



**eNEWS – October 2013**  
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Information for eNews is compiled from several sources, including websites and lists from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Commonwealth Fund, *Health Affairs*, Kaiser Family Foundation, Milbank Quarterly, *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*, *Milwaukee Business Journal*, *The New York Times*, Urban Institute, Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, Wisconsin Health News, Wisconsin Medical Society, Wisconsin Hospital Association, Wispolitics.com, Wheeler Report, *Wisconsin State Journal*, Wisconsin Technology Network, and others.

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- [Health in All Policies: A Guide for State and Local Government](#)
- Wisconsin Toolbox:
  - [Enrollment for Health Wisconsin \(www.E4Healthwi.org\)](http://www.E4Healthwi.org): A clearinghouse of resources for those engaged in building awareness and providing training about the Affordable Care Act's health insurance reforms, and directly assisting and enrolling Wisconsin consumers in the state's new health insurance marketplace.
  - [Every Woman Wisconsin](#): A new interactive website designed to be a preconception health resource for women, families, advocates, and health providers, developed by the Healthiest Women Wisconsin leadership team.
  - [DHS Family Health Survey](#): Wisconsin released the 2011 report from the state Family Health Survey, which includes health insurance coverage statistics.

### **EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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## STATE NEWS

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### *Health Reform Implementation*

#### [OCI Releases Information on Rate Filings and Service Areas; HHS Releases Premium Information](#)

Wisconsin's Office of the Insurance Commissioner completed an initial analysis of rate filings for plans offering coverage in Wisconsin through the new health insurance marketplace. The analysis includes percent premium increases for different geographic locations and age cohorts, but does not include premium subsidies that will be available for some consumers based on income level. The [Associated Press](#) and [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#) reported on the release and reactions.

Later in September, OCI released [county-by-county information](#) on which plans in the individual and small market exchange (SHOP) will be available for consumers to purchase starting October 1<sup>st</sup>, for coverage beginning January 1<sup>st</sup>. Every county in Wisconsin has at least one health plan serving their area in the individual marketplace.

[Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield also announced](#) that it will no longer be sell new individual insurance policies in 41 Wisconsin counties, focusing its efforts around specific geographies and health care provider systems.

[HHS](#) Released an issue brief on national trends in plan choices and costs in the new marketplaces.

#### [OCI FAQ for Navigators and Certified Application Counselors](#)

Wisconsin's Office of the Insurance Commissioner has released a set of frequently asked questions regarding the navigator program and certified application counselors (CACs). Navigators are funded through the federal government's navigator program to provide assistance to consumers enrolling in health coverage through the new health insurance marketplace. CACs are also entities providing assistance, but they are not funded by the federal navigator program. The FAQs outline the state requirements for enrollment assistors, such as navigators and CACs.

#### [Protecting Consumers from Fraud in New Health Insurance Marketplace](#)

Both the [federal](#) and [state](#) governments are reaching out to consumers to inform them about possible fraudulent outreach in anticipation of open enrollment in the new health insurance marketplaces. Both encourage consumers to report fraud immediately and be aware of red flags.

### **[Wisconsin's Medicaid Computers Primed and Ready for Health Care Reform](#)**

Tom Still, president of the Wisconsin Technology Council, makes the case that the transition to Wisconsin's current Medicaid Management Information System, interchange, has helped prepare for implementation of health care reform, putting Wisconsin ahead of many other states.

### **[Small Business Marketplace Online in November; Delay in Spanish-Language Enrollment](#)**

The small business marketplace (SHOP) will not be able to accept online applications for coverage until November 1<sup>st</sup>, however applicants may enroll by mail, phone, or fax starting October 1<sup>st</sup>. The application will be made available at [healthcare.gov](http://healthcare.gov) on October 1<sup>st</sup>. The Spanish language version of the marketplace portal will also be delayed a few weeks after the initial open enrollment date of October 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **[HealthConnect: Dane County Announces Premium Payment Partnership for Low Income Individuals](#)**

Individuals living in Dane County, with income between 100 and 133 percent of the poverty line, will have help paying their new health insurance marketplace premium for at least the first year. UW Health gave \$2 million to the United Way of Dane County to run the program. The [Wisconsin State Journal](#) wrote about the program in more detail, and program guidelines can be found [here](#).

