

E-NEWS - November 2006

Vol. 6, No. 11

Department of Population Health Sciences

University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health

The UW Population Health Institute's E-News is delivered monthly. Check our web site for additional information and updates: <http://www.pophealth.wisc.edu/uwphi/index.html>. To subscribe or unsubscribe, reply to [Judy Knutson](#) with the word "subscribe" or "unsubscribe" in the subject line.

Information for E-news is compiled from several sources, including websites 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, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, *The New York Times*, *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*, *Milwaukee Business Journal*, *Wisconsin State Journal* and others.

In This Issue

State News

- \$4.25 Million Proposed to Improve Dental Access for Kids and Families
- WI Hospitals Quantify Charity Care and Community Benefit
- Regional Variation in Health Costs 30% within Wisconsin
- Report: Teen Childbearing in Wisconsin Costs Taxpayers \$156 Million Annually
- Wisconsin's Educational Achievement Gap Persists
- WI DHFS Awards \$12.6 Million Grant for Alcohol and Drug Program
- Wisconsin Hospital Association Pushes for Statewide Tobacco Ban on Hospital Campuses
- \$400,000 WisDot Grant to Improve Traffic and Pedestrian Safety in Milwaukee
- Free Breakfast Served in 27 Milwaukee Public Schools
- Care for Seniors and Disabled Adults Expanded in Wood County
- Slow Embrace of 'Consumer-Driven' Products, but Rates Higher in WI
- Wisconsin's Post-Election Legislative Changes; Nurse Robson Leads Senate Majority

Research and Program Tools

- The Long- Term Care Partnership Program: Briefing Materials
- Consumer Health Ratings Web Tool
- Expanded Country-Level Data on GlobalHealthFacts.org
- Health Care in America 2006 Survey

- GAO: "Problems Remain" with HPSA Primary Care Shortage Area Designation System

Events

- "Male Brain vs. Female Brain: Fact or Fiction": Nov. 16
- "Efficiency and Healthcare": Nov. 20
- "What Was the Clinton Health Plan? What Was Wrong with It?": Nov. 27
- "Race, Racism and Health": Dec. 4
- "Public Health Responses to Natural and Human Disasters: What We Can Learn from Sri Lanka": Dec. 6
- 15th Annual \$1,000 Rural Health Prize: April 15, 2007 Deadline

Reading Room

- Medicaid Spending Growth Near Record Low
- New Report Examines the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005
- Quality of Care and Racial Disparities in Medicare Health Plans
- Community Hospitals Margin Hits Record High
- In-House Health Clinics becoming More Common
- Report Attributes Much of Decrease in Cancer Death Rates to Reductions in Smoking
- Federal Guidelines to be Established for Physical Exercise
- Trail Users Twice as Likely to Get Recommended Amount of Exercise
- Diabetes is Now Diagnosed in 1 in 523 Young People
- Children Who Survive Cancer Highly Likely to Get Ill Later
- Scottish Smoking Ban Improves Bar Workers' Quality of Life

State News

\$4.25 Million Proposed to Improve Dental Access for Kids and Families

The Doyle Administration has proposed that \$4.25 million will be made available to counties, organizations, and oral health facilities to expand or create oral health programs for children, low-income families, seniors, and people with disabilities. This funding is an addition to the \$8.8 million for dental access included in the BadgerCare Plus proposal. The plan must be approved by the Joint Finance Committee, which will consider the proposal at a future meeting.

http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/journal_media_detail.asp?locid=19&prid=2367

WI Hospitals Quantify Charity Care and Community Benefit

The Wisconsin Hospital Association has launched a web site that places a dollar figure on the free health programs its member hospitals give to their respective communities. The site reports that 132 hospitals gave away more than \$900 million worth of free services in 2005. About \$158 million of that came in the form of true "charity care," which state law strictly defines as health care that providers give away knowing ahead of time they will not be paid. The report provides statewide figures. It does not break out community-services expenditures by individual hospitals.

The difference between the broader category of community benefits and the more precise definition of "charity care" is a key point of contention. Most hospitals are non-profit businesses, and receive broad tax exemptions based on their charitable activities. However, those charitable activities, if narrowly defined, often amount to just a few percent of overall budgets. Hospital representatives argue that their contribution to the community far exceed literal free health care to the poor. This reports' figures for hospital community contributions, for example, include reported underpayments by Medicaid.

