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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 [Colleen Comeau](mailto:Colleen.Comeau@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

Bill Would Give the Governor Broad Powers over Health Programs

Governor Walker's proposed budget repair bill would give his administration broad powers to reshape state Medicaid and BadgerCare health programs. The bill authorizes the Department of Health Services to make program changes in benefits and eligibility determination, notwithstanding limits in state law related to specific program provisions. The proposed changes will require only passive approval of the Joint Committee on Finance, which has a broad margin of control for majority Republican lawmakers.

Fiscal Bureau Reports on Potential Impact of Budget Bills Items

The non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau classifies two health care items in Governor Walker's budget repair bill as [non-fiscal policy items](#) and [Wisconsin Health News](#) reports that they have little impact on the current budget. The Governor proposes, as noted above, to increase the authority of the Department of Health Services to implement changes to the Medicaid and BadgerCare programs. The bill also eliminates a newly created registry for home health care workers. The Fiscal Bureau reports that neither measure would save the state money in the current budget, but that the DHS authority could produce significant savings in the next budget.

Medicaid and BadgerCare Undergoing Legislative Audit

Lawmakers recently approved a sweeping audit of the Medicaid and BadgerCare Programs. Two separate audits are underway: A [comprehensive overview of the Medicaid program's costs and administration](#), that will be delivered by Fall 2011, and a statutorily required review of the BadgerCare Plus Basic program, which will be completed in Spring 2011.

Evaluation of BadgerCare Plus Completed; Results Reported

The UW Population Health Institute, for the past two years, has been conducting RWJF-supported research on various aspects of the BadgerCare Plus program, including enrollment and take-up, continuity of coverage and churning, use of the on-line application, target efficiency and crowd-out. Some of the results were published in the [February issue of Health Services Research](#).

WI Office of Free Market Health Care Created

Governor Walker recently signed an executive order that created the Office of Free Market Health Care. This new office will be directed by the Department of Health Services and the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance.

\$637K Federal Health Care Grant Terminated

Wisconsin's insurance commissioner has terminated a \$637,114 grant issued through the federal health reform law, part of \$86 million awarded to the state, some of which also could be in question. Ted Nickel, the Commissioner of Insurance appointed by Gov. Scott Walker, has

ended a Consumer Assistance Grant announced in October to help people enroll in health coverage and file complaints under the new law.

Federal Health Law Declared 'Dead' in Wisconsin; Yet Implementation Proceeds

State Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen, following the decision by U.S. District Judge Roger Vinson in Florida that the entire law should be struck down for improperly requiring Americans to buy health insurance, asserted "This means that, for Wisconsin, the federal health care law is dead - unless and until it is revived by an appellate court." Nonetheless, [the Attorney General concedes](#) that he has not advised Governor Walker to stop implementation of the law.

Meanwhile, Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker and 27 other governors have signed a letter asking President Barack Obama to [expedite](#) the process to bring U.S. Supreme Court review of the Affordable Care Act.

Health Care Reform Cost or Savings to State Debated

DHS Secretary Dennis Smith testified before the U.S. House budget committee, [focusing on the state's Medicaid funding shortfall](#) and asserting that certain provisions of the ACA could cost Wisconsin \$433 million. However, other provisions of the law could bring nearly \$1 billion in additional federal Medicaid matching payments to Wisconsin. Advocates point out that this nets a \$500 million savings from 2014 to 2019 from health care reform.

WISPIRG has also released a report, [The Cost of Repeal: Examining the Impact on Wisconsin of Repealing the New Federal Health Care Law](#), arguing that repeal would strip tax credits from 86,100 Wisconsin small businesses. Over the longer term, the report asserts, the cost of offering employer-based health insurance could jump by more than \$3000 a year over current law.

Debate Continues over Marshfield's Plan for Wisconsin's Second Dental School

Marshfield Clinic recently announced a plan to open the state's second dental school, and had secured \$10 million from an affiliate and a matching state grant. The plan includes a new school in Marshfield and several new state and federally funded dental clinics where students would gain clinical experience in rural communities. But the Wisconsin Dental Association and the state's only dental school say the new school is unnecessary and that government-subsidized clinics would unfairly compete with existing private dentists.

