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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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STATE NEWS

WI Receives \$50 M to Expand Health Insurance

As part of the [State Health Access Program](#), the U.S. DHHS awarded grants to 13 states through a competitive process to support state expansion of health care coverage for the uninsured. Wisconsin will receive a new State Health Access Program (SHAP) grant in \$10 million increments over a five-year period to assist in providing additional members the benefits available to them within the BadgerCare Plus Core Plan for Adults with No Dependent Children.

DHS Develops Plans to Reduce \$600 M from Medicaid Spending

The Wisconsin [DHS has circulated its list of recommended savings](#) to achieve over the biennium \$625 million in Medicaid savings, including \$205 million in state funds. DHS goals are to maintain current coverage levels, continue expansion of coverage to the uninsured, and avoid across-the-board cuts to providers. Over a third of the savings come by reducing or deferring payments to the 30,000 HMOs, clinics, hospitals and other providers. Savings are also expected through “evidence-based health care initiatives” and various administrative cost reductions.

BadgerCare Plus Core Plan Has Large Enrollment Backlog

WI's health care plan for low-income adults ([BadgerCare Plus Core Plan](#)) has many applications and processing time is taking longer than expected. From June 15 to Aug. 7, the state Department of Health Services received 37,211 applications for the Core program, of which only 5,000 were processed. Under program guidelines, the state has 30 days to process an application and, if approved, coverage is to begin on the following 1st or 15th of the month. To try to expedite the processing of applications, DHS has enlisted the voluntary support of a number of counties to assist with this state-administered program. [The WI State Journal](#) reports that BadgerCare Plus has seen far greater enrollments than what state officials projected during its two rounds of expansions since February 2008. The Core Plan, already with 26,000 members, is on track to exceed its enrollment target of 41,000.

Insurers in SE WI to Bid on BadgerCare Plus

The Wisconsin DHS plans, by July 2010, to end all existing BadgerCare Plus contracts with HMOs in Milwaukee, Waukesha, Washington, Ozaukee, Racine and Kenosha counties. The tentative plan is that early next year DHS would solicit bids on new contracts - possibly contracting with just one or two HMOs to serve those counties. This move is intended to improve plan performance, reduce costs, and improve outcomes for the enrolled population. DHS is soliciting comments and suggestions regarding the proposal to restructure the Medicaid managed care delivery system in southeast WI.

Options for Using SCHIP law to Bolster BadgerCare Plus

The WI Council on Children and Families (WCCF) has released a policy brief that summarizes the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) options for expanding coverage and how Wisconsin might gain access to performance bonus funding for states that achieve 5 of 8 standards for improving enrollment and retention.

SeniorCare Extended through 2012

SeniorCare, Wisconsin's alternative to Medicare Part D, has been officially granted an extension of the program through 2012. SeniorCare, initiated in 2002, had been scheduled to end on December 31, 2009. SeniorCare, will continue to provide services for the 86,000 Wisconsin residents signed up.

WI receives almost \$6.5 million from HHS for H1N1 Preparedness

To aid in seasonal flu preparedness, HHS awarded Wisconsin \$4,753,288 for public health emergency response and \$1,642,227 for hospital preparedness.

Milwaukee County's Surveillance Helps Nation Develop H1N1 Vaccine

With more than 1,000 H1N1 cases than the next leading state and a commitment to surveillance of the virus, WI and Milwaukee in particular help researchers understand and prepare for next round of virus.

WI Ranks 10th in New Kids Count Databook

The 2009 Kids Count data book ranks Wisconsin 10th overall in its composite of ten indicators of child well-being. WI improved in six of the ten measures since 2000, including infant and child mortality rates, and WI continues to have one of the lowest high school dropout rates in the country. However, Wisconsin has declined in four other key areas.

Change in Wisconsin Dental License Process Could Bring More Dentists to State

The Wisconsin Department of Regulation and Licensing (DRL) Secretary Celia Jackson has announced that the Dentistry Examining Board (DEB) has removed a major barrier to licensing dentists in Wisconsin. At its most recent meeting, the DEB decided that dentists who pass a clinical competence examination on or after January 1, 2009 in any region of the country will be eligible for a license to practice dentistry in Wisconsin.

