Institute, the Children's Service Society of WI and others.

www.nationalchildrensstudy.gov

<http://www.healthinschools.org>

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/wauk/sep05/359646.asp>

WiCell Selected as New Home to NIH's Stem Cell Bank

WiCell received a \$16 million NIH grant to create a national stem cell bank. James Thomson, WiCell scientific director and professor of anatomy at UW-Madison, first isolated stem cells in 1998 and began worldwide research efforts to explore the potential of using them to fight diseases. President of the WiCell board of directors, Carl Gulbrandsen, said the NSCB would benefit academic researchers by lowering the cost of obtaining stem cell lines, continuing the ability for academic researchers to patent any discovery made with these stem cell lines, offering comprehensive technical support, and providing special training classes. <http://www.news.wisc.edu/11616.html>

<http://www.news.wisc.edu/11616.html>

WiCell is a non-profit subsidiary of the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation that manages and distributes the institution's five available lines. The NSCB will also house six lines from a research center in Australia. The bank will serve as a centralized clearinghouse for existing, federally funded lines. It will enable the cell lines to be grown under similar conditions, providing uniform quality control and allowing for comparative analyses. <http://www.jsonline.com/news/>

state/oct05/360550.asp

Wisconsin's Graduated Licensing Program Reduced Teen Crashes

The Medical College of Wisconsin study concluded that the state's drivers' licensing program, which allows for a more gradual introduction to driving, has lowered the number of crashes involving 16 and 17 year-olds. Susan Fohr, lead author on the study, said they did not see evidence of safer driving in teens. It is believed that the drop in crashes resulted from reduced overall time behind the wheel for teens. <http://www.madison.com/wsj/home/local/index.php?ntid=56566&ntpid=5>

Challenge Grant to Expand Next Door Pediatrics Clinic in Milwaukee

Children's Hospital of Wisconsin is donating a challenge grant of \$500,000 for the Next Door Foundation to expand its Next Door Pediatrics clinic. The clinic serves low-income patients in Milwaukee's Metcalfe Park neighborhood. The foundation is trying to raise a total of \$1.7 million to increase its square footage to accommodate exam rooms, record storage, a larger waiting area and possibly a dental clinic. <http://milwaukee.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/stories/2005/10/17/story4.html>

Manitowoc County Receives Third Air Quality Advisory Since 2002

Northeastern Wisconsin has received 12 particle pollution advisories since 2002, with 3 being for Manitowoc County along. The American Lung Association's 2005 State of the Air report gave the county an "F" for ozone emissions. Air quality specialists at the DNR and health officials are requiring that Manitowoc address its air quality issues. Particulate pollution can linger at high levels in the fall and winter due to emissions from power plants, vehicles, stoves and furnaces. http://www.wisinfo.com/heraldtimes/news/archive/local_22884327.shtml

Wisconsin Faces Federal Hurdle in Safe Disposal of Drugs

As prescription drugs are considered controlled substances, it is illegal for a third party to acquire them for environmentally friendly disposal. That leaves individuals with the options of flushing their unused pharmaceuticals, or throwing them in the trash. Pharmacies cannot take back unused medications. These drugs end up in landfills and in groundwater, potentially harming waterways and wildlife and possibly contaminating drinking water. Governor Jim Doyle's office has started a waste management task force to address this issue. <http://www.jsonline.com/news/state/oct05/362192.asp>

Safe Community Coalition Awarded Bicycle Safety Grant

Dane County awarded a \$52,000 grant to Safe Community Coalition through funding from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. The grant will be used to improve bicycle safety in urban and rural Dane County. The Coalition is planning to develop public service announcements, provide bicycle safety education for children and adults, increase communication

to communities about bicycle events, and assist with law enforcement training. <http://www.co.dane.wi.us/press/default.asp?frmPRID=561>