### **[Milwaukee County Executive Considers Dropping Health Coverage in Favor of Exchanges](#)**

County Executive Abele's proposed budget includes a provision to eliminate the county's health insurance plan sometime during 2014 if it proves feasible and provides cost-savings to provide subsidies to employees to purchase insurance coverage through the new health insurance marketplace.

### **[Regional Enrollment Networks: Central Strategy for Health Care Reform Outreach](#)**

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services has been working with several private sector partners to launch and support an infrastructure of Regional Enrollment Networks (RENs), one of Wisconsin's most significant strategies to assist Wisconsin residents with enrolling in the appropriate public or private health care coverage. RENs, first developed by the [Milwaukee Health Care Partnership](#), are comprised of various community entities, health care providers, income maintenance consortia, managed care organizations, and other key stakeholders. DHS also collaborated with the [Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association](#), [Covering Kids and Families](#) to build a new [website](#) under the auspices of Enrollment for Health-WI. This website is keeping an inventory of outreach and education opportunities and resources.

### **[Health Care Reform Navigators Won't be Available in Parts of Wisconsin](#)**

Wisconsin Public Radio notes that though six organizations received nearly one million in federal funding as the "official" Navigators to help people enroll in the health insurance marketplace, these Navigators are not evenly distributed throughout Wisconsin. That is why many communities and individuals will be relying on [Certified Application Counselors](#) to help learn about and enroll in coverage.

### **[Milwaukee County Board Approves Up to \\$729,000 for ACA Outreach & Education](#)**

Milwaukee County Board Chair Dimitrijevic [proposed](#) spending \$1.1 million on health care reform outreach, which ultimately led to the Board approving a [compromise plan](#), of up to \$729,000. The funding is being dispersed through the Milwaukee Enrollment Network, with delegated funds to Winged Victory, 2-1-1 social services hotline, Covering Kids & Families, and the Milwaukee Health Department. Supervisor Abele [released information](#) highlighting the county's outreach efforts. The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* [profiled the work of Joy Tapper](#), of the Milwaukee Health Care Partnership, in organizing outreach efforts in Milwaukee.

### [CommonGround Healthcare Cooperative Going Door-to-Door](#)

CommonGround Healthcare Cooperative, a new nonprofit health insurance company in eastern Wisconsin started with federal funding through the Affordable Care Act, is using community organizing tactics to outreach to individuals to enroll them in coverage under the new health insurance marketplace.

### [My Coverage Plan Garner \\$1.2 Million NIH Development Grant](#)

The National Institutes of Health has awarded \$1.2 million to ABC for Health Inc., a public-interest law firm in Madison, to develop software to help hospitals and clinics determine whether patients are eligible for government health programs. The three-year grant is the second from the NIH Small Business Innovation Research Program for My Coverage Plan Inc., a for-profit affiliate of ABC for Health. My Coverage Plan hopes to develop decision-support software based on processes used by ABC for Health to determine eligibility for government programs.

### [Rural Health Outreach Funding Awarded to ABC for Rural Health](#)

The Health Resources and Services Administration awarded \$25,000 to ABC for Rural Health, Inc. for health insurance marketplace outreach and enrollment efforts, focusing on uninsured individuals living in rural areas.

## ***Medicaid/BadgerCare***

### [DHS Releases Letters to be Sent to BadgerCare Plus Members on Enrollment Changes](#)

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) has released five versions of letters to be sent this month to BadgerCare Plus members and BadgerCare Core waiting list individuals regarding the state budget changes and new Affordable Care Act marketplace enrollment options in 2014. These letters inform individuals that they may be at risk of losing BadgerCare coverage, required to pay a premium, or have new options for coverage. [Advocates are concerned](#) that the shift from BadgerCare to marketplace coverage will confuse some enrollees.