"Business Health Care Group Sees Costs Continue to Decline"

The Business Journal of Milwaukee reports that, "in 2008 the Business Health Care Group continued its progress of moving southeast Wisconsin health care costs toward the Midwest average, according to new data from the company. The group's self-funded member companies saw a three-year aggregate health care cost decrease of 1.5 percent per health plan member when compared with 2005 base-year costs."

Area Hospitals Better than Average on Readmissions

The *Milwaukee Business Journal* reports: "Readmission rates at Milwaukee-area hospitals are slightly better than the national average, according to new information released by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. ..."Reduction of unnecessary hospital readmissions has the potential to save billions in health care dollars nationally," said Tracey Klein, a shareholder in Milwaukee law firm Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren SC's health care practice."

New Study Highlights Gundersen Lutheran as High-Performing Health System

The Commonwealth Fund's continuing case study series on high-performing organized health care delivery systems in the U.S. recently highlighted the LaCrosse-based Gundersen Lutheran Health System, in a report titled *Performance Improvement Through Partnership*. The report

notes: “Gundersen Lutheran Health System, a physician-led integrated system serving Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota that has increased efficiency, improved patient care, and achieved the high performance associated with large urban institutions.”

[WI Among Leaders of Value Coalition for Payment Reform](#)

The Wisconsin Hospital Association is a driving force behind a newly-organized national [Value Coalition](#) of national hospital association leaders that are promoting value-based payment in Medicare and health reform plans. The Value Coalition uses the [Dartmouth Atlas](#) as the data source for Medicare spending by hospital referral region and the CMS Web site "[Hospital Compare](#)" for the quality component of the annual incentive plan.

[Madison Diabetes Educator Says Obesity and Diabetes Threaten Children of Color](#)

Diabetes educator recently screened 86 children (63 percent African-American, 34 percent Latino, 3 percent white) and found that 54% were overweight or obese, conditions that can set them up for developing Type 2 diabetes, in which the body becomes resistant to insulin. At current diagnosis rates, it is estimated that one in three children born in the year 2000 will eventually develop [Type 2 Diabetes](#).

[Largest Class in UW School of Medicine and Public Health History Begins](#)

The largest entering class in school history – 168 students – has just begun its first year of medical education at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health. The class includes 18 students in the [Wisconsin Academy for Rural Medicine](#) -- a specialized program that focuses on underserved populations in rural Wisconsin

[State Dentists Donate Over \\$1 Million in Oral Health Care](#)

Wisconsin dentists provided \$1 million in oral health care for the disabled, seniors, poor and uninsured in the state in fiscal year 2008-2009 through the Wisconsin Dental Association Foundation’s Donated Dental Services program.

[Wisconsin Nursing Homes Outperform Nation in Resident, Family, and Staff Satisfaction](#)

The Wisconsin Health Care Association (WHCA) announced that Wisconsin’s nursing homes are among the top in the nation for resident and family satisfaction according to national and state-specific results issued by My InnerView, an independent, third-party applied research company.

[Wisconsin Tries to Strengthen Drunk Driving Laws, Catch Up With Nation](#)

A leading proposal in the state Legislature would require certain first-time offenders to use ignition interlock devices as well as make fourth-offense drunk driving a felony. Even if passed, WI drunk driving laws would still fall short of most other states.

[WI Cigarette Tax Increased on September 1st](#)

On September 1st, Wisconsin’s cigarette tax increased by 75 cents to \$2.52 per pack, the 5th highest cigarette tax in the nation.

Marshfield Clinic: HIT for Population Health Management

Commonwealth Fund reports that “Marshfield Clinic’s experience shows how an organized group of physicians can improve patient outcomes and reduce costs by undertaking a population-based approach to ambulatory care management supported by robust information technology.”

DOC 2008/2009 Probation and Parole Revocation Study Released

UWPHI prepared a report for the Wisconsin Department of Corrections summarizing the findings of a one-year study examining patterns in probation/parole revocation of offenders admitted to prison without a new sentence/offense. The report also includes analyses of agent decisions to file for revocation of probation/parole, an examination of racial disparities in revocation, and recommendations for policy and practice improvement.