A Public Health Approach to Gun Violence

"Communities Coming Together: A Public Health Approach to Gun Violence," a conference highlighting guns in domestic violence situations, was sponsored by the Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation. According to WI-DHFS 2003 data, 61 Wisconsin residents died as a result of domestic violence; 45 were murdered and 16 perpetrators committed suicide. <http://www.wisinfo.com/newsherald/mnhlocal/286915109373112.shtml>

RESEARCH AND PROGRAM TOOLS

KNOW HIV/AIDS Media Tool

The Know is Spreading, a collaboration between Viacom, The Kaiser Family Foundation and a collective of New York- and Tokyo-based artists called The Barnstormers, features graffiti art and hip-hop. Besides a virtual graffiti wall, screen savers, and a video by hip-hop artist Common, their web site offers information on HIV/AIDS and a list of testing centers. www.spreadtheknow.com www.knowhiv aids.org

Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council HIV/AIDS Site

This new site contains information on the GLITC HIV/AIDS programs, educational materials, resources and event listings for member tribes.

<http://www.glitc.org/HIVweb/index.html>

California EPA Report on Dangers of Secondhand Smoke

A new report from the California EPA, "Proposed Identification of Environmental Tobacco Smoke as a Toxic Air Contaminant", confirms and expands the science on the dangers of secondhand smoke. <http://www.arb.ca.gov/toxics/ets/finalreport/finalreport.htm>

Investing in Early Education in Wisconsin

The 2005-2007 Budget and Recent Spending Trends <http://wccf.org/pdf/eewibudget200507.pdf>

Medical Debt and Access to Healthcare

This study compares access to care for the privately insured who have had problems paying medical bills and those who have not had medical bill problems, as well as those with no health coverage at all. <http://www.kff.org/uninsured/upload/Medicaid-Debt-and-Access-to-Health-Care-Report.pdf>

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Clinical Classification Software

CCS-MHSA was developed as part of the Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUP). This

software tool is based on the diagnostic coding of ICD-9-CM that is valid for January 1980 through September 2005. <http://www.hcup-us.ahrq.gov/toolssoftware/mhsa/mhsa.jsp>

HCUP website: <http://www.ahrq.gov/data/hcup/>

New Chartbook on Access, Quality, Efficiency

A new chartbook has been released by The Commonwealth Fund Commission on a High Performance Health System. According to the Fund, the charts paint a stark picture of a fragmented system beset by widespread disparities in access to and quality of care. As well, it suggests that, despite spending more per capita on health care than any other country, the U.S. health system is fraught with waste and inefficiency.

[A Need to Transform the U.S. Health Care System: Improving Access, Quality, and Efficiency](#)

also points to promising opportunities for reforming the health system. These include management of high-cost care, enhancements in care coordination, disease management, and developing networks of high performing providers under Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance. The Commission on a High Performance Health System will be exploring such opportunities as part of its mission to move the nation toward a health care system providing better access, quality, and efficiency http://www.cmwf.org/usr_doc/gauthier_transformushltsys.pdf

KaiserEDU.org Health Policy Resource

This site, geared towards students and faculty, provides narrated slide tutorials, background reference libraries and issue modules on current topics and policy debates. Topics covered include: Health and the Law, Health Systems, HIV/AIDS, Medicaid/SCHIP, Medicare, Minority Health, Prescription Drugs, Quality of Care, Uninsured, and Women's Health. <http://www.kaiseredu.org/index.asp>

New data on managed care and health insurance, health status, and women's health were added to the Kaiser Family Foundation's state health data website.

