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**Population Health Institute, 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](#) 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

[Hospital Assessment Plan Updated](#)

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services has released a new version of the hospital assessment that is designed to generate \$275 million and leverage \$393.6 million in additional federal matching funds. The program would be retroactive to July 1, 2008. In the current fiscal year, the funds would be allocated as follows: \$477 million for hospital Medicaid rate increase, \$12.7 million for childless adult coverage, \$179 million to support the Medicaid budget, and \$750,000 for hospital supplements.

[DHS Secretary Timberlake's letter](#), [WI Hospital Association statement](#)
[Anticipated effect on Milwaukee area hospitals](#).

Wisconsin Hospital Tax-Exempt Status Scrutinized

The *Wisconsin State Journal*, in a three-day series, reviewed the questions surrounding the provision of charity care by Wisconsin hospitals and questions about the community benefits relative to the hospitals' tax exempt status. Read the [first](#) and [second](#), and [third](#) articles.

[Report: UW Must Graduate More Nurses](#)

Nursing programs within the University of Wisconsin System must expand in order to avoid a future nursing shortage, a new report commissioned by the System found.

Over the past 10 years, the number of undergraduate nursing students across the System has almost tripled, the report's authors wrote, but the programs are not meeting demand from students or the marketplace. In related news, the UW Population Health Institute has posted materials from its January 8 Evidence-Based Health Policy Project briefing at the state capitol titled [Rx for RNs: Addressing Wisconsin's Nursing Shortage](#).

[More Relying on State Health Care Programs](#)

Enrollment in state programs like BadgerCare Plus has increased by 238,000 people in the past six years and is expected to continue to increase. As the economy worsens and benefits run out for people who are unemployed, more people are applying to the program. [Medicaid is now the fastest growing portion of the state budget](#).

[Many Counties await BadgerCare Childless Adults Benefits](#)

Wisconsin's current budget shortfall has delayed plans to expand BadgerCare Plus to include coverage for childless adults. As of January 1, individuals enrolled in existing county-based General Assistance Medical Programs (most in Milwaukee County but including 13 other counties) have been converted to [BadgerCare Plus Core Plan](#) coverage. But new applications and enrollment in these counties and in the other 58 counties remains on hold. A [Wisconsin Council on Children and Families paper reviews the current status](#) of the childless adult coverage initiative.

[Wisconsin Providers anticipate HIT support in Stimulus Package](#)

Funding Provisions within the proposed federal [economic recovery package will support health IT for hospitals and long-term care facilities](#). However, the Wisconsin Hospital Association and the Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative are [voicing concern](#), along with [national groups](#), that Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs) are excluded from incentive payments and privacy provisions.

[UW Population Health Institute Awarded \\$4.9 Million to Expand Health Rankings](#)

The UW Population Health Institute will rank the health of every county in all 50 states in a project to Mobilize Action Toward Community Health (MATCH), with support from a [\\$4.9 million Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant](#). This work builds on the institute's six years of experience publishing the annual [Wisconsin County Health Rankings](#).

[Wisconsin Fares Poorly in Lung Association Report Card](#)

The American Lung Association's (ALA) "State of Tobacco Control" report assigned Wisconsin an F for providing smoke-free air and an F for providing coverage for medications, counseling, and quitting smoking aids. The ALA gave A's to Madison, Appleton, Marshfield, Shorewood, Beloit and Eau Claire for their smoke-free ordinances.

[Wisconsin Participating in Largest Ever National Children's Study](#)

After 10 years of planning, the National Children's Study will begin recruiting volunteers to take part in its comprehensive study of how genes and the environment interact to affect children's health. The Waukesha Center, Wisconsin's site, is a collaborative project of the UW-Madison

School of Medicine and Public Health and the Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, and several other state and local agencies and institutions.

Stricter rules for Milwaukee restaurants

The Milwaukee Health Department is stepping up its restaurant food inspection program. Under the new guidelines, food establishments with complex menus will receive up to three inspections per year and require the date of last inspection to be posted to the public. The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reported last year that 37% of Milwaukee restaurants had at least one critical code violation.

Legislation Drafted to Clarify the Faith Healing Statute

The 2008 death of an 11-year-old Wausau girl whose parents opted for prayer instead of seeking medical care has prompted new legislation in order to clarify the currently ambiguous standards regarding parental responsibility. The legislation being drafted would repeal a provision in the state's child abuse and neglect statute that exempts parents from prosecution in certain faith healing cases.