Report: www.wiservepoint.org

Regional Variation in Health Costs 30% within Wisconsin

A new study by the Institute for One Wisconsin, a group that advocacy a "progressive" public policy, reports a nearly 30% cost variation between highest and lowest cost areas in Wisconsin, and over a 10% variation between the state average and the four highest cost metro areas. Building on earlier research, the analysis suggests that consolidation of health systems is major health insurance cost driver and that large buying pools may place downward pressure on health care costs. The data do not support the contention that cost shifting (the transfer of non-reimbursed costs for low Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement rates and charity care into insurance rates) is major factor in regional health insurance cost variation. Northwestern Wisconsin had the highest costs by region, followed by west-central and then southeastern Wisconsin. The Racine metro area had the highest cost, followed by the Chippewa Valley and then La Crosse. Milwaukee, which has been the focus of previous reports for high health care costs, ranked fourth.

http://advwisc.3cdn.net/170af59ed6e9822ac8_mzm6b9tcg.pdf

Report: Teen Childbearing in Wisconsin Costs Taxpayers \$156 Million Annually

A new national study released by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy reports that that teenage (age 19 and younger) childbearing in Wisconsin cost taxpayers (federal, state, and local) at least \$156 million in 2004 -- despite a 31% decline in Wisconsin's teen birth rate between 1991 and 2004. The study examined the costs to taxpayers associated both with teen parents and their children. Of these costs, 31% were federal costs and 69% were state and local costs. Most of the public sector costs of teen childbearing are associated with negative consequences for the children of teen mothers. In Wisconsin in 2004, annual taxpayer costs associated with children born to teen mothers included: \$23 million for public health care; \$38

million for child welfare; \$50 million for incarceration; and \$41 million in lost tax revenue due to decreased earnings over the children's career. There are also costs and savings associated with teen mothers and fathers of their children that are factored into the \$156 million total. The analysis, *By the Numbers: The Public Costs of Teen Childbearing*, is the first analysis of what teen childbearing costs in every state.

One –page fact sheet: http://www.teenpregnancy.org/costs/pdf/summary/WI_onepager.pdf

five-page report: http://www.teenpregnancy.org/costs/pdf/fact_sheet/WI_Final.pdf

press release: <http://www.teenpregnancy.org/costs/default.asp>

Wisconsin's Educational Achievement Gaps Persists

A report from the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation criticizes Wisconsin's efforts to close achievement gaps. Overall, the foundation gave Wisconsin a D- for the achievement record of low-income, African-American and Hispanic students; a D+ for its work on education reform; and a rating of "no progress" when it came to trends in achievement of students at the short end of the gaps. However, no state got better than a D+ when it came to student achievement for low-income and minority students, and the D+ Wisconsin got in school reform was actually in the middle of the pack.

<http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=522018>

Report: <http://www.edexcellence.net/foundation/global/index.cfm>

WI DHFS Awarded \$12.6 Million Grant for Alcohol and Drug Program

The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services was awarded a Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral and Treatment Grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the amount of \$12.6 million. The funding will be used for drug and alcohol screening of adolescents and adults during the next five years.

<http://www.thewheelerreport.com/releases/Oct06/Oct24/1024dhfsaldrscr.pdf>

Wisconsin Hospital Association Pushes for Statewide Tobacco Ban on Hospital Campuses

The Wisconsin Hospital Association, Madison, formally asked its 132 member hospitals to ban all tobacco from their entire campuses within the next year. Aurora Health Care's four hospitals in the Milwaukee area, Columbia St. Mary's, and Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare all ban smoking across their entire campuses already. The WHA's decision is a recommendation and not a binding requirement for its members.

http://milwaukee.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/stories/2006/10/23/daily16.html?jst=b_ln_hl

\$400,000 WisDot Grant to Improve Traffic and Pedestrian Safety in Milwaukee

A \$400,000 WisDot Transportation Enhancement grant will be used to improve pedestrian crossings near the Manitoba Elementary School and the Jackson Park neighborhood on

Milwaukee's South Side. Matching funds may be obtained from area businesses and the Cities of Milwaukee and Greenfield to redevelop the neighborhood business district in the Jackson Park/Mitchell Highlands area to attract walkers, bikers and public transit users.

