



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

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*Translating Research into Policy and Practice*

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**University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health**

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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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### *In This Issue*

#### **STATE NEWS**

- [Wisconsin's Biennial Budget Proceeds: Includes Many Health-Related Provisions](#)
- [Law Now Requires Coverage for Cochlear Implants, Hearing Aids for Kids](#)
- [Wisconsin Smoke-Free Law Enacted](#)
- [State Human Service Reductions would Cut Local Safety Nets](#)
- [Dane County Ends Black Infant Mortality Gap](#)
- [UW Hospital and Clinics Receives Magnet Recognition](#)
- [State's Neediest Lack Dental Care](#)
- [New Law to Promote Volunteer Dental Care](#)
- [Public Employers Modifying Health Benefits](#)
- [National Children's Study Begins Recruiting](#)
- [After-School Program Enhances Fitness](#)
- [Several Wisconsin Schools Recognized for Health Promotion Activities](#)
- [Doyle Opposes Transplant Shift](#)
- [Insurance Commissioner Issues New Rules for Medicare Supplement Policies](#)
- [WI Families Spending More than 10% of Income on Health Care](#)
- [Poverty Report Card \(Vision 2020\)](#)
- [Tribes get \\$500 million in Stimulus Money for Health Projects](#)

#### **RESEARCH AND PROGRAM TOOLS**

- [Resources on Federal Health Reform](#)

- [AHRQ: 2008 National Healthcare Disparities and Quality Reports](#)
- [New Data Query System from AHRQ](#)
- [Expanding Medicaid As A Platform For Health Reform](#)
- [Fact Sheet Highlight Medicare's Fiscal Challenges](#)
- [New updates available at Statehealthfacts.org](#)

## EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- [Bracing for Impact- Climate Change Adaptation in Wisconsin](#)
- [AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting](#)
- [Population Health Sciences 50th Anniversary Symposium](#)

## READING ROOM

- [Study: Meeting Enrollees' Needs: How Do Medicare And Employer Coverage Stack Up?](#)
- [Study: Physician Interactions With Health Plans Cost \\$31 Billion A Year](#)
- [How Effective are the ARRA COBRA Subsidies for Laid-Off Workers?](#)
- [Access and Affordability: An Update on Health Reform in Massachusetts](#)
- [Trustees Report Projects 2017 Insolvency of Medicare Hospital Fund](#)
- [Soda Tax Weighed to Pay for Health Care](#)
- [Congress Plans Incentives for Healthy Habits](#)
- [U.S. Cancer Death Rates Continue to Fall](#)
- [Chances Bright for Legislation Seeking FDA Regulation of Tobacco](#)
- [Study Links Cigarette Changes to Rising Lung Risk](#)
- [African-American and Low-SES Patients Have Worse Breast Cancer Prognosis](#)
- [Male Elders Face Growing Suicide Risk as they Age](#)

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## STATE NEWS

### [Wisconsin's Biennial Budget Proceeds: Includes Many Health-Related Provisions](#)

The two-year budget for WI passed out of the Joint Finance Committee and is expected to clear the Legislature this month. The current budget version includes the following:

- Expanded hospital revenue assessment that will leverage additional federal Medicaid matching funds.
- DHS released a [press release](#) stating that applications will be accepted for the BadgerCare Plus Core Plan for Adults with No Dependent Children starting on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009
- [Autism Treatment Insurance Coverage Mandate](#)
- \$0.75 increase in the cigarette tax, but no overall sales tax increase.
- Insurance reforms - Provisions in [budget paper 482](#), with some modifications from a separate motion (# 392)
- Medical homes - requires DHS to develop an MA physician practice pilot project to increase MA reimbursement to providers meeting certain criteria (as recommended by the Legislative Council).

- Contraceptive equity - requires health insurance to cover contraceptives and related services.

### **[Law Now Requires Coverage for Cochlear Implants, Hearing Aids for Kids](#)**

Governor Jim Doyle signed SB 27, requiring health insurers cover hearing aids and cochlear implants for persons under 18 years of age. The bill requires health insurance policies and plans to cover the cost of hearing aids or cochlear implants and related treatment for children under 18.

### **[Wisconsin Smoke-Free Law Enacted](#)**

Smoke-Free Wisconsin Act passed the [Assembly](#) and the [Senate](#) and was [signed into law by Governor Doyle](#) on May 18, 2009.

- [Senator Glenn Grothman plans to propose a bill to exempt 25% of hotel and motel rooms from the smoking ban](#)
- [Smoking Ban Would Take Effect July 2010](#)

### **[State Human Service Reductions would Cut Local Safety Nets](#)**

County leaders speak out against a proposed \$60 million cut from state programs that help families connect with food and medical assistance resources. The leaders are not calling for an increase in funding; they only call for sustained funding at current levels for the next two years.