<http://www.statehealthfacts.org>

EVENTS

7th Annual CWHR Women's Health Leadership Conference: November 4

"Women & Medicines: Biological, Social and Political Issues," 8:00 AM. to 1:30 PM at the Fluno Center. Followed by a free public lecture, "Women's Health: Emergency Contraception and the FDA" at 1:30 PM <http://www.womenshealth.wisc.edu/>

"Healing Our Communities" 2005 13th Annual Conference: November 7-9

Wisconsin Department of Health & Family Services & American Indians Against Abuse. Hosted by the Stockbridge-Munsee Community at the Ho-Chunk Hotel & Convention Center in Baraboo, WI. http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/R_Counties/Information_And_News/DHFS-

[TribalConferenceBrochure_1.pdf](#)

**Healthcare Financial Management Association Rural Providers Education Program:
November 9**

Topics include: capital allocation and long-term financial planning, Medicare Advantage, physician integration and compensation strategies, and information technology management for the non-IT manager. Cranberry Country Lodge, Tomah, WI. Contact: Toby Freier at <mailto:tfreier@tomahhospital.org>

**The Transformation of Health Care & The Role of the University: November 17-18,
Monona Terrace Convention Center**

Produced by the UW Population Health Institute, with sponsorship from the Wisconsin Partnership Fund for a Healthy Future and the UW Medical Foundation

Registration: <http://www.pophealth.wisc.edu/uwphi/news/05%20ConferenceRegForm.pdf>

Information: http://www.pophealth.wisc.edu/uwphi/news/TransformationHC_0591.pdf

"Current Topics and Techniques in Women's Health" November 21

The keynote speaker will be Dr. Linda C. Giudice, M.D., Ph.D, from the University of California-San Francisco School of Medicine, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Pyle Center, University of Wisconsin Extension Conference Center.

READING ROOM

Study Reports on Quality Improvement in "P4P" Programs

A study billed as the first of its kind to evaluate "pay-for-performance" programs has found they result in significant improvements in quality. The report, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, compared clinical quality improvements on Pap smears, mammography, and hemoglobin testing for diabetics for two groups in a large health plan, PacifiCare Health Systems.

PacifiCare's California network, which implemented a quality incentive program (QIP) in 2003, was compared with Pacificare's Pacific Northwest group, which did not participate in a quality incentive program. The California medical groups received bonuses for meeting specific targets in clinical quality scores.

Researchers found that quality scores for differed significantly only for cervical cancer screening, where they improved 5.3% in the pay-for-performance group, compared with 1.7% in the group without pay-for performance. The study's authors also report that 75% of bonus payments went to physician groups whose performance was above the bonus threshold before the quality incentive program was implemented. <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/294/14/1788>

The report was funded by The Commonwealth Fund, a private, nonpartisan foundation that studies health and social issues. Commonwealth Fund President Karen Davis noted that "there is widespread consensus that existing financial incentives in the U.S. health care system are

misaligned and fail to reward high quality . . . We need to move from just paying for services that get rendered to rewarding delivery of the right care."

Commonwealth also noted that, in June, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Administrator Mark B. McClellan wrote a letter to House Ways and Means Committee leaders detailing CMS' plan to move forward on pay-for-performance programs for Medicare providers. Separately, the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) has urged taking about 1 percent to 2 percent of current payments for physicians and other providers and redistributing it to caregivers who improve the quality of their care or meet quality benchmarks. http://www.cmwf.org/healthpolicyweek/healthpolicyweek_show.htm?doc_id=308284&#doc308288

In Congress, the Senate Finance Committee has included provisions to link Medicare payments to the quality of care provided, arguing that it will improve beneficiary care while lowering cost. http://www.kaisernetwork.org/daily_reports/rep_index.cfm?DR_ID=33246)

Kidney Paired Donation and Live Donor Renal Transplantation

A clinical study was conducted to determine the feasibility and effectiveness of kidney paired donation for the management of patients with incompatible donors. Twenty-two patients received transplants from incompatible live donors at Johns Hopkins Hospital with graft survival rates comparable to directed, compatible live donor transplants. If the results can be generalized, it could result in a large expansion of the donor pool. <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/294/13/1655?etoc>

