



E-NEWS – February 2008

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Department of Population Health Sciences

University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health

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STATE NEWS

Gov. Doyle Proposes BadgerChoice for Small Businesses Health Insurance Market

Governor Jim Doyle released a new proposal aimed at controlling costs in the health insurance market for small businesses. The plan would create a "virtual marketplace" where employers with less than 50 employees could compare and buy health insurance. Employers could allocate a defined contribution to an employee's health benefit, which the employee would use to choose a health plan through the BadgerChoice marketplace. The plan also includes new community rating, controlling the insurers' use of claims history to underwrite rates charged to small businesses.

<http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=710780>

<http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=713802>

Wisconsin Group Designated as U.S.' Second Chartered Value Exchange

Secretary Michael Leavitt of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has recognized a Wisconsin collaboration for its work to improve the quality and value of health care, and designated Wisconsin as a Chartered Value Exchange. The designation will provide Wisconsin with new information on the quality of care that physicians provide to patients and access to a nationwide learning network. The Wisconsin Healthcare Value Exchange is a multi-stakeholder collaborative founded by seven organizations: the Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality, Business Health Care Group, Employer Healthcare Alliance Cooperative (The Alliance), MetaStar, Wisconsin Health Information Organization, Wisconsin Hospital Association, and Wisconsin Medical Society. http://www.wchq.org/utility/news_020108.php
HHS press release: <http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2008pres/02/20080201a.html>

Community Partners Awarded \$447,142 for BadgerCare Plus Enrollment

As part of an initiative to help enroll children in Wisconsin's new BadgerCare Plus program—which started February 1, 2008—32 organizations have been awarded \$447,142 to support outreach and application assistance. Some of community partners will be capable of providing children with immediate, express enrollment into BadgerCare Plus. BadgerCare Plus offers access to coverage for all Wisconsin children.

<http://www.thewheelerreport.com/releases/Jan08/jan17/0117dhfscorrected.pdf>

State Injured Patients' Fund Experiences Cash Shortfall

The state fund for injured patients has experienced a cash shortfall following an October 29 transfer of \$71.5 million to help balance the state budget. The transfer, which will include another \$128.5 million during the fiscal year starting July 1, was a piece of the budget compromise approved in October. Although the fund had enough assets to cover the transfer, it was \$46.2 million short in cash following the transfer. The fund had \$831 million in assets as of September 30; however, accounting for future claims the fund's surplus in June 2006 was \$60 million. The transfer was intended to help balance the state budget and fund health care initiatives while holding down taxes.

<http://www.madison.com/wsj/home/local/267964&ntpid=1>

Wisconsin Dentists Donate Services for National Give Kids a Smile Anniversary

Roughly 316 Wisconsin dentists, alongside 760 dental hygienists and assistants, dental and hygiene students and their instructors, and community volunteers donated roughly \$763,350 in dental health care and education on February 1. The donation of services was part of an effort to recognize the sixth annual Give Kids a Smile national children's dental access day. The services were donated to approximately 5,433 of the state's low-income children. GKAS events in Wisconsin have donated approximately \$2.1 million in dental care since the initiation of the program.

<http://www.thewheelerreport.com/releases/Jan08/jan25/0125dentaldonate.pdf>

Senate Leaders Advocate Temporary Smoking Ban Exemption for Taverns

Senate Democratic leaders stated this past month that taverns should be exempted from the state smoking ban until July 2011. Senate leaders and anti-smoking groups did not settle on a compromise ready for a Senate vote at their most recent meeting. Governor Jim Doyle still supports a statewide smoking ban to begin on January 1, 2009.

<http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=713162>

Marshfield Study to Increase Activity Using Video Game Technology

Researchers at Marshfield Clinic are involved with a National Science Foundation funded research project to look at ways to increase physical activity through 'computer video game-like technology,' a project meant to acknowledge the strong popularity of video games with many age groups of the population, and utilize this understanding in creative methods geared towards health improvement. The research study is called NEAT-o-Games: Ubiquitous Activity-based Gaming.