Wisconsin Ranks 12th in State Scorecard on Children's Health Care

The *State Scorecard on Child Health System Performance, 2011*, examines states' performance on 20 key indicators of children's health care access, affordability of care, prevention and treatment, the potential to lead healthy lives, and health system equity. The analysis, by the Commonwealth Fund, finds wide variation in performance across states. Wisconsin's specific rankings among states: Access and Affordability: 21; Prevention and Treatment: 14; Potential to Lead Healthy Lives: 8; Equity: 25.

Madison Ranks High for Health Insurance Coverage

Madison is one of the most insured cities in the country, according to [a report compiled by The Daily Beast website](#). Madison ranked fourth on the list of metropolitan areas for health insurance coverage, while Appleton was eighth. The ranking is based on four factors, using 2009 census data: percentages with health insurance of the general population, 18 or younger, 65 or over, and the disabled.

[Study Shows Potential Health Insurance Savings for WI School Districts](#)

The conservative [John K. MacIver Institute for Public Policy](#) has released a study concluding that a competitive health care marketplace can yield cost savings for school districts across Wisconsin. The study also reports that districts that shop around often leave WEA Trust, although it still remains the most popular provider for Wisconsin school districts. The study used data provided by the Wisconsin Association of School Boards.

[New Health Care Cost Disclosure Law Takes Effect; Early Information Limited](#)

As of January 1, 2011, Wisconsin's patients have a right to information about charges, insurance payments and out-of-pocket costs for the most common types of care at hospitals and clinics. The health care transparency law aims to support informed consumer-purchasing and utilization in health care, and increase price and quality competition among providers. However, the [Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel reports](#) that, at least initially, consumers get information only on request and can see only retail price and not the negotiated rate applicable to their health insurance plan.

[New Law Requires Carbon Monoxide Detectors in Dwellings](#)

On February 1, 2011, a new law took effect that requires carbon monoxide (CO) alarms to be installed in all one- and two-family dwellings.

[New Law Requires More School Training to Dispense Medication](#)

Changes in Wisconsin law specifies that, as of March 1, 2011 schools will need to ensure whoever administers medication in schools has taken [training approved by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction](#). Public schools have someone designated to administer an EpiPen, a diabetes shot or oral medication when a student needs it. Madison's [Isthmus newspaper also reports](#) that the new law constrains public in their ability to dispense medication to students and respond to health emergencies.

[Partnership Pledges \\$2.1 Million to Improve Health of Wisconsin Communities](#)

The [Wisconsin Partnership Program](#) has pledged \$2.1 million to 14 projects aimed at improving the health of Wisconsin's communities. The [Oversight and Advisory Committee \(OAC\)](#) of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health funded these projects through its [Community-Academic Partnership Fund](#).

[Lucigen Awarded \\$1.46 Million R&D Grant](#)

Lucigen Corporation has recently been awarded a Phase II Small Business Innovation Research grant to fund additional research and development. The National Institutes of Health has awarded Lucigen \$1,461,160 to be used over the next 3 years to develop research tools with the potential to improve human health.

[USDA Awards Funds to Improve Rural Health and Education](#)

Three Wisconsin organizations recently received more than \$919,000 to increase health care and educational access in rural communities. The grants are part of the USDA's Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program. More than \$34.7 million was awarded to 106 projects in 38 states.

Gov. Walker Named Chair of National Governors Association's HHS Committee

Governor Scott Walker was named chair of the National Governors Association's Health and Human Services Committee. Governor John Kitzhaber of Oregon will serve as vice-chair. The panel will play a leading role on issues involving health care reform and Medicaid reform.

UW Scientist Thomson Co-Winner of International Medicine Prize

University of Wisconsin-Madison's James Thomson and Kyoto University's Shinya Yamanaka are co-winners of the 2011 [King Faisal International Prize in Medicine](#). The two scientists won the award for their "pioneering and seminal" stem cell research.