Fewer in Wisconsin Smoke While Pregnant

The number of Wisconsin women who smoke during pregnancy has fallen considerably since 1997, following a national downward trend, according to a new report. A UW-Madison study reports that, between 1990 and 2007, the rate of maternal smoking in Wisconsin decreased from 22.9% to 14.9% while, in the United States, it fell from 18.4% to 10%. Smoking rates generally correlated with socioeconomic status - the wealthier and more educated the county, the lower the rate. One exception was Milwaukee County, which halved its maternal smoking rate between 1990 and 2007, from 24.7% to 11.5%. [Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel Coverage](#)

Study: Poorest More Likely to Suffer Catastrophic Health Problems

People in Milwaukee's poorest areas are much more likely than those in high-income neighborhoods to get lead poisoning, have sexually transmitted diseases or fare poorly on women's health issues, according to the 2009 Milwaukee Health Report.

Milwaukee Promotes Healthy Lifestyles among Public-Housing Residents

The Milwaukee Housing Authority has launched a health and nutrition education program targeting some of the city's poorest, and unhealthiest, residents. The initiative, called With Every Heartbeat Is Life, will train African-Americans living in public housing to become promoters of healthier living within their communities. This project addresses a need identified by in a new report released by the WI Department of Health Services, which examines the state's obesity and overweight epidemic, highlighting disparities across income, gender and racial lines. Persons of lower income and racial and ethnic minority have higher likelihood of overweight.

Green Bay teen pregnancy rate higher than WI overall

Green Bay's teen pregnancy rate is higher than the state rate and has long received attention from health-care providers and social service agencies. The 2007 Green Bay birth rate of 69.8 births per 1,000 females between the ages of 15 and 19 is more than double the state rate of 32 births for that age group, according to the most recent state health data. Area counselors and health-care workers attribute the higher numbers in Green Bay to the city's growing population, a lack of preventive education as well as a growing acceptance of teen pregnancy.

Study: WI Physicians Support Health System Reform; Differ on Details

Wisconsin physicians share a desire for health care reform and agree about several key priorities. Nevertheless, primary care physicians and specialists tend to differ on how changes to the current system should be implemented, according to the authors of a 2008 study published in the

September 2009 issue of the [Wisconsin Medical Journal](#). The study was conducted by researchers at the UW Population Health Institute.

[Autism Most Prevalent in Families with Highest Levels of Education and Income](#)

New Wisconsin-based research published in the [Wisconsin Medical Journal](#) (Vol. 108, No. 5) reports that the prevalence of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) increases along with family socioeconomic status (SES). ASD prevalence in the highest education bracket was 6.8 per 1,000 8-year-old children compared to 2.6 per 1,000 children in the lowest education bracket. Access to health and educational services may differ between high-SES families and low-SES families, which could account for variations in how often children are diagnosed with ASD and which children receive therapy and other services.

RESEARCH AND PROGRAM TOOLS

[State-by-State Insurance Premium Trends](#)

The Commonwealth Fund has released a state-by-state analysis that finds rapidly rising health insurance premiums across the U.S. Nationally, family premiums for employer-sponsored health insurance increased 119 percent between 1999 and 2008. The new data brief, *Paying the Price: How Health Insurance Premiums Are Eating Up Middle-Class Incomes*, reports that premiums could increase another 94 percent by 2020 if the current pace of cost growth continues.

[How Will Comprehensive Reform Improve Health Care for Americans?](#)

This Commonwealth Fund report draws largely on the work of the [Commonwealth Fund Commission on a High Performance Health System](#), as well as other research, to provide journalists and others with an evidence-based context for understanding how both lack of coverage and spiraling health care costs directly affect American families and businesses, and how comprehensive health reform can address these problems.

[HHS Releases State-by-State Report: How Reform Will Help All Americans](#)

As part of an effort to include Americans in the health reform debate, HHS created a series of reports describing how reform will lower costs, increase choice and assure quality and affordability. [Wisconsin's detailed report available here](#).

