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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

Republicans Gain Control of Governorship, Statehouse; Health Policy to Pivot

Republican candidate Scott Walker has been elected Wisconsin's next Governor, and Republicans gained the control of both the state Assembly and Senate in Tuesday's voting, giving them control of all of state government. Governor-elect Walker's positions [on healthcare policy](#) and [on BadgerCare](#) , are posted on his campaign website.

Doyle Admin Moves Forward on Insurance Exchange; Legislature on Separate Track

Wisconsin is receiving a \$1 million federal grant to begin work on an online health insurance exchange. The exchange will consist of an online marketplace where Wisconsin small business owners and individuals can go to compare and purchase health care plans. It is estimated that as many as 2 million Wisconsin residents will obtain their coverage from the exchange.

Meanwhile, [Wisconsin's Special Committee on Health Reform Implementation](#) canceled its October 21 meeting and will next convene on November 9. The committee is considering [special issues with regard to the application of the federal health reform law](#).

WISHIN Selected to Governor Wisconsin's Health IT Network

The Wisconsin Relay of Electronic Data (WIRED) for Health Board has selected the Wisconsin State Health Information Network (WISHIN) to develop a statewide Health Information Exchange. The new organization will establish the first features of statewide health information exchange in 2011. As part of its initial work, the exchange will allow more health care providers to receive summaries of recent patient visits and lab results electronically from other health care providers who are not associated with the same clinic or health system. WISHIN is a non-profit organization formed by the [Wisconsin Hospital Association](#), the [Wisconsin Health Information Organization](#), the [Wisconsin Collaborative for Health Care Quality](#) and the [Wisconsin Medical Society](#).

Third Medical School for Wisconsin Considered

Wisconsin's Special Committee on Health Care Access continues to address the maldistribution and shortage of primary care physicians, and had recently also discussed concerns about the dental provider, nursing, and public health workforce. Much of the testimony and discussion within the meetings has also concerned the potential to develop a third medical school in Wisconsin, and whether that could alleviate the shortages of primary care physicians and those serving rural areas of the state.

Teen Healthy Behavior Programs Granted \$4.7 Million

Wisconsin will receive \$4.7 million over five years to prevent unintended teen pregnancy and reduce the youth cases of STD and HIV/AIDS. Grant-funded programs are also aimed toward helping young people improve communication with parents, maintain healthy relationships and understand basic financial topics. The grant will support programs targeted at youth ages 10 to 19, especially at-risk youth who are homeless, in foster care, live in areas with high teen birth rate or are living with HIV/AIDS.

\$2.1 Million to Help Seniors, Disabled Access Health and Long-Term Care Options

Wisconsin will receive \$2.1 million in federal long-term care grants to help seniors and persons with disabilities understand and access their health care options and manage the transition from nursing home to community-based care, especially community-based long-term care options.

State Expands Medicaid Birth Control Services

The Wisconsin State Journal reports that the state DHS expanded its birth control services under Medicaid before the planned start date of November 1, the day before a new governor was elected, even though the federal government had not yet granted approval. The state is sure that the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services will eventually approve the plan retroactive to November 1. The plan, allowed under the new health care law, lets the state continue providing free birth control pills, vasectomies and other contraceptives to more low-income people than some states without having to periodically reapply, as the state must do now. The services also include Pap smears and testing for sexually transmitted diseases.

[New Census Data: 9.4% of Wisconsin Residents Uninsured in 2009](#)

Wisconsin's child poverty rate increased significantly last year, according to data from the American Community Survey (ACS) released by the U.S. Census Bureau. The recession has also had an impact on health insurance coverage in Wisconsin. While BadgerCare Plus has allowed Wisconsin to fare better than most states in covering its population, the loss of jobs has resulted in a larger percentage of uninsured people than in recent years. According to the Census Bureau, 9.4% of Wisconsin residents lacked health insurance in 2009, which was the 7th lowest nationally.

[Milwaukee's Neediest Lack Primary Care Access](#)

Most primary care physician offices in Milwaukee County are located outside of the areas where services are most needed, according to a study in the October issue of the *[Wisconsin Medical Journal](#)* (Vol. 109, No. 5). The study focuses on organizational factors that influence access to primary care, including geographic distribution of physician offices, types and hours of practices and acceptance of new patients. "Although the majority of physicians accepted new patients, most providers were only available during standard business hours, were located outside the center city, and limited acceptance of patients who were on Medicaid or had no health insurance," the authors wrote.

