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Department of Population Health Sciences

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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

[Humana Agrees to Pay \\$750,000 Million Settlement to State](#)

Humana will pay Wisconsin \$750,000 in order to settle allegations regarding its Medicare plan marketing activities, while denying wrongdoing. Humana was accused of using agents who were not properly licensed to sell its Medicare health and prescription drug plans, and violating other insurance regulations. The settlement marks the second largest forfeiture in the State's history.

[BadgerCare Plus Expansion Expected to Cost Additional \\$25 Million this Year](#)

The BadgerCare Plus program expansion is now expected to cost an additional \$25 million this year. Since the program's initiation in mid-January, 85,400 children and parents have signed up, which is three times the original projections. 85% of the new enrollees have lower incomes that would have qualified for BadgerCare prior to the eligibility expansion.

[CMS Lists Four Wisconsin Nursing Homes as Having Chronic Quality Problems](#)

CMS cites four nursing homes in Wisconsin for chronic quality problems. There are a total of 133 nursing homes across the nation on the government list. Despite the negative news, three of these four nursing homes, were indicated to have "shown improvement," these three are located in Middleton, Sun Prairie and Columbus. The fourth, a nursing home in Marinette, had "not improved."

WI HMO Transparency Pledge Fully Implemented

All 17 members of the Wisconsin Association of Health Plans have implemented procedures to provide estimates of out-of-pocket health care costs to enrollees who request them. The development is consistent with the written commitment made by the plans in May 2008, in which they agreed to provide the estimates to help consumers make more informed health care decisions. The pledge applies to the plans' commercial enrollment as well as their BadgerCare Plus enrollees who may have out-of-pocket expenses.

Family Health Care Premiums in WI Rose 4.8 Times Faster Than Earnings from 2000-07

Families USA reports that, in the period from 2000 to 2007, family health care premiums in the state of Wisconsin increased 4.8 faster than earnings for workers. This most recent Families USA report updates its report released in 2006.

Governor Doyle Announces New Worksite Wellness Award

Governor Doyle has announced a new award program created to recognize employers that create a work environment that enables workers to lead a healthy lifestyle. The Worksite Wellness Award was designed by the [Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Health](#).

Family Care Launched in Jefferson County

Family Care, a Medicaid funded program that provides greater flexibility in access to health and long-term care services for individuals with disabilities and seniors, expanded to Jefferson County early this past month Family Care is currently offered in 21 of the State's counties.

WHA Posts New Quality Indicators on CheckPoint Web Site

The Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) released several new quality indicators on its web site [CheckPoint](#) this past month. Wisconsin now has the largest, most expansive voluntary public reporting initiative in the nation, which includes more than 70 quality measures. The new quality indicators include volume measures, which indicate how many times a procedure has been performed by a hospital, and patient outcomes measures.

WHA and WHIAC Begin "Fair Share for Health Care" Campaign

The Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) and the Wisconsin Hospitals Issue Advocacy Council (WHIAC) launched a new campaign this past month in order to increase awareness regarding Medicaid payment levels and the repercussion this has on overall health care costs in the State. Wisconsin ranks low in the country in terms of the federal dollars drawn in for hospital Medicaid payments. Currently, approximately \$650 million in unpaid Medicaid hospital costs are shifted to other payers in the health system, contributing to increases in health care prices to others.

WI Selected to Participate in Criminal Justice/Mental Health Leadership Initiative

Wisconsin, along with three other states, has been selected by the Council of State Governments (CSG) to take part in a new project geared at improving how the criminal justice system responds to individuals with mental illness. A statewide task force, led by WI Supreme Court Chief Justice will consider appropriate opportunities to divert persons with mental illnesses into treatment rather than the criminal justice system.

WHA's Standard Patient ID System Going National

The American Hospital Association (AHA) recommends that all hospitals standardize to the same color-coded system for patient identification that the Wisconsin Hospital Association adopted in June. Standardization is intended to reduce medical errors. Currently 20 hospitals in Wisconsin have moved to use of the new system, and WHA hopes to reach 100 percent compliance by March 1, 2009.

Department of Health Services Announces \$3.2 Million for Oral Health Services

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services has announced that \$3.2 million in grants will be put towards efforts to increase the availability of oral health services for BadgerCare Plus members. The Department is calling for submission of grant proposals from those desiring to participate in the initiative. Proposals are due to the Department by 3:00 pm on Friday, October 24.

RESEARCH AND PROGRAM TOOLS

GAO Reports Highlight Dental Disease, HIT, and the Health Center Program

Below are reports of particular interest released by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) during the month of September; provided links access GAO Highlights:

- [Extent of Dental Disease in Children Not Decreased, and Millions Are Estimate to Have Untreated Tooth Decay](#)
- [HHS Has Taken Important Steps to Address Privacy Principles and Challenges, Although More Work Remains](#)
- [Many Underserved Areas Lack a Health Center Site, and the Health Center Program Needs More Oversight](#)

Urban Institute: Analyses of Presidential Health Care Proposals

In depth analyses of the health care proposals of both presidential candidates are now available from the Urban Institute Health Policy Center site. Analyses of the [McCain Health Care Proposal](#) and the [Obama Health Care Proposal](#) are both available separately in full analysis and summary form.

Health Care Proposals of the 2008 Democratic and Republican Presidential Nominees: Implications for Improving Access, Affordability and Quality for America's Minorities

This recently published released report by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies examines the health care plans of the major presidential candidates with particular focus on the impact each plan would have on reducing the racial and ethnic disparities in the United States.