### **[Dane County Ends Black Infant Mortality Gap](#)**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Mortality and Morbidity Weekly Report said since 2002, black infant mortality in Dane County, Wis., declined by 67 percent eliminating the 3:1 black-white infant mortality gap that existed during the 1990s.

### **[UW Hospital and Clinics Receives Magnet Recognition](#)**

The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) has announced that the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics has been awarded Magnet Recognition® status, considered to be among the highest honors that can be bestowed upon a health care organization. Only 5% of hospitals across the country have earned this designation.

### **[State's Neediest Lack Dental Care](#)**

More than 300,000 children on BadgerCare Plus did not see a dentist in 2007. Fewer than 25% of children insured by Medicaid saw a dentist in 2007. Dentists assert that the Medicaid reimbursement rate is too low. Several bills to increase dental access for low-income children and families have gone nowhere in the legislature.

*Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* Editorial:

[Legislature Needs to Address Medicaid Payment for Dentist, Dental Access](#)

*WI State Journal Editorial*: [Dental funding needs a filling in Wisconsin](#)

### **[New Law to Promote Volunteer Dental Care](#)**

Governor Doyle signs AB103 into law, which permits dentists and dental hygienists from other states to obtain a temporary permit to practice in Wisconsin. It will allow more dentists to provide free dental services to low-income families through volunteer programs like the Wisconsin Dental Association's Mission of Mercy.

### **Public Employers Modifying Health Benefits**

Three out of four public employers are considering increasing employee deductibles, co-pays and premiums on their health insurance plans because of the financial crisis, according to a new survey.

### **National Children's Study Begins Recruiting**

The National Children's Study is the largest long-term study of children's health and development ever conducted in the U.S. It will track the health of over 100,000 children from before birth to age 21. Trained researchers will go door-to-door throughout Waukesha County to recruit participants in the study. Waukesha is one of seven pilot sites chosen for the study.

### **After-School Program Enhances Fitness**

A collaboration between the YMCA of Dane County and UW Health Sports Medicine created the program YKidzFit in 2006. Nine months after the program began, results have been encouraging. The children's maximum oxygen consumption increased and their percentage body fat dropped 6 percent.

### **Several Wisconsin Schools Recognized for Health Promotion Activities**

Schools have been named recipients of the [Governor's School Health Award](#) for 2009.

### **Doyle Opposes Transplant Shift**

Doyle speaks out against a proposal put forth by the United Network for Organ Sharing that would shift allocation of organs from a local to a regional system. Doyle says that this shift would imperil the lives of Wisconsinites waiting for an organ because they would have to be put on a longer list that is shared with neighboring states.

### **Insurance Commissioner Issues New Rules for Medicare Supplement Policies**

The changes come from federal legislation that adds options for Medicare supplement policies and prevents use of genetic information by the insurers. The updated rules will align Wisconsin with the federal regulations.

### **WI Families Spending More than 10% of Income on Health Care**

A report released by the consumer health organization Families USA reports that spending more than 10% of pre-tax income on health care has increased by 64.1% between 2000 and 2009. It reports that nearly 1.3 million Wisconsin residents are in families that have spending exceeding 10% of pre-tax income.

### **Poverty Report Card (Vision 2020)**

The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families released their report card that examines four main areas of child and family well-being and provides an analysis of where Wisconsin stands. Since the last edition grades have remained the same with the exception of the state's Healthy Children grade improving from a B- to a B.

### **[Tribes get \\$500 million in Stimulus Money for Health Projects](#)**

The funds will be divided amongst tribes across the U.S. and used for building and repairing medical facilities, health information technology, sanitation projects, and purchasing medical equipment.

## **RESEARCH AND PROGRAM TOOLS**

### **Resources on Federal Health Reform**

Kaiser Family Foundation has compiled relevant resources on health care reform into a new **[Health Reform Gateway](#)** page that serves as a hub to current information.

Other Resources on Federal Health Reform Options:

- [Senate Finance Committee Paper on Coverage Options in Health Reform](#)
- [The Senate Finance Committee Paper on Delivery System Reform Options](#)
- [The Senate Finance Committee's Paper on Financing Options in Health Reform](#)

### **[AHRO: 2008 National Healthcare Disparities and Quality Reports](#)**

These reports highlight trends in effectiveness of care, patient safety, timeliness of care, patient centeredness, and efficiency of care.

### **[New Data Query System from AHRO](#)**

[NHQRDRnet](#) online query system allows access to national and State data, from scientifically credible measures and data sources, on the quality of and access to health care.