A related article explores the importance of innovative efforts to increase organ donation. The number of candidates on the waiting list for a kidney transplant far exceeds the number of available deceased donor kidneys. Efforts to increase live donor transplants include using non-directed donors, extensive recipient desensitization protocols, paired organ exchange, and increasing the effectiveness of incompatible live donors. <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/294/13/1691>

Vaccine Proves Effective at Preventing Cervical Cancer

This experimental vaccine works by making people immune to two types of sexually transmitted virus, HPV-16 and HPV-18, that cause most cases of cervical cancer. The director of breast and gynecological cancer at the American Cancer society predicts the vaccine could prevent at least 70% of deaths globally from cervical cancer. The vaccine would require three shots over a six-month period of time, ideally in girls who have not yet become sexually active. <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/07/health/07vaccine.html?th&emc=th>

Second-Hand Smoke May Increase Risk for Leukemia

Canadian researchers found an excess risk of chronic lymphoid leukemia in those who were the most exposed to environmental tobacco smoke. In a study conducted of non-smokers who reported environmental tobacco smoke exposure for at least 75% of their lifetimes, the odds ratio

of chronic lymphoid leukemia was 2.3 for those with over 83 smoker-years of residential exposure and 2.4 for those with over 72 smoker-years of occupational exposure. <http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/513712>

IBM Vows to Protect the Privacy of Its Employees' Genetic Information

IBM announced a new work force privacy policy, promising not to use genetic information in hiring or in determining eligibility for its health care or benefits plans. This new policy is in response to the growing trend in medical research to focus on a person's genetic propensity for a disease in hopes of tailoring treatments to specific genetic needs. The U.S. Senate has passed, and the House is considering, a genetic information nondiscrimination bill.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/10/business/10gene.html?th&emc=th>

Gross National Happiness as a Gauge of Public Welfare

While most nations use the gross domestic product to measure progress and public welfare, Bhutan has decided to focus on its gross national happiness. Globally, a growing number of economists, social scientists, corporate leaders and bureaucrats are developing ways to measure access to health care, free time with family, conservation of natural resources, and other non-economic factors. Life expectancy in Bhutan increased by 19 years from 1984 to 1998, while household incomes remained among the world's lowest. King Jigme Singye Wangchuck expressed the need to ensure that prosperity is shared across society, and is balanced against preserving cultural traditions and protecting the environment.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/04/science/04happ.html?th&emc=th>

Nobel Prize Winning Discovery of Bacterium Linked to Ulcers

Dr. Barry J. Marshall and Dr. J. Robin Warren of Australia won the 2005 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine for discovering the bacterium *Helicobacter pylori*. Their discovery in the 1980's opposed the prevailing belief that psychological stress caused stomach ulcers. Through patient biopsies and self-experimentation, the two proved that *H. pylori* causes 90% of duodenal ulcers, 80% of gastric ulcers, and may lead to stomach cancer.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/04/science/04nobe.html?th&emc=th>

<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/514219?src=hp30.lead>

Bike Seat May Play Role in Sexual Impotence

Several studies conclude that poor bicycle saddle design and biking several hours per week can cause erectile dysfunction. In response to researchers' calls for safer saddle design, the bicycle industry has developed seats with cut-outs, splits in the back, and thick gel padding to alleviate pressure. Boston urologist Dr. Irwin Goldstein said that women cyclists have not been studied as much as male cyclist, but are likely to suffer the same types of injuries.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/04/health/nutrition/04bike.html>

1918 Flu Virus Found to Be Bird Flu

Scientists studied the lung tissue of three people who died in the 1918 pandemic. The flu virus was synthesized and injected into mice and human lung cells at the CDC. Unlike the pandemics of 1957 and 1968, which were caused by human flu viruses that had picked up a few genetic elements of bird flu, the 1918 pandemic was caused by bird flu that jumped directly to humans.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/06/health/06flu.html?th&emc=th>

President Bush proposed using the military to enforce quarantines in the event of an avian influenza epidemic.

<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/513969>

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/04/AR2005100400681_pf.html

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