



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

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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

Federal Recovery Funds Boost BadgerCare Plus, COBRA Options

The federal economic recovery act (ARRA) will deliver nearly \$1.2 billion to Wisconsin over the next two years for state health programs, preserving a safety net that's likely to be tested as more people lose their jobs and health insurance. The money comes at a time when enrollment in BadgerCare Plus is expected to increase sharply.

HHS Releases \$3.9 Million to Expand Community Health Centers in WI

The funds will go towards expansion of services offered at community health centers. The money was made available from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act with the goal to aid the increasing number of citizens who are losing their health care coverage.

Hospitals are Significant Contributors to Wisconsin's Economy

A study released by the University of Wisconsin-Extension and the Wisconsin Hospital Association examines the economic impact of Wisconsin's 145 hospitals. The study found that hospitals support more than \$22 billion in economic activity. Read the [Capital Times article](#) on the study.

Study: WI Nursing Homes Contribute \$5.2 Billion Annually to State Economy

A study done by NorthStar Economics, a Wisconsin-based economic and research firm, concluded that Wisconsin's nursing homes contribute more than \$5 billion annually to the state's economy through job creation, tax revenue, and payment for various goods and services. However, the average WI nursing home loses \$37.65 daily for each Medicaid resident it serves. The authors call for an increase in Medicaid payments to address this problem.

Wisconsin chosen for national nursing home demonstration project

Wisconsin has been selected to participate in a national demonstration project designed to improve the quality of life for residents of nursing homes, as well as reduce costs.

State Tavern League Continues to Battle Smoking Bans

Members of the Tavern League say they want the ban removed from the state budget. However, interviews with members indicate they may be willing to compromise.

More Than 500,000 Wisconsin Residents Exposed to Secondhand Smoke at Work

A report issued by the Paul P. Carbone Comprehensive Cancer Center states that one in five Wisconsin workers is employed in workplaces that still permit smoking. Read the [full report](#).

Verona to Go Smoke-Free

Verona passes a comprehensive smoke-free air ordinance which will begin August 15, 2009. Verona is the twelfth WI community to pass a comprehensive smoke-free ordinance.

Three Madison Hospitals Lag in Labeling Standards, Meriter Complies

Nearly 80 percent of hospitals in the state have standardized the colors of patient wristbands, but Meriter Hospital is the only one in Madison to have joined them. The colors of patient wristbands are an important patient safety issue.

Plan Would Improve Health Care for Immigrant Children

Madison's main health systems say they will try to improve health care for children who are not documented citizens and better coordinate mental health services for adults.

Two From Wisconsin Participate in Obama Health Care Summit

The administration selected the two from among thousands of people who had participated in local health care discussions this winter organized by the Obama transition team.

Governor Doyle's Budget Seeks to Improve Health Care of Female Inmates

Gov. Jim Doyle's budget lays out millions of dollars to help female prisoners get better mental health care and dodge a potentially costly lawsuit over their care.

Wisconsin gets 'C' Grade for Mental Health

Wisconsin has been given a "C" grade by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) for its public mental health care system. In the previous report, Wisconsin received a "B" grade and is one of 12 states that saw their grades decline over the past year.

More UW Med Students Staying in State, Pursuing Primary Care

Graduating medical students in the UW School of Medicine and Public Health achieved a historically high 96% rate of matching into their preferred specialty. More students are choosing to stay in the state for their residency training and about 40 percent plan to pursue a residency in primary care.

Rural Outreach for a Healthier Farming Community

Healthy farmers are vital to a healthy economy in rural Shawano County, WI. But many dairy farmers find health insurance too costly – nearly 20% lack coverage and 80% lack insurance that covers checkups and preventive care. So community leaders decided that, if farmers were not going to leave the farms to get care, the county would bring care to the farmers.

RESEARCH AND PROGRAM TOOLS

The COBRA Subsidy and Health Insurance for the Uninsured

This Kaiser Family Foundation Issue Brief explains the COBRA provisions of the new legislation and how they work, who they benefit and how they interact with other laws and programs helping people obtain health insurance.

Health Care Costs: A Primer

The Kaiser Family Foundation released an updated analysis on trends in health care costs and what factors contribute to their rising costs.

Beyond Incrementalism? SCHIP and the Politics of Health Reform

This *Health Affairs* article examines the political and legislative history of the Children's Health Insurance Program and analyzes the lessons for policymakers who are contemplating broader health care reform.

Reforming Provider Payment: Essential Building Block for Health Reform

This report examines key payment reform recommendations made by the Commonwealth Fund Commission. The authors explore bundling payments to cover care over a specified period, revising fees to increase compensation for primary care, and offering providers financial incentives to serve as patient-centered medical homes.

Midwestern States and Southern States Receive Least Federal Funding for Disease Prevention

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Trust for America's Health released a report that found Midwestern and Southern states receive less than Northeastern and Western states did for disease prevention programs in 2008.

[Report on Future Health Insurance Costs](#)

The New America Foundation's report, "The Cost of Doing Nothing: Wisconsin", analyzes what health insurance will cost in 2012 and 2016.

Recent GAO Reports:

- Health-Care-Associated Infections In Hospitals: Continuing Leadership Needed from HHS to Prioritize Prevention Practices and Improve Data on These Infections. Read the [Summary](#); Read the [Highlights](#).