[WI Hospitals Provide \\$1.18 Billion in Community Benefits; No Surge in Charity Care](#)

Wisconsin hospitals report that the number of patients that are unable to pay their bills in part or in full has increased over the past 18 months, and patient enrollment in BadgerCare has increased enormously. At the same time, the *[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#)* reports that, despite the heavy job losses in the recession, the amount of free and discounted care provided by the health systems has been stable when calculated as a percentage of patient revenue. As well, the amount of bad debt also has not risen noticeably. This is attributed to the growth in coverage under BadgerCare for those who lost employer-sponsored health insurance coverage.

[New VA Regulations Provide Easier Paths for Veterans to Receive Medical Benefits](#)

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs wants to make Wisconsin's veterans aware of new federal regulations. The federal Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently published a final regulation on presumptive illnesses for Gulf War (including Iraq) and Afghanistan veterans. Published in the *[Federal Register](#)*, these final regulations make it easier for veterans to access quality health care and disability compensation. "What these new regulations will do for the veterans community is remove the barriers for ill veterans in applying for the medical care they deserve," said Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) Secretary Ken Black.

[Promoting Access to Health Care Through Patient Advocacy in Wisconsin](#)

[ABC for Health](#) has submitted a white paper titled "Promoting Access to Health Care Through Patient Advocacy in Wisconsin" to the Access to Health Care Committee.

[Nearly 500,000 Wisconsinites will be Eligible for Health Care Premium Tax Credits](#)

In Wisconsin, 476,900 people will be eligible for new tax cuts beginning in 2014 that will significantly reduce the cost of private health insurance for those individuals and families. The tax credits in the federal PPACA will offset a portion of the cost of health insurance premiums. Wisconsinites' tax reductions are estimated at approximately \$1.7 billion in 2014.

[WI Receives \\$637,000 Grant to Create Consumer Assistance Program for Residents](#)

Wisconsin will receive \$637,114 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to fund a Consumer Assistance Program. The grant will fund state efforts to protect consumers through the Patient's Bill of Rights set forth in national health care reform and provide residents with additional assistance and advocacy in resolving issues with health insurance coverage.

[Wisconsin's Community Health Center Receiving \\$16M for Construction, Renovation](#)
[U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) announced that [community health centers in Wisconsin](#) will receive about \$16 million in federal funding. The money is earmarked for construction and renovation, to help the health centers serve more patients.

[Sixteenth Street Community Health Center Receives \\$2.6 Million Grant](#)

[Sixteenth Street Community Health Center](#), based on the near-south side of Milwaukee, has received a \$2.6 million grant as part of federal health care reform and a commitment of \$2 million from the Waukesha Memorial Hospital Foundation to open a clinic in Waukesha. The clinic will be the first affiliated with a community health center in Waukesha County. Community health centers provide primary care and other services in low-income urban and rural areas.

['WINNERS' Community Health Partnership Secures Million Dollar Grant](#)

A partnership between researchers from the UW–Madison School of Nursing and two Madison community organizations has received \$1 million in federal funding to improve community health while supporting health research. The University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Nursing, the [Lussier Community Education Center](#), and the [Goodman Community Center](#) in Madison have been awarded a three-year grant to establish Project WINNERS (Wisconsin Network for New Employment and Research Support).

[Marshfield Clinic Awarded Funding to Expand Primary Care Residency](#)

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has awarded \$3.8 million to the Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation for primary care residency expansion. The funding is the largest chunk of an \$11.2 million grant divided among Wisconsin educators and health care providers to strengthen the state's health care workforce.

[Marquette awarded 5-year grant to treat children with orthopedic disabilities](#)

Marquette University has been named a national Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center by the U.S. Department of Education and will receive nearly \$5 million over the next five years to implement four research and four development projects aimed at addressing the needs of children with orthopaedic disabilities.