### [Governor Walker Announces Fraud Prevention Efforts in State Public Assistance Programs](#)

Governor Walker has instructed the Department of Health Services (DHS) to implement six strategies for increasing fraud prevention and detection, including: front-end verification of self-employment, creation of an Error Prone Profile for CARES, requirement that enrollees with self-employment income submit tax returns, evaluate and implement more data exchanges, create a fraud and abuse prevention taskforce, and require an asset test for FoodShare members.

### [Virtual PACE Integrated Managed Care for Dual Eligibles: WI Calls for Final CMS Action](#)

In an [August 12 letter to CMS](#), DHS Secretary Kitty Rhoades asserted that Wisconsin will not entertain any further CMS modification to Wisconsin's Virtual PACE demonstration proposal. Her letter included a 100+ page draft Memorandum of Understanding which provides Wisconsin's final proposed update of the [Memorandum of Understanding](#).

### [Report: Last Year's BadgerCare Changes Makes Case Against New Waiver](#)

The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families reports that requiring premiums for low-income families causes a dramatic decline in their participation in BadgerCare, according to a [preliminary analysis](#). The

report outlines the [current proposed waiver](#), preliminary results of last year's changes to BadgerCare, and CMS options with respect to the Transitional Medicaid population.

### [OIG Medicaid Audit: WI Claimed Excess Federal Medicaid Payments for Residential Care](#)

The federal Office of the Inspector General (OIG) released an audit of claims made by over the last decade by the Wisconsin Medicaid program for the HealthCheck program (EPSDT), reporting that \$39.4 million of the \$41.4 million claimed were unallowable. The OIG recommends that Wisconsin refund \$22.8 million to the federal government and identify methods to properly claim federal share for HealthCheck. WI Department of Health Services Secretary Rhoades responded to the audit, asserting the charges were appropriate, but the final OIG audit maintained that their original findings and recommendations were valid. The [Wisconsin State Journal](#) summarized the reports and response.

### [Drug Company Pharmacia Pays \\$29 Million Toward Judgment](#)

Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen reported that Pharmacia Corporation has paid \$29 million, to partially satisfy a judgment from the Dane County Circuit Court. The WI Department of Justice won a lawsuit finding that Pharmacia was liable for Medicaid fraud and violations of the Deceptive Trade Practices Act for inflating drug prices to increase pharmaceutical reimbursement from Medicaid.

### ***Workforce/Health Professionals/Training & Education***

#### [State Exam for Chiropractors Dropped, but Bar on National Exam Raised](#)

In June, Governor Walker dropped the state exam requirement for chiropractors in Wisconsin. However, he also added new requirements for the national exam, setting passing scores higher than the national passing score. Later in this article

#### [GHC Grants \\$1M to Establish Edgewood College Nursing Innovation Center](#)

Group Health Cooperative of South Central Wisconsin (GHC-SCW) has [announced](#) a \$1 million gift to Edgewood College in Madison to create Center for Primary Care Innovation. The program will engage and enlist Edgewood College nursing students and graduates in innovative, progressive models of primary care delivery.

#### [Marshfield Dental School Exploring Partnership with UW](#)

According to confidential documents obtained by the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, the Marshfield Clinic, UW-Stevens Point, and the Family Health Center of Marshfield are potentially partnering around a new dental school in central Wisconsin. Developments around this second Wisconsin dental school continue to be contentious.

#### [HHS Funding to Expand Rural Health IT Workforce](#)

Southwest Wisconsin Technical College was awarded \$268,599 to help develop rural-focused health information technology training programs. This grant was made possible by a partnership between HRSA and the Department of Veteran's Affairs to implement 21<sup>st</sup> century information infrastructure for rural health. \$5.3 million total in grants were awarded.

#### [Easing Doctor Burnout with Mindfulness](#)

The [New York Times](#) discussed two new studies that support mindfulness as a practice to improve the health of Doctors. The article highlighted the work of Meriter Medical Group's Dr. Luke Fortney, including his groups' mindfulness in medicine interactive [website](#) with tools and resources for practitioners.

## **Public Health**

### **[Wisconsin Health Trends: 2013 Progress Report](#)**

The University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute released the 2013 progress report and resources on health trends, examining ten-year trends for 19 leading health indicators. The report found that though Wisconsinites are living longer, not all residents are living better. Trends for subgroups of the population show wide disparity in both health outcomes and health factors.