Updated Factsheets at statehealthfacts.org

- [State Budget Shortfalls, SFY2009](#)
- [Measures of State Economic Distress: Housing Foreclosures and Changes in Unemployment and Food Stamp Participation](#)
- [Unemployment Rate \(Seasonally Adjusted\), 2008-2009](#)
- [Number of Occupational Fatalities, 2007](#)
- [State Laws Addressing Childhood Obesity, 2008](#)
- [Number of Deaths Due to Suicide, 2005](#)
- [Prenatal Care, 2006](#)
- [Number of HMOs, July 2008](#)
- [LIS-Eligible Medicare Beneficiaries with Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage](#)

[How Beliefs about the Cause of Obesity Affect Support for Public Policy](#)

Relatively little is known about the factors shaping public attitudes toward obesity as a policy concern. This study examines whether individuals' beliefs about the causes of obesity affect their support for policies aimed at stemming obesity rates. This article identifies a unique role of metaphor-based beliefs, as distinct from conventional political attitudes, in explaining support for obesity policies.

[Hospital Mortality Measurement: AHRQ](#)

There is increasing interest in deploying and publicly reporting a risk-adjusted measure of mortality as a quality indicator of hospital system-level performance. The presentations provided here are from a November 2008 meeting to discuss issues related to mortality measures.

[Health Insurers Propose to Stop Charging More to Cover the Sick](#)

The Commonwealth Fund reports that the health insurance industry offered to phase out the practice of charging people more for their coverage if they are sick. The offer depends on the lawmakers' willingness to impose a mandate requiring individuals to buy health care.

[How Effectively Does the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Help Laid-Off Workers and States Cope with Health Care Costs?](#)

An analysis from the Urban Institute concludes that these provisions are likely to achieve only partial success.

[EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS](#)

[Population Health Seminars](#)

Mondays, 12:00- 1:00 p.m., 1309 HSLC

Medical Homes and Retail Clinics: Complementary Care or Conceptual Clash?

Briefing produced by the Evidence-Based Health Policy Project

Tuesday, April 7, 2009, 9:00-11:00 am State Capitol

Information: contact cerijenkins@wisc.edu

Summit Conversations on American Health Care for the 21st Century

Hosted by the Honorable Tommy Thompson

April 7, 2009, 1-5 pm. Edgewater Hotel, Madison

Wisconsin Wellness Campaign Expo

April 18, 2009, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Southeast Recreational Facility (SERF)

Contact: 608-262-4268, devine@recsports.wisc.edu

Healthy Classrooms 2009 Symposium

April 22, 2009, 5:30 p.m.

1306, 1325, 1335, and 1345 Health Sciences Learning Center

Contact: healthyclassrooms@uwmedstudents.com

UW Library Workshops: Keeping Current with the Health Literature Using RSS

April 22, 2009, 12:00- 1:00 p.m., 2121 Health Sciences Learning Center

Contact: 608-262-4308, libinstruct@library.wisc.edu

Spring 2009 Public Health Symposium

May 8, 2009, 8:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., Fluno Center, 601 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53715

Wisconsin Research and Education Network (WREN)

Annual Convocation of Practices

May 8-9, 2009, Stevens Point, WI

Population Health Sciences 50th Anniversary Symposium

August 27-28, 2009, including dinner, poster session, and featured speakers

Speakers include: Sharokh Javaheri, MD. Kay Dickersin, PhD. Dennis Fryback, PhD

Info: <http://www.pophealth.wisc.edu>

Questions: pophealth50@doll.pophealth.wisc.edu

READING ROOM

Agreeing to Pay for Treatments Puts Families in Difficult Spot

Who is responsible to pay for a transplant operation when insurance does not cover it? The wife of a liver transplant recipient is left with a half million dollar bill when her now deceased husband's insurance company refused to pay for the transplant because of his history with alcohol abuse.

Racial Differences in Incident Heart Failure among Young Adults

A study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* reports that incident heart failure before 50 years of age is substantially more common among blacks than among whites. Hypertension, obesity, and systolic dysfunction that are present before a person is 35 years of age are important antecedents that may be targets for the prevention of heart failure.

OSHA Speeds Up 'Popcorn Lung' Safeguards

The Wall Street Journal reports that Labor Secretary Hilda Solis is moving quickly to deliver on her promise that the Obama administration would be more vigorous in protecting workers' safety than the Bush administration.

Comparison Shopping for Medicine

Obama's stimulus package funds research on cutting costs.

Enough of the Puff: Tax May Cut Smoking Rates

A big hike in the federal tax on cigarettes taking effect on April 1 may prompt 1 million U.S. smokers to quit, according to public health experts.

HEALTHBEAT: What's the Best Medicine -- Really?

Think your doctor knows which drug - or surgery or even diagnostic test - works best? Think again. Half the time, there's little if any good evidence comparing one to another. And one of medicine's little secrets is that brand-new drugs don't have to work any better than cheap old ones to be approved for sale.

Low Literacy Can Lead to 'Food Portion' Distortion

A study in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* finds that people with lower literacy levels potentially have a more difficult time judging the amount of foods they eat.

Bill Would Put Tobacco under FDA Control

Legislation that the House Energy and Commerce Committee will consider could place tobacco under the control of the Food and Drug Administration. The bill regulates how tobacco companies market cigarettes, requires them to disclose the ingredients, and gives the FDA the authority to require the removal of harmful chemicals and additives from cigarettes.

Drug Firms' Cash Skews Doctor Classes

A Journal Sentinel investigation found that industry-funded doctor education courses offered at UW often present a slanted view by favoring prescription medications over non-drug therapies and by failing to mention important side effects.

Going Abroad to Find Affordable Health Care

Medical tourism is expected to expand quickly in the coming years because of rising health care costs in the United States, increasing availability of international facilities with United States accreditation, and the fact that insurers and employers are beginning to embrace the practice.