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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/news.htm>. To subscribe or unsubscribe, reply to [Judy Knutson](mailto:jknutson@pophealth.wisc.edu) 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*, Wisconsin Technology Network and others.

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STATE NEWS

[Survey: Consumer-driven health plans growing in popularity in Wisconsin](#)

The Milwaukee Business Journal reports on a new survey by employee-benefit advisory company United Benefit Advisors Inc. that shows participation in consumer-driven health plans is becoming an increasingly popular health insurance option in Wisconsin.

[Milwaukee Business Health Care Group Sees Cost Savings](#)

Members of the Business Health Care Group, an organization dedicated to reducing health care costs, saw actual medical costs rise in 2007, that growth was still lower than the average increase seen across the Milwaukee market.

[Family Care Program Launched in Dodge County](#)

Dodge County has joined 19 other Wisconsin counties in launching the Family Care Program, which uses Medicaid dollars to support long-term care, but allows individuals to receive care through community-based alternatives as opposed to nursing home care. The Family Care program is set to reach at least 35 counties by the start of 2009.

[New Pharmacy School at Concordia University Receives \\$1M Donation](#)

Concordia University of Mequon was the recipient of a \$1 million donation from Shopko. Concordia hopes to open the new school by 2010, and will need about \$20 million. The UW-Madison currently has Wisconsin's only pharmacy school. The program in Madison graduates roughly 130 students per year, although applications to the program typically range between 300 to 400 students each year.

[BadgerCare Plus Healthy Living Grants Awarded to Six HMOs across State](#)

BadgerCare Plus awarded six Healthy Living Grants for pilot projects designed to improve overall health and healthy behavior choices of BadgerCare plus members. The six pilot projects, scheduled to run through March 31, 2010, will target the following goals: a greater amount of well-child visits, better birth outcomes, a decrease in smoking, and a decrease in childhood obesity.

[Hearings Begin on \\$200 Million Transfer from Medical Malpractice Fund](#)

Hearings progressed this past month to determine the fate of the \$200 million transferred from the Patients Compensation Fund to balance the state budget. The Wisconsin Medical Society is contesting the action, arguing that state legislatures did not possess the authority to utilize resources available in the fund, which is paid in by doctors.

[Marshfield, CMS Demonstration Project Show Positive Outcomes](#)

Wisconsin's Marshfield Clinic was one of 10 groups in the CMS Physician Group Practice (PGP) Demonstration project, which has demonstrated an improvement in the quality of care provided to patients for congestive heart failure, coronary artery disease, and diabetes mellitus. CMS awarded \$16.7 million in incentive payments under the two-year demonstration project.

[Grant Community Clinic Highlighted by Commonwealth Fund](#)

Grant Community Clinic has been selected as one of 12 primary care practices from a sample of over 2,000 to be included in a Commonwealth Fund case study project that aims to analyze high-performing, patient-centered primary care practices.

[Survey Finds Active Health Information Technology Implementation in Hospitals](#)

The Wisconsin Hospital Association released a new [report](#) showing that Wisconsin hospitals are actively pursuing health information technology (HIT) adoption. Almost 90% of Wisconsin hospitals have begun to utilize—either partially or fully—at least five key health information technologies.

[WiCell Research Institute Creates Second Stem Cell Bank at UW-Madison](#)

A second stem cell bank has been opened in Madison by the UW-Madison affiliated WiCell Research Institute. Since 2005, the WiCell Research Institute has been home to the National Stem Cell Bank, which is the official holding site of the 21 stem cell lines that have been approved for federal funding. The [new WiCell Bank](#) will also enable the storage and distribution

of other cell lines developed other places or at UW, as well as other embryonic stem cell lines that do not have federal funding approval.

Six WI Counties Violate EPA's New Fine-Particle Pollution Limits

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) indicated that six counties in Wisconsin are in violation of newly revised federal standards for fine-particle pollution. The counties designated as violating the federal standard are Milwaukee, Waukesha, Racine, Dane, Columbia and Brown counties.

Department of Natural Resources to Hold Steady on Mercury-Emissions Regulation

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) [announced](#) that it would not alter the current standards under its mercury-emissions rule. The emissions rule limits the amount of certain pollutants that can be released by coal-burning power plants; mercury emissions are known to fall on water and can contaminate fish. Concerns had circulated around these regulations due to the cost of implementing the cuts.