<http://www.thewheelerreport.com/releases/Oct06/Oct11/1011zepnickwisdottraff.pdf>

Free Breakfast Served in 27 Milwaukee Public Schools

A new program makes breakfast free for all students in 27 Milwaukee Public Schools, regardless of income. Nationally, Wisconsin ranks last in providing low-income children with school breakfasts. After a pilot study last year in several MPS schools, organizers said benefits from this larger experiment could range from increasing student performance and lowering behavioral problems in the classroom to increasing the district's eligibility for federal and state aid. A big difference between this program and the one continuing in other MPS schools is that breakfast will be served in the classroom. Of the 27 schools participating, 26 are elementary schools.

<http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=519268>

Care for Seniors and Disabled Adults Expanded in Wood County

Lt. Governor Barbara Lawton announced \$2.4 million of new funding to expand a pilot program aimed at providing long-term support to qualified individuals in their own homes and communities, instead of nursing homes. The program, known as Family Care and funded by the state Health and Family Services Department along with federal matching funds, provides care for seniors and adults with disabilities who meet certain financial and functional requirements through care management organizations formed through the state and county aging and disability resource centers. It already has been successfully implemented in five counties, including Fond du Lac, La Crosse, Milwaukee, Portage and Richland.

<http://www.wisconsinrapidtribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20061003/WRT0101/610030549/1982>

Slow Embrace of 'Consumer-Driven' Products, but Rates Higher in WI

The *Milwaukee Business Journal* reports that, three years after health savings accounts were legalized and "consumer-driven" insurance products first rolled out, "the hype still far exceeds the actual impact on the market and corporate bottom lines, several recent independent studies have found. Nevertheless, advocates from the political and insurance worlds continue to have faith in the consumerism movement, promising that the broad economic shifts in health care they've promised will still develop, if more slowly than originally predicted." The articles does, however, note that about 7% of Wisconsin's work force is enrolled in HSAs, compared with 4% nationally.

<http://www.bizjournals.com/ct/c/22471359>

Wisconsin's Post-Election Legislative Changes; Nurse Robson Leads Senate Majority With Wisconsin's Senate turnover to Democratic leadership, so too will control of committees

and other leadership positions. The *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* provides this summary:
<http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=529317>

Research and Program Tools

The Long- Term Care Partnership Program: Briefing Materials

This Alliance for Health Reform briefing, held on November 09, 2006, provides materials and webcasts to answer questions associated with the Long-Term Care Partnership Program, supported by provisions in the 2005 Deficit Reduction Act. The Long-Term Care Partnership Program allows purchasers of private long-term care insurance to qualify eventually for Medicaid coverage of long-term care services without having to meet the same asset requirements as other Medicaid applicants. Partnership programs began in 1987 in four states – New York, California, Connecticut, and Indiana.

http://www.allhealth.org/briefing_detail.asp?bi=89

Consumer Health Ratings Web Tool

The site guides consumers to a library of online healthcare ratings on such topic categories as Physician Licensure and Board Certification, Hospital Quality Ratings, Health Insurance Plan Ratings, Nursing Home Quality, Cost Comparisons, and Directories for doctors, dentists, hospitals, and other healthcare facilities. An additional category directs consumers to information on common diseases and conditions that drive utilization and costs.

www.consumerhealthratings.com

Expanded Country-Level Data at GlobalHealthFacts.org

GlobalHealthFacts.org has expanded its country-level data with 40 new indicators across a wide range of areas and topics. The data are displayed in tables, charts, and color-coded maps and can be downloaded for custom analyses. Globalhealthfacts.org, operated by the Kaiser Family Foundation, provides free access to a range of global health information for all countries in the world, including key indicators for AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.

GlobalHealthFacts.org

Health Care in America 2006 Survey

The Health Care in America Survey is a nationally representative survey of 1,201 adults conducted from Sept. 7 to 12, 2006. According to the poll, conducted jointly by ABC News, the Kaiser Family Foundation and *USA Today*, one in four Americans say that they or a family member in their household had problems paying medical bills during the past 12 months. That's the highest share of Americans reporting a problem paying medical bills in a series of Kaiser surveys taken since 1997. Among those reporting a problem this year, nearly seven in 10 have health insurance. The report, along with a summary and chartpack, are available at:

<http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/pomr101606pkg.cfm>

“Problems Remain” with HPSA Primary Care Shortage Area Designation System

New report released in October by the U.S. Government Accountability Office

<http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-84>

Highlights - <http://www.gao.gov/highlights/d0784high.pdf>

EVENTS

"Male Brain vs. Female Brain: Fact or Fiction": Nov. 16

This one day training will focus on what brain research is telling us about gender differences from prenatal brain development through adolescence. This training opportunity will be offered on Thursday November 16, 2006 in Wisconsin Rapids at the Hotel Mead and Conference Center. For more details, training information and registration brochure email or call Jeanne Erickson at jerickson@wccf.org or 608-284-0580 ext 301.