[Foundation Links Medical Professionals to Research Expertise](#)

With \$1 million of seed money to draw upon, a new foundation is seeking to harness the brainpower of thousands of medical professionals across Wisconsin and create a huge research and development network. Among potential innovations: pelvic fracture sealants, laser-based surgical instruments and safer blood thinners. The new foundation will help 3,400 medical professionals at hospitals, clinics and university laboratories across the state bring their innovations to market.

[Local Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families Efforts Set to Begin](#)

Coalitions in three cities will formally launch their efforts to improve birth outcomes among Wisconsin's African-Americans. The events will introduce the [Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families](#), an up to \$10 million collaboration between the [Wisconsin Partnership Program](#) of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health and groups in Beloit, Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine.

[State Has Filed Motion to Join Stem Cell Funding Amicus Brief](#)

The state has filed a motion in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia seeking permission to join an amicus brief in *Sherley v. Sebelius*, a legal case challenging the National Institutes of Health's embryonic stem cell research guidelines. The state has pledged to assist the U.S. Department of Justice in its efforts to uphold the guidelines and secure federal funding for stem cell researchers in Wisconsin and across the nation.

[UW-Madison Researcher Aims to Break Habit of Implicit Bias](#)

A University of Wisconsin-Madison doctor who has long worked to increase the entry of women into the scientific workforce has won a grant to develop video games to uncover and neutralize implicit, unintentional biases against women, minorities and people with disabilities. After years of effort, many fields in science, math, engineering and medicine still have trouble attracting and retaining women and minorities, and all find women underrepresented in leadership.

[Governor Receives Award from American Cancer Society](#)

Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle has been awarded the National Distinguished Advocacy Award, the most prestigious honor bestowed by the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) in gratitude for the Governor's commitment to strong public health and tobacco control policies. The annual award is given by ACS CAN, the advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, to select lawmakers.

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New and Updated Resources from the [Common Wealth Fund](#)

- [Why Not the Best?](#)
- [A Manual for Replication of the *Help Me Grow* System](#)

[Communicating with Your Healthcare Team](#)

Communicating effectively with your healthcare provider is critical to staying informed and involved. From scheduling an appointment to wrapping up your doctor visit, effective communication will help to ensure that you get what you need.

[New guidelines drop the "P" from CPR](#)

When an adult has a sudden cardiac arrest, his or her survival depends greatly on immediately getting CPR from someone nearby. The American Heart Association has simplified that process.

[Wisconsin Hospitals 2010 Community Benefits Report](#)

The number of patients that were unable to pay their bills in part or in full increased as enrollment in the state's medical assistance program—BadgerCare—skyrocketed. Patients that had nowhere else to turn began to seek care in hospital emergency departments – some for the first time in their lives.

[Early Retiree Reinsurance Program](#)

Rising health care costs have made it difficult for employers to provide quality, affordable health insurance for workers and retirees while also remaining competitive in the global marketplace. The Affordable Care Act creates a new program called the Early Retiree Reinsurance Program to help address this challenge that employers and older employees are facing.

[Training Webinar Video on Open Enrollment](#)

[EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS](#)

[New Webinar: Health Insurance Exchanges and the Affordable Care Act](#)

November 4, 2010, 2:00pm, EDT

[Legislative Council Special Committee on Health Reform Implementation](#)

November 9

[Legislative Council Special Committee on Health Care Access/Workforce](#)

November 22

[Population Health Monday Seminar Series](#)

Mondays, 12:00-1:00 pm. Health Sciences Learning Center

[READING ROOM](#)

[Health Affairs Focuses on Value-Based Insurance Design](#)

This month's issue of *Health Affairs* offers a thematic cluster of articles that focus on value-based insurance design. The cluster considers evidence on value-based insurance design as a strategy for changing patient behavior. Two studies examine the effects of value-based insurance design, which as currently construed, typically reduces cost sharing for services that have strong evidence of clinical benefit. The studies show the effect of reducing or eliminating cost sharing on patient adherence to medications. Another study, focusing on Oregon, reports that many purchasers will choose to avoid employee pushback – by increasing traditional cost sharing rather than adding copay disincentives in value-based benefit programs.