RESEARCH AND PROGRAM TOOLS

Seeing Red: The Growing Burden of Medical Bills and Debt Faced by U.S. Families

The 2007 Commonwealth Fund Biennial Health Insurance Survey reports that the percent of working-age Americans medical bill troubles or accumulated medical debt has increased to 41%, up from 34% in 2005. The report also shows an additional 7 million adults age 65 and older also experience difficulties relating to medical bills and accumulated medical debt.

How the Loss of Adequate Health Insurance Is Burdening Working Families

Further data from the Commonwealth Fund Biennial Health Insurance Survey indicate an increase in the proportion of income spent on health care, difficulties paying medical bills, more avoiding of needed care due to high cost, and coverage gaps resulting in inefficient care.

Kaiser Health Tracking Poll: Election 2008—August 2008

This poll reports on the number Americans experiencing difficulty paying for health care, as well as the portion of Americans indicating that health care is more or less of a concern than paying for food, debt problems, rent or mortgage payments, paying for gas, or level of income. The tracking report also examines how some poll responses vary by level of health status and level of need.

New Resources from the Center for Studying Health System Change (HSC)

New resources released by HSC over the past month included a tracking report entitled, "[Striking Jump in Consumers Seeking Health Care Information](#)," and a new research brief, "[A Health Plan Work in Progress: Hospital-Physician Price and Quality Transparency](#)."

New AHRQ 2006 Statistics on Hospital-based Care in the United States

Data include inpatient hospital stays by diagnosis, inpatient hospital stays by procedure, spending for inpatient hospital stays, and priority conditions. Data in this report originates from the 2006 HCUP Nationwide Inpatient Sample (NIS); the database includes patient discharge records from a sample of approximately 1,000 hospitals.

[Statehealthfacts.org New Data Tools](#)

Updates are available for the following topics: Total number of retail prescription drugs sold at pharmacies, 2007; Cancer Incidence rate, 2004; Child Death Rate, 2005; Infant Mortality rate, 2003-05; Number of Infant Deaths, 2005; Death Rate, 2006; AIDS Drug Assistance Programs with Waiting Lists or Other Cost-Containment Strategies, 2008

EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Smoking Cessation in Clinical Trials and Public Health Studies: A Research Ethical Imperative

Marty Kanarek, PhD, Professor of Population Health Sciences and the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, UW-Madison
September 15, 2008: 12:00-1:00 pm; 1309 Health Sciences Learning Center

20th Annual Colloquium on Aging

Understanding Healthy Aging: Contributions from MIDUS
September 16, 2008: 8:30 am, Monona Terrace
Information: (608) 262-1818; aging@ssc.wisc.edu

Systems Engineering Initiative for Patient Safety - SEIPS

Workarounds in Hospitals: Impact on Nurses and Patients
Dr. Jonathon R. B. Halbesleben, Ph.D., Research and Quality, National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, and the Department of Defense.
Thursday, September 18th , 4:00 – 5:00 PM
Rm 1309 Health Sciences Learning Center, UW-Madison

2008 WHA Annual Convention: Health Care's New Playing Field

September 17-19, 2008
KI Convention Center, Green Bay, WI

Diagnosing a Policy Fix to U.S. Health Care: the Future of Health Care Policy

September 19, 2008: 8:00 am – 1:15, tentative schedule
Alliant Energy Center, Madison, Wisconsin
Ticket Information: Jim Greer, (608) 237-6296, greer@wispolitics.com

Neighborhood Physical Activity and Youth Overweight and BMI

Sandy Slater, PhD, Senior Research Specialist, Institute for Health Research and Policy, University of Illinois at Chicago
September 22, 2008: 12:00-1:00 pm
1309 Health Sciences Learning Center, UW-Madison

Health Care and New Governance, the Quest for Effective Regulation

September 23, 2008: 12:00 noon; Conference Room, La Follette School of Public Affairs
Information: (608) 262-3038, shelton@lafollette.wisc.edu

The Nursing Agenda for Health Care Reform

Keynote Lecture: Rebecca M. Patton, president of the American Nurses Association
September 26, 2008: 8:00 am-12:00 noon; Medical Alumni Hall, Health Sciences Learning Center, UW-Madison
Information: (608) 265-2936, lsimonds@wisc.edu

18th Annual Worksite Wellness Conference

September 30, 2008, Marriot Madison West, Middleton, WI
Seeking Higher Returns: Taking Your Program to the Next Level