“Efficiency in Healthcare”: Nov. 20

Harvey V. Fineberg, MD, PhD, Institute of Medicine President, will speak. The event is co-sponsored by the Health Innovation Program and the Robert Wood Johnson Health and Society Scholars Program. It will be held in room 1335 of the Health Sciences Learning Center from 12:00-1:00.

<http://www.pophealth.wisc.edu/seminar.htm>

“What Was the Clinton Health Plan? What Was Wrong With It?": Nov. 27

David Kindig, MD, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Population Health Sciences, University of Wisconsin-Madison will speak in room 1309 Health Sciences Learning Center, from 12:00-1:00.

<http://www.pophealth.wisc.edu/seminar.htm>

“Race, Racism and Health”: Dec. 4

David R. Williams, PhD, Norman Professor of Public Health, Harvard School of Public Health, and Professor of African and African American Studies and of Sociology, Harvard University, will speak in room 1335 Health Sciences Learning Center, from 12:00-1:00. The event is co-sponsored by the UW Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Health and Society Scholars Program.

<http://www.pophealth.wisc.edu/seminar.htm>

"Public Health Responses to Natural and Human Disasters: What We Can Learn From Sri Lanka." Dec. 6

The Center for Global Health Fall Seminar Series presents Rick Brooks. Following more than 20 years of civil war, over 36,000 people died and close to a million lost their homes in Sri Lanka in the tsunami of December 2004. Civil unrest has created 200,000 more refugees and many public health challenges. 1309 Health Sciences Learning Center, 5-6 p.m. Information: 262-3862, teigland@wisc.edu.

15th Annual \$1,000 Rural Health Prize - April 15 Deadline

The Hermes Monato, Jr. Prize of \$1,000 is awarded annually for the best rural health paper. It is open to all students of the University of Wisconsin. Students are encouraged to write on a rural health topic for a regular class and then to submit a copy to the Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative as an entry by April 15th. Previous award winners as well as judging criteria and submission information are available at <http://www.rwhc.com/Awards/MonatoPrize.aspx>

Reading Room

Medicaid Spending Growth Near Record Low

State revenues increased faster than Medicaid spending for the first time since 1998, according to a new 50-state survey released by the Kaiser Family Foundation's Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured (KCMU). The survey finds that an improved economy combined with the implementation of the new Medicare prescription drug benefit has contributed to a 2.8 percent growth rate in Medicaid spending for state fiscal year (FY) 2006 – the lowest rate of growth in a decade and the fourth consecutive year in which Medicaid spending growth has slowed. Looking forward to FY 2007, the survey finds a handful of states (5) plan to restrict eligibility while over half (26) plan to restore cuts from previous years, expand to new populations, or make positive changes to Medicaid's application and enrollment process.

<http://www.kff.org/medicaid/kcmu101006pkg.cfm>

New Report Examines the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005

A federal law enacted last year could either expand access or limit important Medicaid services for children and their families, a new Commonwealth Fund report finds. George Washington University researchers say that provisions in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 grant states flexibility to modify their Medicaid programs in ways that could negatively affect access to early childhood development services. At the same time, other provisions allow states to actually expand eligibility for Medicaid, thereby potentially serving more children. The new report, [The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005: An Overview of Key Medicaid Provisions and Their Implications for Early Childhood Development Services](#), discusses key parts of the legislation related to eligibility, cost-sharing, premiums, the benefit package, and targeted case management, including the latest guidance from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

http://www.cmwf.org/publications/publications_show.htm?doc_id=409144&#doc409144

Quality of Care and Racial Disparities in Medicare Health Plans

Researchers assessed variations among Medicare health plans in overall quality and racial disparity in 4 Health Plan Employer and Data Information Set (HEDIS) outcome measures, to determine whether high-performing plans exhibited smaller racial disparities, and to identify plans with high quality and low disparity. Clinical performance on HEDIS outcome measures was 6.8% to 14.4% lower for black enrollees than for white enrollees. For each measure, more than 70% of this disparity was due to different outcomes for black and white individuals enrolled in the same health plan rather than selection of black enrollees into lower-performing plans. Health plans varied substantially in both overall quality and racial disparity on each of the 4 outcome measures.