[New Resources from Kaiser Family Foundation](#)

- [Side-by-Side Comparison of Major Health Care Reform Proposals](#)
- [What Are Health Insurance Subsidies?](#)
- [Health Reform Lessons From Massachusetts](#)

[Resources from the Conservative Heritage Foundation](#)

- [House Health Care Bill Will Hurt Small Businesses: A Reply to My Critics](#)
- [Economics of Play-or-Pay Mandates in Health Care Reform Bills](#)
- [Five Major Faults with the Health Care Bills](#)

[Seven-Question Survey Identifies People Most Likely to Relapse into Smoking](#)

A short survey developed by the [University of Wisconsin Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention](#) to assess a smoker's dependence on tobacco is proven more accurate than other surveys at identifying those prone to relapse.

[UW Study Results in Tool to Screen for Mental Health Problems in Children](#)

Researchers at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health have come up with a screening tool that seems to accurately predict the small percentage of children most likely to benefit from early intervention.

[WI Medical Journal Issue on Population Health Sciences 50th Anniversary](#)

The *Wisconsin Medical Journal* published "Providing Evidence for Clinical Practice and Public Health" which highlights the department's many areas of research.

[EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS](#)

["Translating Comparative Effectiveness Research into Practice: The Case of Diabetes Medications"](#)

Dr. Nilay D. Shah, Sept 14, 12pm-1pm, 1309 Health Sciences Learning Center

[Health Challenges and Late-Life Mental Illness: Part 1](#)

Sept 16, 9am-3pm, Pyle Center, Cost: \$120

[Nutrition in Health and Healing, A Conference for Nurses and All Health Care Providers](#)

Sept 18, 8am, Fluno Center for Executive Education, Cost: \$160

[Workshop: An Overview of Key Issues in Geriatric Mental Health](#)

Sept 18, 9am-3pm, Pyle Center, Cost: \$120

[Lecture: "In Defense of Food: The Omnivore's Solution" by Michael Pollan](#)

Sept 24, 7pm, Kohl Center

[Paying for Quality and Effectiveness: What are Wisconsin's purchasers doing?](#)

Breakfast Briefing by the Evidence-Based Health Policy Project
October 8, 2009, 8:30 – 11:00 am, State Capitol Room 411 South

[Smart Regulation: Can New Types of Governance Improve Health?](#)

An Interdisciplinary Symposium
Friday, Oct. 9, 2009, 8 a.m – 4:30 p.m., UW Health Sciences Learning Center, Room 1345

[Wisconsin Quality & Safety Forum](#)

October 19-20, 2009, Glacier Canyon Resort, Wisconsin Dells

READING ROOM

Health Affairs: Rapid Health Care Spending Growth and Solutions

The September Health Affairs Thematic Issue Highlights Rapid Spending Growth In Health Care And Explores What Might Work To Slow It.

Report: Health Care and the Middle Class: More Costs and Less Coverage

[Kaiser Family Foundation](#) examines the availability, affordability, and stability of the health insurance coverage of the middle class and reports key findings.

Comparative Effectiveness Research and Evidence-Based Health Policy

The experience of four countries offer insights into near-term decisions about the location, design, and function of a U.S.-based Comparative Effectiveness Research entity.

Building Medical Homes in State Medicaid and CHIP Programs

Since 2006, more than 30 states have developed policies to improve Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Programs (CHIP) to advance medical homes. A new Commonwealth Fund-supported report from the National Academy for State Health Policy summarizes the work in the states and provides state policymakers with examples of promising practices and lessons learned.

Effects of Early Education on Adult Health Status

Effects of a Prekindergarten Educational Intervention on Adult Health: 37-Year Follow-Up Results of a Randomized Controlled Trial, published in the August issue of the *American Journal of Public Health*, reports that the early education experience led to improvements in educational attainment, income, family environment, and health insurance access, which in turn lead to improvements in an array of behavioral risk factors. Participants in the program did not exhibit any overall improvement in physical health outcomes by age 40.

CDC: Progress Slows on Teen Sexual Health Trends

A July report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggests that after a decade of steady improvement in sexual health outcomes for teens and young adults nationally, there is a slowing of progress and in some areas an increase in negative outcomes.

Over 60% of All US Bankruptcies Attributable to Medical Problems

A study by Harvard researchers, published in the recent issue of the *American Journal of Medicine*, reports that medical problems cause most personal bankruptcy, and most of these persons are middle class, well educated and have health insurance.