<http://www.marshfieldclinic.org/patients/default.aspx?page=newsreleases&id=3475>

Madison Company Awarded \$100,000 Research Grant from NIH

A Madison developer of medical adhesives and coatings has received a \$100,000 Small Business Innovation Research grant from the National Institutes of Health. Nerites Corp. will use the funding to research its polymer coatings, which have the potential to prevent biofilm growth—considered to be the cause of most infections associated with urinary stents and catheters. The grant is being awarded from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases branch of the NIH.

<http://milwaukee.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/stories/2008/01/21/daily3.html?surround=lfm>

WI Lead Poisoning Testing for Medicaid Kids Fails Federal Standards

According to data analysis of a Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services database, 41% of the roughly 163,000 Wisconsin Medicaid covered children do not get tested for lead poisoning. Federal Medicaid rules require health plans administer lead tests for their Medicaid-enrolled children. Of the roughly 1,700 doctors who do provide care to Wisconsin's Medicaid covered children, not one of the doctors gave tests to Medicaid covered children 100% of the time from July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006. In 2006, statistics show that of Wisconsin children who test positive for danger lead levels, 88% are Medicaid enrolled. Wisconsin currently ranks sixth nationally for the number of childhood lead poisoning cases.

<http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=710765>

Wisconsin Counties Labeled with 'Red' Air Quality Index

This past December was the first time that the air quality index was red for a December day in Milwaukee, Waukesha, Racine, Kenosha, Jefferson and Dane counties. The State Department of Natural Resources labeled both December 20th and 21st 'red' days on the air quality index spectrum. Factoring into the alert was the fact that Wisconsin had opted for a stricter threshold, which is under consideration by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. On red alert days, it is recommended that all individuals lesson, or reschedule strenuous activities.

<http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=706451>

Froedtert's Petasnick named Chairman of American Hospital Association

William Petasnick, the chief executive of Froedtert & Community Health, is the chairman this year of the American Hospital Association, the nation's largest trade group for hospitals and health care systems. <http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=713756>

In other Milwaukee hospital news, Froedtert & Community Health and Columbia St. Mary's, both in Milwaukee, announced a joint operating agreement that will consolidate finances and

governance for two-hospital Froedtert and three-hospital Columbia St. Mary's under the name Progressive Health.

<http://www.froedtert.com/MediaRoom/MediaReleases/CurrentReleases/BoardsApproveProgressiveHealth.htm>

Milwaukee Health System Consolidations Limit Physician Referral Power

Over the past year, the Milwaukee area's two largest independent physicians groups became absorbed by hospital systems. Some believe that this trend, as it restricts where physicians refer their patients for hospital or specialty care, could reduce patients' choice of where they get medical treatment. The *Milwaukee Business Journal* reports that physicians will try to retain their hospital referral relationships across health care system boundaries.

<http://milwaukee.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/stories/2008/02/04/focus1.html?b=1202101200^1585134>

Dr. David Kindig Appointed to UW SMPH Partnership Fund Oversight Committee

David A. Kindig, MD, PhD, Emeritus Professor of Population Health Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH), has been appointed to the Oversight and Advisory Committee (OAC) of the Wisconsin Partnership Program. Dr. Kindig is recognized at both the local and national levels, as an expert on health policy, the health status of the public, rural health, state health programs, and equity in health services. The OAC is responsible for allocating funding towards community-based public health initiatives and provides advice on the uses of funds for medical education and research.

<http://www.pophealth.wisc.edu/newscontent.htm?ID=178>

UW Hospital and Clinics to Receive Stroke Care Achievement Award

The UW Hospital and Clinics will be recipient of the "Get with the Guidelines" Silver Performance Achievement Award, distributed by the American Stroke Association as recognition of consistent compliance, for at minimum one year, with the guidelines instated by the program. The program promotes aggressive use of certain medications and smoking cessation. UW Hospitals and Clinics will receive the award in February at the International Stroke Conference in New Orleans.

<http://www.uwhealth.org/page.asp?contentid=12711>

RESEARCH AND PROGRAM TOOLS

Evidence-Based Health Policy Project Materials on Public Health Preparedness

The UW Population Health Institute's Evidence-Based Health Policy Project, a partnership with Wisconsin Legislative Council and the LaFollette School of Public Affairs, continues to post new materials from recent forums and briefings that have been conducted at the state capitol. Newly available are materials from the January briefing on Public Health Preparedness.