UWHC & St. Mary's Hospitals Receive National Honor for Work in Organ Donation

St. Mary's Hospital and UW Hospital are among 307 hospitals nationally to receive a National Medal of Honor from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for their work to improve organ donation rates.

La Crosse-Eau Claire Area Makes National List for Hospital Care

HealthGrades, an independent health care ratings organization, ranks the La Crosse-Eau Claire area number 24 in the country for hospital care. The La Crosse-Eau Claire area was Wisconsin's top region in the rankings. The rankings were based on a study of patient death and complication rates at the nation's nearly 5,000 hospitals.

Aspirus Receives TeleMedicine Grant to Improve Service for Rural Patients

Aspirus has received \$486,707 for its telemedicine program, which will be used to install video cameras and monitors at its medical facilities so elderly and rural patients can meet with doctors who are hundreds of miles away.

Rep. Kind Named National Rural Health Association's Legislator of the Year

U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, member of both the House Ways and Means Committee health subcommittee and the Rural Health Coalition, was recently recognized as Legislator of the Year by the National Rural Health Association for his support, leadership and outstanding commitment to rural health care issues.

MCW: New CPR Technique for Cardiac Arrest Increases Survival by 53%

A study led by Dr. Tom P. Aufderheide, professor of emergency medicine at The Medical College of Wisconsin, shows an alternative method of cardio-pulmonary resuscitation increases long-term survival of patients. The study, which is published in the [January 19th, 2011 online version of Lancet](#), and will be in an upcoming publication of Lancet, determined that active compression-decompression cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) with augmentation of negative intrathoracic pressure gave patients a better chance of survival.

Art Project Weaves Humanities into Medical Education

A unique art project at the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) emphasized the importance of the humanities in medical students' education, according to a study in the *Wisconsin Medical Journal* (Vol. 109, No. 6). The Memory Art Project brought together medical students and older adults at an independent living facility in Milwaukee to improve communication skills and understanding among medical professionals and older adults.

[Hospitality Industry Performed Well After Wisconsin Smoking Ban](#)

Smoke-free ordinances in five Wisconsin cities, enacted years before the statewide law, did not have a negative economic impact on the hospitality industry, [according to a study recently released](#) by the [University of Wisconsin Carbone Cancer Center \(UWCCC\)](#).,the number of Class B alcohol licenses increased in virtually every city with an ordinance. The study notes a small dip in the number of taverns, which is consistent with a historical trend, while the number of employees working in taverns increased.

[Huge Child Health Survey Kicks off in Waukesha](#)

Waukesha County researchers have identified 100 babies who'll be part of a landmark study of children's health - a tiny fraction of the 100,000 nationwide who may eventually be identified for the largest long-term study of children's health ever conducted in the country. Waukesha County is among the first seven pilot locations, the only one in Wisconsin and part of 105 centers eventually who'll participate in the [National Children's Study](#). The \$2.7 billion study will follow children from before their birth until age 21 with the aim of identifying the influence of environmental factors, including physical, chemical, biological and psychosocial, on their health and development.

[HIV Increase Among Milwaukee Black Men Prompts CDC Investigation, Report](#)

A 144% increase in the number of reported HIV infections in Milwaukee County among young black men who have sex with men prompted a joint investigation by the Wisconsin Division of Public Health, Milwaukee Health Department and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The investigation found the increase likely wasn't due to intensified testing efforts, but to increased transmission of HIV through high risk behavior and nondisclosure of HIV status, and may be linked to internalized homophobia and living on the streets.

[Wisconsin Auditors Find Issues at Veteran Homes](#)

Poor oversight, infighting and leadership turnover has contributed to a host of financial problems at Wisconsin's two veteran homes, including deficit spending and purchasing violations, according to the Legislative Audit Bureau. The audit notes that the homes' staffs have been at odds with state Department of Veterans Affairs management in Madison for years."Inadequate communication and ineffective oversight persist within the agency, and they will need to be addressed if management is to improve," the report said.