### **[Expanding Medicaid As A Platform For Health Reform](#)**

Kaiser Family Foundation released new research examining policy opportunities for expanding Medicaid that could serve as a platform for larger national health reform. The new resources include:

- [Medicaid as a Platform for Broader Health Reform: Supporting High-Need and Low-Income Populations](#)
- [The Coverage and Cost Impacts of Expanding Medicaid](#)
- [Expanding Health Coverage for Low-Income Adults: Filling the Gaps in Medicaid Eligibility](#)
- [Community Care of North Carolina: Putting Health Reform Ideas into Practice in Medicaid](#)

### **[Fact Sheet Highlight Medicare's Fiscal Challenges](#)**

- The [Fact Sheet](#) provides an overview of spending on the Medicare Program and the latest data on Medicare financing

### **New updates available at [Statehealthfacts.org](#)**

- [Demographics and the Economy](#)
- [Medicaid & CHIP](#)
- [Medicare](#)
- [Managed Care and Health Insurance](#)
- [Women's Health](#)

## **EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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### **Bracing for Impact- Climate Change Adaptation in Wisconsin**

“Climate Change Impacts on Wisconsin’s Ecosystems”

June 4, 2009. 7:00- 8:00 p.m., Auditorium Room 1111, Genetics-Biotechnology Center

David Mladenoff and Sara Hotchkiss

Contact: 608-261-1503, [mnotaro@wisc.edu](mailto:mnotaro@wisc.edu)

### **AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting**

Jun. 28-30<sup>th</sup>, Hilton Chicago, Chicago, IL

### **Population Health Sciences 50th Anniversary Symposium**

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

Questions: [pophealth50@doh.wisc.edu](mailto:pophealth50@doh.wisc.edu)

## **READING ROOM**

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### **Study: Meeting Enrollees' Needs: How Do Medicare And Employer Coverage Stack Up?**

This study published in *Health Affairs* compares the experiences of Medicare beneficiaries with those of people under age sixty-five who have private employer coverage. Compared with the employer-coverage group, people in the Medicare group report fewer problems obtaining medical care, less financial hardship due to medical bills, and higher overall satisfaction with their coverage.

### **Study: Physician Interactions With Health Plans Cost \$31 Billion A Year**

Results from a national survey, published in *Health Affairs*, show that physicians on average spend the equivalent of three work weeks annually on administrative tasks required by health plans. These interactions costs \$31 billion annually, accounting for 6.9% of all spending for physician and clinical services.

### **How Effective are the ARRA COBRA Subsidies for Laid-Off Workers?**

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provides a 65% subsidy for COBRA for laid-off works, and sends funds to state Medicaid programs. The Urban Institute has published a new report about [How Effectively Does the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Help Laid-Off Workers and States Cope with Health Care Costs?](#)

### **Access and Affordability: An Update on Health Reform in Massachusetts**

The study is the latest in a series of updates on implementation of the Massachusetts reforms funded by the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation, the Commonwealth Fund, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

### **Trustees Report Projects 2017 Insolvency of Medicare Hospital Fund**

The Commonwealth Fund reports on the findings by the Trustees of the Medicare Program who predict exhaustion of the Medicare funds by 2017. The report outlines what the Obama Administration is doing to address the issue.

### **Soda Tax Weighed to Pay for Health Care**

Senate leaders are considering a tax on soda and other sugary drinks to pay for a small portion to expand health care coverage. At least a dozen states already have enacted some type of sugar tax.

### **Congress Plans Incentives for Healthy Habits**

As part of the effort to redesign the health care system, Congress plans to give employers power to reward employees for healthy behavior.

### **U.S. Cancer Death Rates Continue to Fall**

The American Cancer Society's Cancer Statistics 2009 report finds a 19.2 percent drop in cancer death rates among men from 1990 to 2005, as well as an 11.4 percent drop in women's cancer death rates during the same time period. Read the [full report](#).

### **Chances Bright for Legislation Seeking FDA Regulation of Tobacco**

The legislation would give the Food and Drug Administration wide power over the manufacturing and marketing of tobacco.

### **Study Links Cigarette Changes to Rising Lung Risk**

Recent research finds that the increase for adenocarcinomas was higher in the U.S. than in Australia. This could be due to the higher concentration of nitrosamines, a known carcinogen, found in U.S. cigarettes compared to Australian cigarettes.

### **African-American and Low-SES Patients Have Worse Breast Cancer Prognosis**

The *Journal of the American College of Surgeons* reports that while black women are less likely to develop cancer, they are 30% more likely to die compared to other women if they are diagnosed with the disease.

### **Male Elders Face Growing Suicide Risk as they Age**

A study in the *Wisconsin Medical Journal* found that older adult males committed suicide at a rate 7.8 times higher than females. The study found that being a single, older male elder (over age 85) were at the greatest risk for suicide.