<http://www.pophealth.wisc.edu/uwphi/publications/forums/events.htm>

Information Tools for Consumer Engagement and Value Purchasing

The UW Population Health Institute has published its January Issue Brief, titled "*Consumer Engagement*" and "*Value-Driven Health Care: Do We Have the Right Information Tools*."

http://www.pophealth.wisc.edu/uwphi/publications/issue_briefs/issue_brief_v08n01.pdf

RWJ Research Synthesis Report: Pay-for-Performance

The RWJ Foundation Synthesis Project released a new synthesis report this past month entitled “Paying for quality: Understanding and assessing physician pay-for-performance initiatives.” The synthesis report examines the extent of current interest in physician P4P, the prevalence and structure of current incentive programs, existing performance measurement concerns, physician perceptions of P4P programs, and current research evidence surrounding P4P.

<http://www.rwjf.org/files/research/no13synthesisreport.pdf>

“Relief, Restoration and Reform: Economic Upturn Yields Modest & Uneven Health Reforms”

The Center for Study Health System Change released a new issue brief highlighting the interaction between economic cycles and the impetus on the state level for health reform. The issue brief tracks interactions and resulting trends starting with 2001 through the present. Topics include “State Budget Cycles Hinder Stability for Safety Net Providers,” “Relief: Economic Recovery,” “Restoration: Rollback of Cuts,” “Reform: Ideas and Realities,” and “Future Expectations and Anxieties.”

<http://www.hschange.org/CONTENT/964/>

Web-Based Training Program to Help Patients Quit Smoking

A new web-based training program presented by Michael Fiore, MD, founder and 15-year director of the UW Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention, provides health care professionals with useful information to help their patients quit smoking. The webcast includes information about new medications, leading-edge methods and new patient resources.

http://www.wisconsinmedicalsociety.org/home/latest_news_physicians/#story22

Urban Institute Updates IOM’s Analysis of the Impact of Uninsurance on Mortality

The Urban Institute released a new report entitled “Updating the Institute of Medicine Analysis on the Impact of Uninsurance on Mortality.” The report updates the 2002 IOM estimate that 18,000 Americans died in 2000 because they were uninsured to the estimate that 137,000 people died from 2000 through 2006 because they were uninsured.

http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411588_uninsured_dying.pdf

AHRQ Video: Personal Health Records

AHRQ released a new video on personal health records this past month highlighting the importance of gathering personal information about medication, allergies and medical history that may not otherwise be easily accessible when it is needed by you or a new health care provider.

<http://www.ahrq.gov/consumer/phrvid.htm>

Statehealthfacts.org Updates Multiple Tools

Recent updates to Statehealthfacts.org include “Number of Infant Deaths, 2004” under Health Status, “Total Nonfederal Physicians, 2007” and “Number of Nursing Home Residents, 2006” under Providers & Service Use.

<http://www.statehealthfacts.org/whatsnew.jsp>

New and Updated Resources on Kaiser.EDU

Kaiser.EDU has created two new modules entitled “Military and Veterans Health Care Issue Module” and “Health Information Technology Issue Module.” The “U.S. Health Care Costs Issue Module” has also been updated.

Military & Veterans Health Care: www.kaiseredu.org/topics_im.asp?id=755&imID=1&parentID=61

HIT: www.kaiseredu.org/topics_im.asp?id=655&imID=1&parentID=70

Costs: www.kaiseredu.org/topics_im.asp?imID=1&parentID=61&id=358

Medicare Part D 2008 Data & Women’s Health Insurance

The KFF website has added two more ‘spotlights’ to its Medicare Part D 2008 Data Spotlights resource tool. “Utilization Management” and “Formularies” have been added as new spotlights, joining four other highlights: Specialty Tiers, Benefit Design, Premiums and The Coverage Gap.

<http://www.kff.org/medicare/med102507pkg.cfm>

The KFF website also includes an updated fact sheet under Women’s Health Policy entitled “Health Insurance Coverage of Women Ages 18 to 64, by State, 2005-2006.”

<http://www.kff.org/womenshealth/1613.cfm>

New Issue Brief on the Financing of Medicare

This new issue brief includes an overview of current Medicare financing procedures, expected future fiscal challenges for the program, and possible changes that could be implemented in the future given current trends. The issue brief also examines how some trends might be altered under specific policy proposals and potential impacts of such actions on national health care spending.

