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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

[Health Care Reform Study Committee Focuses on Exchanges](#)

The Legislative Council Study Committee on Health Care Reform Implementation recently discussed formation of Wisconsin's health insurance exchange, as specified by the federal

[Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act \(PPACA\)](#). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will establish and operate an exchange for those states that choose not to establish one or for states that will not have their exchange operable by January 1, 2014. Leg Council Committee Co-Chairs Rep. Richards and Sen. Erpenbach stated that the Committee should recommend that Wisconsin establish an exchange or allow the responsibility to fall to HHS. And should it be done as part of a regional or multi-state exchange. The next meeting is scheduled for October 21.

[Wisconsin Receives \\$1 Million to Monitor Health Insurance Premium Increases](#)

Wisconsin will receive a \$1 million federal grant to take action against health insurers seeking unreasonable rate increases, Kathleen Sebelius, secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, announced on August 13th.

[Provisions of PPACA Take Effect in WI](#)

Wisconsin recognized number of key provisions in federal [Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act \(PPACA\)](#) that took effect on September 23, six months following the signing of the health care law. These provisions will affect small business owners and their employees, children, young adults, and people formerly denied coverage because of a pre-existing condition.

[HIRSP Audit Released](#)

The Legislative Audit Bureau has released its audit of the HIRSP Authority, which provides medical and prescription drug insurance for individuals who are unable to obtain coverage in the private market or who have lost employer-sponsored group health insurance. As of December 31, 2009, 16,381 policyholders were enrolled in one of the HIRSP Authority's plans. In July 2010, as part of the federal health care reform efforts, the federal government contracted with the HIRSP Authority to implement a temporary federal high-risk pool program to provide access to insurance for individuals who are uninsured because of pre-existing medical conditions. The HIRSP Federal Plan, with coverage effective August 1, 2010, is expected to operate until 2014.

[WI Submits Plan for Statewide Health IT](#)

Wisconsin's WIRED for Health Board submitted its [plan for Wisconsin](#) to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Once it is fully implemented, the statewide network will enable health care providers to better coordinate patient care and improve efficiency of health care delivery in Wisconsin.

[State Designated Entity Recommended for Health Information Exchange](#)

The WIRED for Health [Board voted unanimously](#) to recommend that the Wisconsin State Health Information Network (WISHIN) should serve as the state-designated entity (SDE) to implement a system of statewide health information exchange. WISHIN is a consortium of the Wisconsin Hospital Association, the Wisconsin Medical Society, the Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality, and the Wisconsin Health Information Organization.

[State Seeks Extra \\$675 Million for Health Care](#)

DHS released its [budget estimates](#) for the next biennium, in which it is requesting \$675 million additional state support to maintain health care programs for the poor, elderly and disabled.

[Wisconsin Receiving an Additional \\$185 million in Medicaid FMAP](#)

President Obama in August signed a law an additional Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) through June 2011, extending the enhanced FMAP that was provided from last year's ARRA funding. This provides Wisconsin an additional \$185 million in federal Medicaid matching funds. The increases have been scaled back from the original 6.2 percent for six months to 3.2 percent for the first additional quarter (January 2011 through March 2011) and 1.2 percent for the second quarter (April 2011 through June 2011). A paper released by the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families [examines the role of the enhanced Medicaid reimbursement rate](#) in Wisconsin. The [Legislative Fiscal Bureau \(LFB\) also issued new figures](#) relating to the effect of the extended federal fiscal relief for Medicaid on Wisconsin's Medicaid (and BadgerCare Plus) deficit.

[Census Bureau: Recession Pushes Poverty Up, Job-Based Health Coverage Down](#)

The recession has had a significant impact on employer-sponsored health care coverage. An estimated 531,000 Wisconsinites lacked health insurance in 2008-09, [according to the new CPS data](#). In Wisconsin, BadgerCare Plus has filled the gap for many families and individuals who lost their job-based coverage due to the recession. According to the CPS data, approximately 160,000 Wisconsinites under the age of 65 lost their employer-sponsored coverage from 2006-07 to 2008-09, but 141,000 gained Medicaid or BadgerCare Plus coverage.