### **[Wisconsin AG Announces Heroine Awareness Campaign](#)**

The Wisconsin Department of Justice launched heroine awareness campaign, with an interactive website ([theflyeffect.com](http://theflyeffect.com)) that tells real stories and shares resources. From 2008 to 2012, heroine-related arrests have increased 152 percent in Wisconsin and overdoses have increased dramatically as well. State Representative John Nygren shared his personal stake in the campaign, and is [working](#) on a package of anti-drug legislation to be introduced this fall. DOJ has made \$125,000 from settlement awards available to local communities for pilot anti-heroine initiatives.

### **[WMJ: Geographic and Racial Variation In Teen Pregnancy Rates in Wisconsin](#)**

UW public health researchers Molly Layde and Dr. Patrick Remington found that despite recent declines, teen pregnancy continues to be a public health problem in Wisconsin. Minority teen birth rates continue to be 3-5 times greater than births among whites, and rates varied even more by county.

### **[Mental Health Emergency Detentions Debated](#)**

A [legislative task force](#) made [a range of recommended changes](#) to the state's mental health laws, including one that would allow mental health professionals in Milwaukee County — and not just police officers — the authority to send people into emergency detentions. The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel published op-eds [by Rep. Sandy Pasch](#), Vice Chair of the Legislative Task Force, and [by Walter Laux](#), director of behavioral health services at Community Advocates.

### **[State Announces 38 School-Based Dental Sealant Awards](#)**

Wisconsin's Seal-A-Smile program, administered by the WI DHS Oral Health Program and the Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin, announced nearly \$600,000 in grants to 38 organizations for school-based sealants for low-income children. More information on Wisconsin's Oral Health program can be found [here](#).

### **[DCF: Receives \\$13.4 Million for Home Visiting Initiative](#)**

The Wisconsin Home Visiting Initiative - a shared-governance program between the [Wisconsin Department of Children and Families](#), the Department of Health Services, the Department of Public Instruction, and the Children's Trust Fund – received an additional \$13.4 million in a three year grant to expand the program to three additional communities. This program provides in-home services to families of young children and pregnant women in at-risk communities.

### **[DHS: WIC Receives \\$2.7 Million for Electronic Benefits Transfer System](#)**

Wisconsin's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) will receive \$2.7 million from the US Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services to transition to an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) system. [Earlier this year](#), the state refused to apply for this federal funding. However, in the press release announcing the funds, Secretary Rhoades noted that the transition would provide more tools for program monitoring and fraud detection. A study by the



Department supported the transition for many reasons, including improving processing, customer services, fraud and abuse detection, as well as reducing confusion over purchase items.

### [Public Opinion Poll Reports on Attitudes Toward Healthy Living and Disease Prevention](#)

A [poll](#) of 600 Wisconsin likely voters, conducted in early August for Transform Wisconsin, found that Wisconsin residents feel that youth tobacco use and childhood obesity are serious problems. Transform Wisconsin, a project of the Wisconsin Clearinghouse for Prevention Resources, conducted this poll as a part of the program evaluation for their five year, \$25 million grant to make healthy choices easier in schools and neighborhoods across Wisconsin.

## ***Health Care: Clinics, Hospitals, and Health Plans***

### [Report: Milwaukee Ranks Well Nationally for Quality and Lower Costs](#)

Milwaukee is one of three cities with below-average treatment costs and above-average quality according to an HCTrends' analysis of 24 metropolitan areas nationwide. The analysis compared per-episode treatment costs and compliance with evidence-based treatment protocols to compare the relative efficiency of health care providers in each city. The study looked at physician, hospital inpatient, outpatient and ancillary services for 22 major practice categories. Charlotte, Columbus and Milwaukee were the only cities to have both lower-than-average treatment costs and higher-than-average quality. The [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reports that Milwaukee's costs trends](#) have become more in line with other cities.