<http://www.kff.org/medicare/7731.cfm>

State Efforts to Expand Children’s Health Insurance

KFF has compiled a collection of resources detailing both the efforts of states over the past year to expand coverage, and the potential impact of the current status of SCHIP and the economy on state initiatives. Included among the highlighted topics are, “Health Coverage for Children and Families in Medicaid and SCHIP: State Efforts Face New Hurdles” and “Current Issues in Medicaid: A Mid-FY2008 Update Based on a Discussion with Leading Medicaid Directors.”

<http://www.kff.org/medicaid/kcmu012808pkg.cfm>

Interactive Medicare Tool and Releases New Report

KFF has updated its “Medicare Health and Prescription Drug Plan Tracker” with new data relevant for 2008, including information regarding Medicare Advantage plans. KFF also released a new report entitled “Do We Know if Medicare Advantage Special Needs Plans are Special?”

http://www.kaisernetwork.org/daily_reports/rep_index.cfm?DR_ID=50068

EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Coping with Climate Change

February 11, 2008: Monona Terrace Convention Center, Madison

Keynote Speakers Include: Rep. F. James Sensenbrenner, Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin, James J. “Jim” Hoecker, retired partner of the Washington, D.C. office of Vinson & Elkins, and the principal of new firm, Hoecker Energy, Law & Policy PLLC

Event is open to public. Individual tickets: \$75, includes two meals. Tables available for purchase, student discounts also available. Ticket Information: Jim Greer (608) 237-6296, greer@wispolitics.com

Additional Information: <http://www.wispolitics.com/index.iml?Article=115208>

Opportunities for Women's Health Research in a National Longitudinal Study

February 19, 2008: 8:00-9:00 a.m., Meriter Hospital, Second Floor Atrium 202 S. Park St.
Information: (608) 263-9770, judeebell@cwyr.wisc.edu

Dartmouth's Elliot Fisher: Exploring Spending, Supply & Health Outcomes

The Evidence-Based Health Policy Project will again host Dr. Elliot Fisher, Dartmouth Medical School, for a breakfast briefing at the capitol, titled, "A Pathway toward Health Care Reform: Exploring Spending, Supply and Outcomes." February 26, 2008 from 9-10:30 am, in room 300SE of the State Capitol. Contact Ceri Jenkins, Project Coordinator, to RSVP or for more details: cerijenkins@wisc.edu or 262-6318 or visit www.pophealth.wisc.edu/uwphi.

Wisconsin International Law Journal's 26th Annual Symposium

Dialogue on Cross-Border Health Care: Comparing the Changing Health Care Systems in the European Union and the United States

March 7, 2008: 8:30 am-5:45 pm

UW-Madison Health Sciences Learning Center - Room 1335

Further Information: <http://eucenter.wisc.edu/Conferences/WILJ/Dialogue%20on%20Cross-Border%20Health%20Care%20Flyer.pdf>

American Indian Health Sciences Day: Health is our Future

Produced by the Great Lake Inter-Tribal Council and the UW School of Medicine and Public Health. Hosted by the UW School of Pharmacy.

April 4, 2008: 11:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., UW-Madison, Commons, School of Pharmacy Building
<http://www.pophealth.wisc.edu/uwphi/education/conferences.htm>

Institute for Research on Poverty Seminar: The Size of Health Selection Effects

Alberto Palloni, Northwestern University and IRP Affiliate

Thursday May 1, 2008: 12:15-1:30 p.m. 8417 Sewell Social Science

Information: 262-6175, cwilliam@ssc.wisc.edu

Governor's eHealth Implementation Summit

Annual Summit of the Wisconsin eHealth Care Quality and Patient Safety Board.

Note change of Date: Thursday, June 12, 2008. Location TBD

<http://ehealthboard.dhfs.wisconsin.gov>

READING ROOM

Are Individual Health Insurance Mandates Needed for Successful Reform?

Many reform proposals being discussed at the state level and in the presidential campaigns include mandates that individuals must obtain health insurance. Others would make participation in insurance programs voluntary, but create new ways to encourage people to obtain insurance.