Doctors Face Pressure to Disclose All Side Pay

Physicians that earn outside pay from with drug and medical device companies have come under closer scrutiny recently, with a UW physician cited in Congressional dialogue. U.S. Sens. Herb Kohl (D-Wis) and Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) have introduced the [Physician Payments Sunshine Act](#) requiring full disclosure of gifts received in order to eliminate conflicts of interest in medicine due to pharmaceutical marketing to physicians. The UW tightening regulations on doctors' disclosure forms that require listing the amount of money received from drug companies.

Dr. Seth Foldy Appointed State Health Officer

Dr. Seth Foldy has been selected as the new Administrator of the Division of Public Health and as State Health Officer. Dr. Foldy previously served as Health Commissioner for the City of Milwaukee from 1998 to 2004. Dr. Foldy is board-certified in Family Medicine and Preventive Medicine.

RESEARCH AND PROGRAM TOOLS

WI 2010 State Health Plan Data Updated

The Bureau of Health Information and Policy in the Wisconsin Department of Health Services has updated the online data resource.

Health Literacy Measurement Tools

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality released two health literacy tests that can be used for research, clinical or program planning purposes. One is used as a quick assessment of patient health literacy and the other is used to assess a Spanish speaking adult's ability to read and understand common medical terms in Spanish.

[New Website on Emerging Issues in Medical Therapeutics](#)

A new educational website from AHRQ's Centers for Education and Research on Therapeutics (CERTs) offers expert perspectives, advice and guidance on drugs, biological products and medical devices. The Clinician-Consumer Health Advisory Information Network (CHAIN) assists in clinical practice and health care decision-making in areas that are undergoing significant and rapid changes.

[Clinical Information Technologies and Inpatient Outcomes](#)

Research has shown there are benefits to using Health Information Technology to improve health care quality. However, this is the first study to look at multiple hospitals in inpatient settings. The cross-sectional study of urban hospitals found that those with automated clinical information systems had fewer complications, lower mortality rates, and lower costs.

[A New Way to Pay Medicare Providers and Improve Performance](#)

An article published by *Health Affairs* presents a new framework for revising how providers are reimbursed for treating Medicare patients. The central idea of the proposal includes different bundled payment options for providers, hospitals and health systems along with incentives for improved care coordination.

[New Resources and Updates Available at Statehealthfacts.org](#)

- [State Budget Shortfalls SFY2009](#)
- [States with Firearm Laws Designed to Protect Children, 2007](#)
- [Number of Births, 2006](#)
- [Preterm Births, 2006](#)
- [Teen Birth Rate, 2006](#)
- [Adult Asthma Prevalence Rate, 2007](#)
- [Percent of Adults Reporting Poor Mental Health, 2007](#)
- [Income Eligibility Levels for Medicaid/SCHIP Expansion by FPL, 2009](#)
- [Income Thresholds for Jobless and Working Parents Applying for Medicaid](#)
- [Has Presumptive Eligibility for Medicaid and SCHIP, 2009](#)

Select KFF Issue Briefs, Policy Briefs and Fact Sheets

- [State Fiscal Conditions and Medicaid](#)
- [Enrolling Uninsured Low-Income Children in Medicaid and SCHIP](#)
- [Annual Updates on Eligibility Rules, Enrollment and Renewal Procedures, and Cost-Sharing Practices in Medicaid and SCHIP](#)
- [Challenges of Providing Health Coverage for Children and Parents in a Recession: A 50 State Update on Eligibility Rules, Enrollment and Renewal Procedures, and Cost-Sharing Practices in Medicaid and SCHIP in 2009](#)

Recent GAO Reports and Testimonies

- [Medical Devices: FDA Should Take Steps to Ensure that High-Risk Devices are Approved in the Most Stringent Permanent Review Process.](#) Available in [Highlights](#) and [Full Report](#) format.

- Electronic Health Records: DOD's and VA's Sharing of Information Could Benefit from Improved Management. [Summary](#) format.
- Health Information Technology: Federal Agencies' Experiences Demonstrate Challenges to Successful Implementation. [Summary](#) format.

Recommendations for Quality Children's Health Care

The Rand Corporation recently posted online a video presentation on research findings and recommendations related to the quality of pediatric health care in the United States. It summarizes the largest and most comprehensive study of health care quality for America's children, reporting that children receive recommended care --- including preventive care and screening services as well as standard care for common conditions --- less than half the time.

EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

UW CWHR Women's Health Forum

February 17, 2009, 8:00-9:00 a.m., Meriter Hospital, 2nd Fl. Atrium community health Education Center

Contact: (608) 263-9770, judeebell@cwyr.wisc.edu

Accountable Care Organizations – A Path Forward to Quality and Savings

Briefing by Dr. Eliot Fisher at the state capitol, convened by the UW Population Health Institute's [Evidence-Based Health Policy Project](#).