### [OIG: Most Critical Access Hospitals Do Not Meet the Location Requirements](#)

A [report](#) released by the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services recommends that Medicare take another look at the hospitals in the Critical Access Hospital (CAH) program. Estimates suggest that the OIG proposal would eliminate CAH designation for 53 out of 58 of Wisconsin's CAHs. Wisconsin [state](#) and [federal](#) legislators have responded with support for CAHs. In addition, 43 critical access [hospital leaders](#) in Wisconsin wrote to CMS Administrator Tavenner.

### [State Considering Move to Self-Insured Model; Opinions Vary](#)

Governor Scott Walker is considering replacing Wisconsin's HMO model for state employees with self-insurance. The state has commissioned [three studies](#) of the self-insured model, with no definitive conclusions. Twenty states self-insure all state employees, while 26 states self-insure some of their workers. The [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reports](#) on the various considerations. The *Wisconsin State Journal* reports how, by potentially allowing one or more national insurers to administer the program, the move could have a significant impact on the overall health care system.

### [HHS Announces Funding to Expand Access to Health Care at Health Centers](#)

Wisconsin Community Health Centers will receive \$663,068 in [base adjustment awards](#) through HRSA and the Affordable Care Act. In the award, HRSA recognizes the important role of health centers in implementing the Affordable Care Act by providing services, as well as connecting individuals to coverage.

### [New United HealthCare Consortium Pay for Performance Initiative](#)

UnitedHealthcare of Wisconsin announced an agreement with southeast Wisconsin providers to embark on a new shared savings initiative. The Medical College of Wisconsin, Froedtert Health, Wheaton

Franciscan, Columbia St. Mary's, and Agnesian Healthcare joined the Quality Health Solutions consortium in the long-term goal of an accountable care model where insurers pay a set amount for providers to manage all care for a group of individuals. Aurora Accountable Care Network is also working towards those goals in southeastern Wisconsin.

#### **[MCW Awarded 3 Year, \\$900,000 Grant to Improve Prehospital Emergency Medical Services](#)**

The Medical College of Wisconsin has received a three year, \$900,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to establish a research center to study and improve prehospital emergency medical services, a fairly new specialty that focuses on optimizing care prior to hospital arrival, primarily for critically ill and injured pediatric patients.

#### **[Physicians Plus Shifting Dane County Workers to WEA Trust](#)**

Beginning December 1<sup>st</sup>, Dane County employees will be shifted from Physicians Plus to WEA Insurance for the last three years of their five year contract. This move harkens from the shift to a care navigation policy by Physicians Plus, which aims to direct more patient to care at Meriter, rather than UW Health.

This news comes at the same time as Wisconsin Health News reported that Physicians Plus is not for sale, according to Meriter spokesman Mike Flaherty. However, Flaherty said that Meriter continues to actively look for partners, and that Physicians Plus would be part of any partnership package.

#### **[ThedaCare Profiled in the Harvard Business Review](#)**

The collaborative-care approach pioneered by ThedaCare is showing improvements in safety, efficiency, and effectiveness. The team-based approach to collectively creating and monitoring care plans for patients is a model that shows progress and offers lessons that are discussed in the Harvard Business Review.

#### **[ThedaCare Announces Collaboration with Mayo Clinic](#)**

ThedaCare joined the Mayo Clinic Care Network, which allows physicians aligned with ThedaCare access to Mayo Clinic resources and experts. The Mayo Clinic Care Network was established in 2011 to benefit patient care and improve delivery of care at the local level.

#### **[Honoring Choices Advanced Care Planning Expands Membership](#)**

Honoring Choices Wisconsin, a program launched by the Wisconsin Medical Society, had added five more health care organizations to its program to improve advance care planning. Aspirus, ThedaCare, Mayo Clinic Health System, UW Health Partners Watertown Regional Medical Center and Agrace Hospice & Palliative Care recently signed on to the initiative. The new organizations join six first-round participants: Community Care, Inc., Milwaukee, Fort HealthCare Jefferson County, Group Health Cooperative of South Central Wisconsin, Meriter Health Services, ProHealth Care, and UW Health.