[Red Cliff Wellness Curriculum Gains National Recognition as Evidence-Based Practice](#)

The Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Wellness School Curriculum has been recognized by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and included on its National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP). The Red Cliff Wellness School Curriculum is a substance abuse prevention intervention for grades K-12 based in Native American tradition and culture.

[RESEARCH AND PROGRAM TOOLS](#)

[New Blog on Improving Population Health](#)

Dr. David Kindig, in collaboration with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, launched [Improving Population Health](#) last May to explore current thinking population health policy, practice, and research. Recent posts include [Which Outcomes Should We Improve?](#), [Did You](#)

[Find Population Health in the State of the Union?](#), [Assessing Today's Health...and Tomorrow's](#), and [Unpacking the Triple Aim Model](#). [Subscribe here](#).

- New and Updated Resources from the [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#)
- New and Updated Resources from the [Commonwealth Fund](#)
- New and Updated Resources from the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#)
- New and Updated Resources from [AHRQ](#)
- New and Updated Resources from [HHS](#)

- [Prepared Patient](#)
The Prepared Patient Forum resources make it easier to find good care and get the most out of it. The Forum is part of the Center for Advancing Health (CFAH). CFAH has advocated for patients and health care consumers.

- [USDA & HHS: New Dietary Guidelines](#)
The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* has been published jointly every 5 years since 1980 by the [DHHS](#) and the [Department of Agriculture \(USDA\)](#). The Guidelines provide authoritative advice for people two years and older about how good dietary habits can promote health and reduce risk for major chronic diseases. They serve as the basis for Federal food and nutrition education programs.

- [CMS broadcast: "Improving Care and Lowering Costs in Medicaid"](#)

- [CDC Health Disparities and Inequalities Report — United States, 2011](#)

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[Dimensions of Diversity Webinar](#) , Webinar February 24th

[WHITEC Meaningful Use Forum](#), February 24th, Appleton, WI

[People in Crisis: Workshop on Impacts of Poverty](#), March 17th, Wausau, WI

[HealthWatch Wisconsin: "Health Reform: New Directions?"](#), March 7-8, Madison, WI

[Wisconsin AgriSafe® Training - Agricultural Medicine](#), March 31 – April 2, Wausau, WI

[4th Biennial Wisconsin Health Literacy Summit](#), April 12-13, 2011, Madison, WI

Health Equity Leadership Institute: Translational Research and Health Equity

June 20-24, 2011, University of Wisconsin-Madison

READING ROOM

America Under the Affordable Care Act

Using the Urban Institute's Health Insurance Policy Simulation Model (HIPSM), the authors estimate how the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act would affect health insurance coverage and spending on acute care for the nonelderly.

CCHIT Launches Customized EHR Certification Program for Hospitals

The Certification Commission for Healthcare Information Technology (CCHIT) recently announced the launch of its new EHR certification program for hospitals, which has been successfully piloted at three U.S. medical centers. The EHR Alternative Certification for Hospitals (EACH) is an ONC-ATCB 2011/2012 certification program for installed hospital EHR technology.

Follow the Money: Why are High-Cost Medicare Beneficiaries So Costly?

Policy makers may need to reconsider a commonly held premise that the supply of physicians, hospital beds and other health care resources is a major factor driving high Medicare costs, according [to a study by the Center for Studying Health System Change \(HSC\) published online in the journal *Health Services Research*.](#)

Can We Lower Medical Costs by Giving the Neediest Patients Better Care?

Surgeon and journalist Atul Gawande, writing in *The New Yorker*, considers how health care costs might be contained not by cutting back, but by providing more intensive services to "hot spotters" -- chronically ill patients who incur huge costs with long stays in hospital rooms and intensive care units.

Investing in Communities to Improve Health

RWJF reports on growing attention to the link between a person's health and the health of their community. The community development field is beginning to consider health as a factor in decisions about how its investments are made – from grocery stores and schools to sidewalks and parks. The Winter Issue of [Community Investments](#) published by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, examines the relationship between health and community development and the opportunities for partnerships between the two fields.