Thursday, February 19, 8:30-10:00 am

Contact cerijenkins@wisc.edu

“Accountable Care Organizations – A Path Forward to Quality and Savings”

UW Health Innovation Program seminar with Dr. Elliott Fisher

February 19, 2009, 4:00 p.m., 1309 Health Science Learning Center

“Moving Food Safety Forward: Wisconsin’s Plans for 2009 and Beyond”

Food Research Seminar: FRESH with Steve Ingham

February 24, 2009, 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., 6201 Microbial Sciences

Contact: bacochra@wisc.edu, (608) 263-7777

Population Health Sciences Seminars

Mondays, 12:00-1:00

1309 Health Learning Science Center

Information: Patty Grubb: pagrubb@wisc.edu, (608) 265-0516

“Inequality the World Around From Rome to Today”

Institute for Research on Poverty Seminar

Jeffrey G. Williamson, Harvard University and UW-Madison’s Dept. of Economics

February 26, 2009, 12:15- 1:30 p.m., 8417 Sewell Social Sciences

Contact: cwilliam@ssc.wisc.edu, (608) 262-6175

Kaiser Family Student Essay Contest

Deadline: March 2, 2009; 5 pm EST

A prize of \$1,000 will be awarded to the first place essay. The essay needs to address the elements of health reform that President Obama should focus on in 2009.

READING ROOM

"Survey: Chronically Ill Fare Poorly in U.S."

A recent Commonwealth Fund survey compares the experiences of patients in the U.S. with those in other leading industrialized nations. The study, published in *Health Affairs*, asked chronically ill adults about the health care they received in the past two years, and found that those in the U.S. are by far the most likely to forgo care because of cost, and are the most likely to experience medical errors, care coordination problems, and high out-of-pocket costs.

Should Patients Be Told of Better Care Elsewhere?

This article examines the ethical implications involved in the informed-consent process between a doctor and their patient. Studies have shown that cancer treatment and outcomes can vary among hospitals, but is it the role of the physician to tell the patient that Hospital A has better treatment than Hospital B, even if the doctor works at Hospital B?

U.S. Census Statistical Abstract 2009: How Does Wisconsin Measure Up?

The WI State Journal compares Wisconsin to the nation with statistics on health, binge drinking, charity contributions, income, taxes, poverty, commuting time, and crime.

Alcohol Taxes Have Clear Effect on Drinking

The February edition of the journal *Addiction* reports that the more alcoholic beverages cost, the less likely people are to drink. The study used a meta-analysis of over 100 studies that showed a strong relationship between cost of alcohol and consumption. This data provides a strong incentive to increase the alcohol tax to promote public health through reducing drinking. Read the full study [here](#).

Lawsuits Filed Over Rule That Lets Health Workers Deny Care

Seven states and two family planning organizations filed lawsuits with the U.S. District Court in Connecticut to block the new controversial federal regulation that protects health workers who refuse to provide care that they find objectionable.

Wisconsin Medical Journal Focus on Health Reform

A series of articles in this recent issue address different perspectives and areas for improvement in the health care system.

Testimony--Strategies for a High Performance Health System

Read the [Executive Summary](#) or the Complete Testimony presented by Commonwealth Fund president Karen Davis to the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

In her testimony she refers to high performance models that are already in existence. One example is Geisinger Health System in Pennsylvania that combines electronic record systems with quality incentives to encourage care coordination.

Most Hospital Patients Unable to Identify Their Physicians, Survey Finds

In a survey conducted by researchers at the University of Chicago, 75 percent of patients asked were unable to identify a single doctor that provided care to them. The patients that were able to name at least one doctor were found to be the most dissatisfied with the care provided to them.

New Poll Shows Wide Support for Covering Children, Immigrants

New poll shows wide support for covering children, including legal immigrants --
New polling data released by First Focus has revealed that a majority of Americans support expanding SCHIP to cover legal immigrant children by a margin of 79-15%.
Currently, legal immigrant children and pregnant women face a five year waiting period before they are eligible for SCHIP coverage. In addition, the survey finds that a majority of Americans favor renewing SCHIP by a margin of 82-10%.

CMS: 2007 U.S. Health Spending Growth Lowest Since 1998

Health spending in the United States grew 6.1 percent in 2007, to \$2.2 trillion or \$7,421 per person. This was the slowest rate of growth since 1998. Health care spending, however, continues to outpace overall economic growth. The slower growth in 2007 was attributed mostly to slower growth in retail prescription drug spending and Medicare spending. The health spending share of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) continued to climb, reaching 16.2% in 2007, up by 0.2 percentage points from 2006.