In this brief, Urban Institute authors delineate the reasons why an individual mandate is essential to achieving universal coverage. In so doing, we discuss why it is critical that individual mandate proposals specifically address the affordability of adequate health insurance coverage and develop fair and effective ways to enforce the mandate.

<http://www.rwjf.org/files/research/uimandates012008.pdf>

IOM Report to Determine “What Works in Health Care”

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) has released a report that provides a blueprint for a national clinical effective assessment program. One of the committee’s key recommendations is that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services create a single entity (the Program) with the authority, resources and capacity to: (1) set priorities for evidence assessment; (2) assess evidence (systematic review); and (3) develop or endorse standards for evidence-based clinical practice guidelines. A single, public database gauging the effectiveness of drugs and health service could help eliminate spending on ineffective treatments and reduce annual health spending.

<http://www.rwjf.org/newsroom/newsreleasesdetail.jsp?productid=25351>

President Bush’s State of the Union Addresses Multiple Health-Related Issues

President Bush’s State of the Union addressed multiple health related issues, including a call to Congress to approve a five-year extension and \$30 billion in funds for the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, to increase support for physical sciences research, and to address multiple other issues. President Bush also addressed topics such as health care tax breaks, a cloning ban, and market competition-based health care reform.

http://www.kaisernetwork.org/daily_reports/rep_index.cfm?DR_ID=50088

House Fails to Overturn SCHIP Expansion Veto a Second Time

SCHIP expansion legislation met a second failure late this past month when the House fell 15 short of votes needed to override President Bush’s veto of the expansion legislation. Democrats in the House are expected to reexamine SCHIP later this year, possibly in the legislation geared towards reversing the mandate that states must cover 95% of low-income children prior to providing coverage to families that are higher-income.

http://www.kaisernetwork.org/daily_reports/rep_index.cfm?DR_ID=49999

National Health Spending Tops \$2 Trillion

The *New York Times* recently reported that national health spending topped \$2 trillion for the first time in 2006. The new high represents an average spending of \$7,000 per person and also means that national health spending has almost doubled over the past 10 years. The overall increase for health spending in 2006 was 6.7 percent.

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/08/us/08health.html?_r=1&ref=policy&oref=slogin

FDA Aims to Improve Imports Quality by Posting Inspectors Overseas

The FDA is now aiming to station inspectors at embassies and consulates in developing countries, in order to help improve the quality of food and medicines exported to the United States. The FDA does currently send inspectors to dozens of countries each year to inspect pharmaceutical plants and clinical trial sites, however this new initiative is intended to create continuity in the presence of FDA inspectors overseas.

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/25/business/25fda.html?_r=1&ref=policy&oref=slogin

Major Health Insurers Plan to End Reimbursement for Specified Medical Errors

Major health insurers, including Aetna Inc. and WellPoint Inc., are joining efforts to refuse reimbursement for care resulting from serious medical errors. This is just one piece of a growing trend initiated by the decision of the federal Medicare program to stop reimbursing care for bed sores, falls, and six other preventable injuries and infections that occur in the hospital setting. UnitedHealth Group Inc., Cigna group and the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association are also considering similar or related options.

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB120035439914089727.html?mod=home_health_right

Doctors Believe Reporting Medical Errors Would Improve Patient Safety

A recent report funded by AHRQ has found that a majority of physicians believe that reporting medical errors to their health care organization would help in the provision of safer patient care. The same report also revealed that doctors prefer to discuss errors and mistakes in informal settings with their colleagues as opposed to reporting them risk management or patient safety programs. The study noted the implications of these perspectives and obstacles currently faced in error reporting and patient safety improvement.

http://www.commonwealthfund.org/healthpolicyweek/healthpolicyweek_show.htm?doc_id=652970&#doc652985

Innovative Pay for Performance Initiatives Highlighted

Two new pay for performance initiatives add to the growing interest in value purchasing. CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield will provide physicians with up to a 7% payment increase for adhering to specified quality standards. At the same time, a conglomerate of large employers including General Electric, IBM and Verizon Communications is initiating a Bridges to Excellence program that will provide bonuses to physicians who focus on integrated care coordination.

http://www.kaisernetwork.org/daily_reports/rep_index.cfm?DR_ID=49894
http://www.kaisernetwork.org/daily_reports/rep_index.cfm?DR_ID=50147