Related to this, the [Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel reports](#) that, despite recession and job losses, there has not been an expected surge in charity care provided by health care systems in the Milwaukee area, possibly because government programs filled the gap. In the Milwaukee area, the amount of free and discounted care provided by the health systems has been stable when calculated as a percentage of patient revenue

[New Campaign Focuses on Health Insurance for Children](#)

The new [Get Covered, Get in the Game](#) campaign launched August 19th. Wisconsin is one of six states nationally participating, led by the U.S. DHHS, aimed toward enrolling children in health care coverage. The campaign will recruit athletic coaches at 20 high schools around Wisconsin, as well as community groups such as the Boys and Girls Club, youth soccer, and the United Way, to get the word out to families eligible for state or federal health insurance programs.

[Wisconsin Partnership Program Releases 2009 Annual Report](#)

The University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health has released the 2009 annual report of the [Wisconsin Partnership Program \(WPP\)](#). The document reports on the distribution of funds resulting from Blue Cross and Blue Shield United of Wisconsin's conversion to a for-profit corporation. During its first five-years, the WPP awarded more than \$90 million for 200 research initiatives and community-academic partnerships around the state.

[Grand Opening of AIDS Network Dental Clinic in Madison](#)

The Madison-based AIDS Network officially opened a new dental care facility, providing education, restorative and preventive dental care to HIV-positive people who reside in Wisconsin.

State to Receive \$1.96 Million for Public Health Improvement Programs

Wisconsin is receiving a \$1.96 million federal grant to help increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the state's public health system. The grant is being funded by the Affordable Care Act and administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to support efforts to improve state and local public health department performance and outcomes.

UW to Survey Milwaukee Area Neighborhoods About Health Issues

The [Survey of the Health of Wisconsin](#) - a statewide research project by the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health - will be meeting with people in the Milwaukee area in September and throughout October to complete its third year of research into the health of state residents.

Wisconsin Immunization Registry Wins National Award

The Wisconsin Immunization Registry (WIR), a tool that helped Wisconsin children reach top compliance levels for immunizations, won the prestigious 2010 Davies Award of Excellence. The WIR, an innovative health information system, collects vaccination data to help doctors and clinics keep patients on track to get life-saving immunizations while protecting patient privacy.

For Every \$1 Spent on Helping Smokers Quit, Wisconsin Would See \$1.12 Return

A new study released by the American Lung Association finds that helping smokers quit not only saves lives but also offers favorable economic benefits to states. The study, titled *Smoking Cessation: the Economic Benefits*, provides a state-by-state cost-benefit analysis that compares the costs to society of smoking with the economic benefits of states providing cessation (quit-smoking) coverage.

State Receives \$2.4 Million To Train Health Care Professionals

Four Wisconsin universities and the [Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative](#) will receive \$2.4 million in grants to train health care professionals. The grants include almost \$1 million to Carroll University in Waukesha and almost \$600,000 to Marquette University. The money was part of \$130.8 million in grants, including \$88.7 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

State Awarded \$628,000 to Train Public Health Workforce

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has awarded \$628,480 to the University of Wisconsin System to train a public health workforce in the state. The award will establish a new Wisconsin Center for Public Health Education and Training (WiCPHET).

WI Medical Society Launches Center to Reduce Treatment Variation and Costs

The Wisconsin Medical Society and Wisconsin employers have teamed up to analyze data from the [Wisconsin Health Information Organization \(WHIO\) Data Mart](#). Preliminary results of a six-month study indicate that variation exists in the way physicians diagnose and treat some health conditions—and that variation is sometimes significant. The workgroups studied claims data for 1.6 million Wisconsin residents across four key areas: orthopedics, cardiology, gastroenterology and behavioral health (psychiatry and addiction medicine). Now, the WMS has launched a new Center for Medical Practice Research and Education, which will 1) use WHIO data to identify

sources of treatment variation, 2) determine what variation is acceptable based on quality, patient population, and cultural and geographic differences, 3) establish strategies for reducing variation.

UWSP to Offer Bachelor's Degrees in Nursing

The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point is set to begin offering central Wisconsin's first baccalaureate nursing program, filling an important need in the local health care community. UWSP and UW-Oshkosh have agreed to offer Oshkosh's Bachelor of Science in nursing courses in Stevens Point, starting in January. A mix of Oshkosh and Stevens Point faculty members will teach the courses.