[IOM Launches Study on Geographic Variation](#)

The Institute on Medicine (IOM) has appointed a panel to study geographic variation in health care spending and how to promote high-value care for individuals with Medicare, Medicaid, private insurance, or no insurance. The study will look at how variation may or may not be

related to factors such as the cost of care, the supply of care, quality of care, and health outcomes; diversity within patient populations, patients' current state of health, access to care, insurance coverage, and patients' preferences for their care; physicians' decisions on what care to give and the availability of reliable medical evidence to guide those decisions; and how a geographic area is defined. The IOM will use the committee's findings to recommend changes to Medicare payment systems, especially for high-volume, high-cost conditions.

Mobile Health 2010

Online health-information is going mobile, particularly among younger adults. The Pew Internet Project's latest survey of American adults finds that 85% use a cell phone. Of these cell phone users, 17% have used their phone to look up health or medical information and 29% of cell owners ages 18-29 have done such searches. Of cell owners, 9% have software applications or "apps" on their phones that help them track or manage their health. Some 15% of those ages 18-29 have such apps.

What Changes In Survival Rates Tell Us About US Health Care

Many advocates of US health reform point to the nation's relatively low life-expectancy rankings as evidence that the health care system is performing poorly. Others say that poor US health outcomes are largely due not to health care but to high rates of smoking, obesity, traffic fatalities, and homicides. Researchers in this study used cross-national data on the fifteen-year survival of men and women over three decades to examine the validity of these arguments.

Health Reform to Worsen Doctor Shortage

The AAMC (Association of American Medical Colleges) has released new physician shortage estimates based on projections by the Center for Workforce Studies that, beginning in 2015, are 50 percent worse than originally anticipated prior to health care reform.

Number of Americans with Diabetes Projected to Double or Triple by 2050

As many as 1 in 3 U.S. adults could have diabetes by 2050 if current trends continue, according to a new analysis from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). One in 10 U.S. adults has diabetes now. The prevalence is expected to rise sharply over the next 40 years due to an aging population more likely to develop type 2 diabetes, increases in minority groups that are at high risk for type 2 diabetes, and people with diabetes living longer.

State Disparities in Teenage Birth Rates in the United States

Despite nearly two decades of declining teenage birth rates, significant disparities in state-specific rates persist. This report examines disparities in teenage birth rates by state and among the largest racial and ethnic population groups. The most current data available from the National Vital Statistics System are from the 2008 preliminary file (4). Variations by race and ethnicity by state are illustrated using 2007 data, the most recent available with this detail.

Barber-Based Intervention for Improving Hypertension Control in Black Men

The [barbershop](#) plays a central role in the African American community. The black barbershop owner has become an influential source of health advice too. Public health officials and researchers have been actively enlisting his help in an effort to narrow gaping disparities in healthcare access and uptake that put [black men at a deep disadvantage](#) compared with whites.

In US, Hispanics Outlive Whites, Blacks by Years

U.S. Hispanics can expect to outlive whites by more than two years and blacks by more than seven, government researchers say in a startling report that is the first to calculate Hispanic life expectancy in this country. The report released Wednesday is the strongest evidence yet of what some experts call the "Hispanic paradox" — longevity for a population with a large share of poor, undereducated members. A leading theory is that Hispanics who manage to immigrate to the U.S. are among the healthiest from their countries.

Nutrition Labels Need to be Standardized

The federal government, through the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990, requires that most packaged foods carry a standardized label—the Nutrition Facts panel—that provides certain nutrition information intended to help consumers make healthful choices. In recent years, manufacturers have begun to include additional nutrition messages, often represented in symbol form, on their food packages. These messages are commonly referred to as “front-of-package” (FOP) labeling, even though they may appear anywhere on the food package or on store shelves. As FOP labeling has multiplied, it has become easy for consumers to be confused about critical nutrition information. Adding to the confusion, manufacturers use a variety of FOP nutrition rating systems, with different and often conflicting criteria that can yield varying results.

Americans in the Dark about Lung Cancer, Survey Finds

According to a survey released by the National Lung Cancer Partnership, Americans know little about lung cancer’s causes, symptoms and the number of lives it takes compared to other cancers. The survey of 1,000 American men and women age 18 and older found most women were unaware that lung cancer takes more women’s lives each year than breast cancer. Most men surveyed were unaware that lung cancer takes more men’s lives each year than prostate cancer.