<http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/296/16/1998>

Community Hospitals Margin Hits Record High

Aggregate profits at community hospitals hit another all-time high last year at \$28.9 billion, up from 2004's record of \$26.3 billion, according to figures released by the American Hospital Association. Hospitals' aggregate profit margin was 5.3% in 2005, the highest margin in seven years.

<http://www.modernhealthcare.com>.

In-House Health Clinics becoming More Common

More U.S. companies are opening on-site health clinics to cut down on time away from desks for doctor visits. About one-quarter of Fortune 1000 companies are expected to have on-site clinics by the end of next year, compared with 15% that have them now. Services at in-house clinics can include physicals, allergy shots, pregnancy tests and general consultations, often with no copayments required. Freddie Mac, which hired Cleveland-based Whole Health to manage its wellness programs, has estimated savings of \$686,000 in direct costs last year. With added productivity from employees who are able to receive more convenient care, the company estimated savings at \$900,000.

<http://bcbshealthissues.com/proactive/newsroom/release.vtml?id=212832>

Report: Much Decrease in Cancer Death Rates due to Reduced Smoking

If smoking rates hadn't declined in the past 50 years, there would have been virtually no reduction in overall cancer mortality in recent years, according to an estimate from the American Cancer Society published in *Tobacco Control*. Men's death rate from cancer dropped 16% from 1991 to 2003, falling from 279 deaths per 100,000 to 234 per 100,000, according to the article. Even using conservative projections, researchers say, the trend of fewer men smoking cigarettes is responsible for about 40% of that decline — and 146,000 fewer lung cancer deaths among men.

Women have not yet experienced a dramatic drop in lung cancer death rates, according to the article, because smoking rates among women began to drop more recently than among men.

http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2006-10-03-smoke-efforts_x.htm

<http://tc.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/extract/15/5/345>

Federal Guidelines to be Established for Physical Exercise

The Bush administration plans to develop guidelines for physical activity by late 2008.

The government already makes recommendations about exercise: the new pyramid recommends 30 minutes of daily physical activity, 60 minutes to prevent weight gain and 90 minutes may be needed to sustain weight loss. The surgeon general issued a report in the mid 1990s that contained recommendations on exercise. Officials said the new guidelines, however, would establish a process where the best science on physical activity would be routinely evaluated.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20061027/ap_on_he_me/exercise_guidelines

Trail Users Twice as Likely to Get Recommended Amount of Exercise

People who walk, bike or hike local trails at least once a week are twice as likely to get the recommended amount of daily exercise as those who rarely hit the trails, a new study concludes. Yet nearly half of those who didn't use the trails said they would be in favor of more public places to exercise, and many even said they would be willing to pay more taxes to build more trails in their communities. The study appears in the November issue of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*.

<http://www.cfah.org/hbns/getDocument.cfm?documentID=1354>

Diabetes is Now Diagnosed in 1 in 523 Young People

About one in every 523 young people have been diagnosed with diabetes, according to the first comprehensive assessment of the disease in Americans under 20. That places diabetes among the more common chronic illnesses of youth, the researchers report, striking 1.82 children per 1,000, compared with 1.24 per 1,000 with cancer and 120 per 1,000 with asthma. The researchers found that diabetes is more common in non-Hispanic whites than in other ethnic groups, and that type 1 diabetes is the most common form in young people of all racial and ethnic groups, except for American Indians, in whom more than three-quarters of cases are type 2. The study also found that the average age of diagnosis was 8.4 years, and 96% of children under 10 with diabetes had type 1. Girls had a higher prevalence, at 1.88 per 1,000, than boys, at 1.77 per thousand.

http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/2006-10-01-diabetes-young_x.htm

Journal Article: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/118/4/1510>

Children Who Survive Cancer Highly Likely to Get Ill Later

As the first generation of patients to survive pediatric cancer nears middle-age, a new study finds that more than 73% of patients cured of pediatric cancer will develop a chronic illness within 30

years of diagnosis.

<http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/355/15/1522>

Scottish Smoking Ban Improves Bar Workers' Quality of Life

Scotland prohibited smoking in confined public places on March 26, 2006. Investigators studied the association of smoke-free legislation with symptoms, pulmonary function, and markers of inflammation of bar workers. Smoke-free legislation was associated with significant early improvements in symptoms, spirometry measurements, and systemic inflammation of bar workers. Asthmatic bar workers also had reduced airway inflammation and improved quality of life.

<http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/296/14/1742?etoc>