More Rural Medical Clinics on the Way

Farming families and countryside dwellers who once drove miles into town for treatment now have a clinic in their backyard. Major medical providers started building rural clinics about four years ago, and more are on the way.

Wisconsin Healthcorps Program Launched

A newly-created, community-based service project named Wisconsin HealthCorps has officially launched, providing interested national AmeriCorps members with the opportunity to help improve the public health environment in some of Wisconsin's most medically-underserved communities.

Medical Software Firm Awarded \$800,000 Grant

An Elm Grove medical imaging software firm received an \$800,000 innovation grant from the National Institutes of Health, the company said Wednesday. Imaging Biometrics LLC will use the Small Business Innovation Research grant to develop and distribute its software to neuroradiologists, oncologists and surgeons, said Michael Schmainda, chief executive officer.

Major Pharmaceutical Firms Showing More Interest in Wisconsin Research

An upcoming visit to Wisconsin by representatives of Teva, one of the world's 20 largest pharmaceutical firms, is the latest example of a trend within "Big Pharma" to shop for promising drugs far outside its own laboratories - in the labs of innovative start-up companies. It's a trend that generally bodes well for Wisconsin, which is among 15 or so states with significant R&D around biotechnology drugs.

Court Puts Stem Cell Researchers Back to Work in Wisconsin, For Now

A panel of appellate judges removed barriers to embryonic stem cell research funded by federal grants in a decision Thursday, Sept. 9 reversing a suspension of funding ordered in August by another federal judge.

Wisconsin's First Human Case of West Nile Virus Reported

State health officials have reported the state's first confirmed human case of West Nile virus (WNV) in 2010. The case was diagnosed in a Washington County resident during routine screening of blood donations. Because screening of blood donated by this patient yielded a positive result for the genetic material of West Nile virus, the Blood Center of Wisconsin destroyed all of the blood and blood products from this donation to prevent the donated blood

from entering the blood supply. The patient later reported ill with mild West Nile-like virus symptoms.

[Reported Lyme Disease Cases in Wisconsin on the Rise](#)

This summer's warm, wet weather, a migration of bugs from up north and generally better reporting methods have led to a surge in Lyme disease across central Wisconsin. Health departments are reporting spikes in Lyme disease throughout the state.

[Infant Mortality Group in Wisconsin Receiving More Support](#)

The African American Infant Mortality Coalition (AAIMC) has received commitment from state and community agencies, and recently attracted grant dollars from the Wisconsin Partnership Program. Formed to educate the community on the disparity between white and African American infant mortality rates, the AAIMC led by President Marilyn Kilgore has organized health fairs and is attracting state attention.

[RESEARCH AND PROGRAM TOOLS](#)

[BadgerCare + Toolbox](#)

Covering Kids & Families has developed the Toolbox to help schools and community organizations connect uninsured families to BadgerCare+, Wisconsin's public health insurance program.

[2010 Report: Wisconsin Public Health Preparedness](#)

Being prepared to prevent, respond to, and recover from all types of public health threats requires that states and localities improve their capabilities in surveillance, epidemiology, laboratories, and response readiness.

[Wisconsin Local Health Department Survey](#)

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) is mandated by section 251.05, Wisconsin Statutes, to collect information annually from local health departments (LHDs) for use in a local public health data system. The 2008 Local Health Department Survey was conducted within DHS by the Office of Policy and Practice Alignment, Wisconsin Division of Public Health (DPH).

New and Updated Resources from the **[Kaiser Family Foundation](#)**

- **[A Guide to Sept. 23: Health Law's Big Day](#)**
- **[Eligibility and Enrollment Processes For Medicaid, CHIP, and Subsidies](#)**
- **[A Consumer's Guide to the Health Law, Six Months In](#)**

New and Updated Resources from the **[Commonwealth Fund](#)**

[AHRO Releases New Spanish Language Guides for Patients](#)

HHS' Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality has released a series of free evidence-based guides designed to help Spanish speakers understand and compare the risks, benefits and side effects of treatments for eight health conditions. The guides provide valuable information that patients can use in talking with their clinicians.