Health Care Reform in America: Lessons Learned from the Oregon Health Plan

Dr. John Saultz, Department of Family Medicine, Oregon Health Sciences University
October 1, 2008: 4:00 pm
1309 Health Sciences Learning Center UW-Madison

The Politics of Population Health Policy

Dan Fox, PhD, Past President, Milbank Memorial Fund
October 6, 2008; 12:00-1:00 pm; 1309 Health Sciences Learning Center, UW-Madison

Sleep Need and Sleep Loss: From Laboratory Findings to American Time Use

David Dinges, PhD, Professor and Chief, Division of Sleep and Chronobiology; Director, Unit for Experimental Psychiatry, Department of Psychiatry, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine; Editor-in-Chief, *Sleep*
October 13, 2008; 12:00-1:00 pm; 1309 Health Sciences Learning Center, UW-Madison

The Impact of Fatness on Disability Insurance Application by the Non-Elderly

Maximilian Schmeiser, School of Human Ecology, UW-Madison
October 30, 12:15-1:30 pm: 8417 Sewell Social Sciences
Information: (608) 262-6175, cwilliam@ssc.wisc.edu

Health Insurance and School Lunch: Covering Poor Kids and Families

Roberta Riportella, School of Human Ecology and School of Medicine and Public Health, IRP Affiliate
November 13, 12:15-1:30 pm: 8417 Sewell Social Sciences
Information: (608) 262-6175, cwilliam@ssc.wisc.edu

READING ROOM

Medical Homes Model Reduces Costs, Hospitalizations

A [study](#) published in this month's Health Affairs reports that, through innovations like patient-centered medical homes, chronic disease management, and bundled payment of acute-care episodes, Geisinger Health System in Pennsylvania is improving its quality of care and achieving better outcomes for patients, while at the same time lowering costs and increasing value.

CMS Makes Additions to Medicare No Pay List; Take Effect Oct. 1

CMS [announced](#) that, as of October 1, hospitals will no longer be reimbursed for the treatment of additional 'preventable' conditions, join the current list already implemented.

CMS Will Not to Enforce Financial Penalty under August 17 SCHIP Directive

The Bush Administration announced that it would be more lenient with respect to its August 17, 2007 directive on the State Children's health Insurance Program. States that had expanded SCHIP to children in families with an income over 250% of the federal poverty level are affected by the directive, which would require states to enroll 95% of children eligible for Medicaid before extending coverage to children from higher-income families.

CMS to Begin New Personal Health Record Pilot Program in January 2009

CMS has [announced](#) a new pilot program to help give Medicare beneficiaries the opportunity to access their medical records and treatment plans electronically. The pilot program is set to last for one year and will begin in both Arizona and Utah starting in January 2009.

Life Expectancy Disparities Grow

Life expectancy has grown for all Americans in recent decades, but the gains have been increasingly uneven and dependant on income, according to a [short analysis](#) published in July by the Economic Policy Institute.

CDC Releases New Estimates of HIV Incidence Rate in the United States

The CDC has released new estimates that approximately 56,300 new HIV infection occurred in the US in 2006, representing a 40% increase over the estimate of 40,000 per year previously used by CDC. The CDC indicated that the previous incidence rate was likely never as low as the previously estimated.

CDC Report Shows Increase in Emergency Department Visits and Wait Times

CDC reports that emergency department visits in the US increased by 36% from 1996 to 2006. Corresponding to the increase in visits has been a drop in the number of emergency departments in the United States and an increase in the average emergency department wait time from 38 minutes in 1997 to 56 minutes in 2006 (median 31 minutes).

Census Report Shows Decrease in U.S. Residents Uninsured

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that the number and percent of uninsured U.S. residents decreased to 45.7 million (15.3% of the population) in 2007 down from 47 million (15.8%) in 2006. Insurance status varies significantly by race: in 2007 32.1% of Hispanics, 19.5% of blacks, 16.8% of Asian-Americans and 10.4% of whites were uninsured. The Commonwealth Fund [reports](#) that this decline of 1.3 million uninsured people was exactly equal to the growth in coverage under Medicaid. Journal Sentinel [perspective](#).

FDA Allows Irradiation of Fresh Spinach and Iceberg Lettuce

The Food and Drug Administration will now allow food producers to irradiate fresh spinach and iceberg lettuce at a level high enough to kill microorganism like E. coli and salmonella. Irradiation of beef, eggs, poultry, oysters and spices is already allowed.