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

New resources released by HSC over the past month include a new tracking report entitled [Trade-Offs Getting Tougher: Problems Paying Medical Bills Increase for U.S. Families, 2003-2007](#), and a new issue brief: [Despite Regulatory Changes, Hospitals Cautious in Helping Physicians Purchase Electronic Medical Records](#).

AHRQ: [Advances in Patient Safety: New Directions and Alternative Approaches](#)

This new AHRQ resource presents 115 articles in the following 4-volume format: (1) assessment; (2) culture and redesign; (3) performance and tools; and (4) information technology and medication safety. The new collection serves as a complement to AHRQ's 2005 *Advances in Patient Safety: From Research to Implementation*.

[Statehealthfacts.org New Data Tools](#)

Updates are available for the following topics: Distribution of Total Population by FPL, States and U.S.; Total Residents, States and U.S.; Percentage Point Change among Nonelderly by Coverage Type; Distribution of the Nonelderly Uninsured, States and U.S.; Health Insurance Coverage of the Total Population, States and U.S.; Medicare Enrollees by Age; Total Black Population; and Total Number of Nursing Home Residents.

New KFF Issue Brief and Fact Sheets

- [Medicare Advantage Fact Sheet](#)
- [Prescription Drug Trends Fact Sheet](#)
- [Medicare Spending and Financing Fact Sheet](#)
- [Spotlight on Low-Income Uninsured Young Adults: Causes & Consequences](#)

EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

[Newborn Screening for Severe Combined Immune Deficiency](#)

WI State Lab of Hygiene Scientific Seminar:

Dr. Mei Baker, UW-Madison Assistant Professor of Pediatrics

October 16, 2008: Noon – 1 PM

WI State Laboratory of Hygiene, 465 Henry Mall (corner of Linden and Henry Mall)

Reforming American Diets: Historical Perspectives on Major Dietary Changes

Susan E. Lederer, PhD, Chair, Department of Medical History and Bioethics, UW-Madison

October 20, 2008; 12:00-1:00 pm: 1309 Health Sciences Learning Center, UW-Madison

[Risk Based Regulation and Food Safety](#)

Lorna Zach, PhD, Center for Human Performance and Risk Assessment, UW-Madison

October 21, 2008; 11:00 am: 2511 Microbial Sciences, UW-Madison

Contact Information: (608) 265-8038, wage@intl-institute.wisc.edu

Children's Health Lecture

Negative Effects of Pollutants on Children's Psychological Development, Colleen Moore, PhD, Psychology and Kinesiology, UW-Madison

Social and Physical Environmental Determinants of Childhood Asthma, Sheryl Magzamen, PhD, RWJ Scholar, Population Health Sciences, UW-Madison

October 24, 2008; 12:00-1:15 pm: 5120 Grainger Hall, 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

Eliminating Disparities in Birth Outcomes in Wisconsin: Current Trends and Future Approaches

Sheri Johnson, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Medical College of Wisconsin and Murray Katcher, MD, PhD, Clinical Professor of Pediatrics, University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health; and Chief Medical Officer for Community Health Promotion, Wisconsin Division of Public Health

November 3, 2008; 12:00-1:00: 1309 Health Sciences Learning Center, UW-Madison

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

A Collective Turn in Biomedicine: New Configurations of Practice and New Forms of Objectivity in the Era of Genomics

Alberto Cambrosio, PhD, Dept. of Sociology; Chair, Social Studies of Medicine, McGill University

November 13, 2008, 4:00-5:00 pm: 8417 Sewell Social Sciences, UW-Madison

General Information: <http://sts.wisc.edu/events/cambrosio2008.html>

Contact Information: (608) 262-5956, sts@ssc.wisc.edu

READING ROOM

[New Rules to Regulate Marketing of Medicare Advantage & Prescription Drug Plans](#)

CMS has issued a new set of rules regulating how insurance companies, agents and brokers can market both Medicare prescription drug plans and Medicare Advantage plans. The rules will become mandatory starting October 1, 2008. The new rules will also change the structure of commission for sales agents.

[President Bush Signs Legislation Expanding ADA Protections](#)

President Bush has signed legislation that will increase the protections provided by the America with Disabilities Act (ADA). ADA was first applied in 1990; in 1999 and 2002 the Supreme Court ruled that ADA does not apply to individuals who can use medications, medical devices or prosthetics to compensate for the disabilities. The newly signed legislation indicates that the Supreme Court rulings excluded individuals from ADA protection that Congress had originally sought to include.

Director of NIH Announces Plans to Step Down

The director of the National Institutes of Health, Dr. Elias A. Zerhouni, announced plans this past month to step down from his current position at the end of October. Dr. Zerhouni served as director for six years, and was best known for prohibiting agency scientists from consulting for drug makers. Deputy Director of NIH, Raynard S. Kington, will likely serve as the interim director for the rest of the Bush administration.

Study Finds 2% of U.S. Medical Students Intend to Enter General Internal Medicine

A study published this past month in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reports that two percent of medical students surveyed intended to enter the field of general internal medicine. Reasons cited for the medical students' preferences included income and work hours, but not amount of debt. General internists provide a large portion of the care received by the chronically ill and the elderly; the number of elderly U.S. residents has been projected to almost double between 2005 and 2030.

Comparative Effectiveness: Better Value for the Money?

This new Issue Brief, sponsored by the RWJF and prepared by the Alliance for Health Reform, reviews comparative effectiveness research and its prospect of cutting costs while improving the quality of health care. What exactly do comparative effectiveness studies compare? What research of this type is already underway in the U.S. and in other countries? What could we do to stimulate more of it?