[HHS: Understanding the Affordable Care Act, a video introduction](#)

EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

[Health Insurance Reform Seminar by Dr. Jennifer DeVoe](#)

Thursday, October 7th, 2010, 1335 Health Sciences Learning Center, Madison, WI

[AHRQ: Integrating Comparative Effectiveness Research into Everyday Practice](#)

Tuesday, October 12th, 2010, Webinar

[Forward Health Top 10 Billing Issues and Remedies to Fix Them](#)

Tuesday, October 12th, 2010, Webinar

[Catalyzing Global Health: Passion and Public-Private Collaborations](#)

Wednesday, October 13th, 2010, Fluno Center for Executive Education, Madison, WI

[Wisconsin Health Information Organization \(WHIO\) Orientation Session](#)

Tuesday, October 19th, Tuesday, November 16th, and Tuesday, December 14th, 2010, Webinar

[Performance Improvement Continuing Medical Education \(PI CME\)](#)

Thursday, October 21st, 2010, Webinar

[Traveling Exhibit: Making a Difference in Global Health](#)

October 25 – December 23rd, Health Sciences Learning Center Atrium, Madison WI

[Community Engagement for Health Conference 2010](#)

Tuesday, October 26th, 2010, Italian Conference Center, Milwaukee, WI

[The Changing Landscape of Health Insurance after National Healthcare Reform](#)

Thursday, October 28th, 2010, Madison, WI

[WI DHS: FOCUS 2010 Conference "Striving for Excellence in Challenging Times"](#)

November 17th and 18th, Kalahari Convention Center, Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin

READING ROOM

[Many Emergency Department Visits Could Be Managed At Urgent Care Centers](#)

Americans seek a large amount of nonemergency care in emergency departments, where they often encounter long waits to be seen. Urgent care centers and retail clinics have emerged as alternatives to the emergency department for nonemergency care.

Americans Cut Risk of Heart Disease Death in Half, Prevention Is Key

By smoking less, watching their cholesterol and lowering their high blood pressure, Americans halved their risk of dying from coronary heart disease over the past 20 years, a new study shows. While treating existing heart disease also helped reduce mortality rates, preventing heart disease from occurring in the first place made the biggest dent by far.

Obesity-Related Quality-Adjusted Life Years Lost in the U.S. from 1993 to 2008

Although trends in the prevalence of obesity and obesity-attributable deaths have been examined, little is known about the resultant burden of disease associated with obesity. This study examined trends in the burden of obesity by estimating the obesity-related quality-adjusted life years (QALYs) lost— defined as the sum of QALYs lost due to morbidity and future QALYs lost in expected life years due to premature deaths—among U.S. adults along with differences by gender, race/ethnicity, and state.

Uninsured Children: Who Are They and Where Do They Live

The number of uninsured children has declined since the late 1990s, reaching the lowest level reported in more than 20 years in 2008. Notwithstanding that progress, an estimated 7.3 million children lack health insurance coverage, most of whom are eligible for public health insurance under either Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

Medicare Beneficiaries in Donut Hole: 50-Percent Discount on Brand Name Drugs

The nation's pharmaceutical manufacturers will provide 50 percent discounts on the cost of covered brand-name prescription drugs for beneficiaries in the Medicare Part D coverage gap, or donut hole, starting in 2011.

Steps Needed to Slow Antibiotic-Resistant Infections

The United States must focus on conserving the use of antibacterial drugs, or face a public health crisis from rapidly rising rates of antibiotic-resistant infections. Evidence indicates that our nation's supply of antibiotics is being depleted by resistance, which occurs when infection-causing microbes mutate or change so that they no longer respond to widely-used treatments.

A Progress Report On Electronic Health Records in U.S. Hospitals

Promoting the adoption and use of health information technology (IT) is a major priority for U.S. policy makers as a means of managing health care costs and improving quality. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) authorized incentive payments through Medicare and Medicaid to providers that implement certified electronic health records and demonstrate their "meaningful use."

Current Cigarette Smoking Among Adults Aged ≥18 Years --- United States, 2009

Cigarette smoking continues to be the leading cause of preventable morbidity and mortality in the United States, causing approximately 443,000 premature deaths annually. In 2009, 20.6% of U.S. adults aged ≥18 years were current cigarette smokers. Previous declines in smoking prevalence in the United States have stalled during the past 5 years.