#### ***Pending Legislation***

##### **[SB 236 and AB 287](#) Regulating the Sale of Raw Milk in Wisconsin**

Public hearings in Madison and La Crosse have been held over a bill that would permit sales of unpasteurized milk in Wisconsin. This bill is similar to one vetoed by Governor Doyle due to public health concerns in 2010. Medical, public health, and dairy trade groups have partnered in opposition to this bill. [Recent comments](#) by Governor Walker imply that he will not support this bill without support from health professionals, which is highly unlikely.

**[SB 73](#) and [AB 78](#) Creating an Income and Franchise Tax Credit for Workplace Wellness Programs**

A similar version of this bill was introduced and debated last session, and was reintroduced in January 2013. Passage has been recommended by the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Small Business, and Tourism. The Assembly has held a preliminary committee hearing. The amended Senate bill provides up to \$3 million annually in small business grants for creation of workplace wellness programs.

**[SB 258](#) and [AB 343](#) Distribution by Schools of Concussion and Head Injury Information Sheets and Participation in Youth Athletic Activity**

**[SB 251](#) and [AB 292](#) Therapeutic Alternate Drug Selections in Nursing Homes, Performance of Patient Services by a Pharmacist and the Practice of Pharmacy**

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**[AB 365](#) Eliminating Certain Changes to the Medical Assistance Program and BadgerCare Plus that Have Not Been Approved by the Federal Government**

***Passed Legislation***

**[Emergency Rule: Relating to the Training and Licensing of Navigators](#)**

The Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OCI) promulgated an emergency rule regarding the training and licensing of navigators and nonnavigator assistors with the intent to promulgate a permanent rule before expiration of this emergency rule. The public hearing took place at OCI on September 27<sup>th</sup>. The deadline for [submitting comments](#) on the rule is October 11, 2013. The [scope statement](#) was released in July.

A navigator refers to those who have contracts with the federal government to assist individuals in enrolling in coverage through the new health insurance exchange. Nonnavigator assistor refers to those who are registered with the federal government to provide assistance with enrolling in coverage (e.g. Certified Application Counselors). Governmental agencies, or those working on behalf of governmental agencies, are exempt from these requirements.

**[JFC 13.10 Meeting: Implementation of Estate Recovery and Divestment from WI Act 20](#)**

The 2013-15 state budget included provisions changing the estate recovery and divestment asset recovery in the Medicaid program. In order to implement those provisions, the budget required that the Department of Health Services (DHS) have the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) approve the changes. The [Legislative Fiscal Bureau](#) prepared a thorough analysis of the changes for the 13.10 JFC meeting, including potential federal law violations. A 10-6 vote of the committee approved the changes, though made clear that changes in violation of federal law could not be implemented. The Journal Sentinel [article](#) provides an overview of this complicated issue and the committee meeting.

## **RESEARCH AND PROGRAM TOOLS**

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- New and Updated Resources from the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#)
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- New and Updated Resources from [AHRQ](#)
  - [New Toolkit on Rapid-Cycle Patient Safety and Quality Improvement](#)
- [Health in All Policies: A Guide for State and Local Government](#)
- Wisconsin Toolbox:
  - [Enrollment for Health Wisconsin \(www.E4Healthwi.org\)](http://www.E4Healthwi.org): A clearinghouse of resources for those engaged in building awareness and providing training about the Affordable Care Act's health insurance reforms, and directly assisting and enrolling Wisconsin consumers in the state's new health insurance marketplace.
  - [Every Woman Wisconsin](#): A new interactive website designed to be a preconception health resource for women, families, advocates, and health providers, developed by the Healthiest Women Wisconsin leadership team.
  - [DHS Family Health Survey](#): Wisconsin released the 2011 report from the state Family Health Survey, which includes health insurance coverage statistics.

## **EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **[ACA and Medicaid Changes – Calendar of Training, Presentations and Enrollment Events](#)**

### **[Wisconsin Public Health Association Calendar of Events](#)**

**[Marshfield Clinic Oral Systemic Health Conference](#)**, October 4, Marshfield

**[Wisconsin Dental Hygienists Association 2013 Indigo Conference](#)**, October 4-5, Wisconsin Dells

**[Evidence-Based Health Policy Project: Wisconsin's Economic, Social, and Health Trends: What Matters?](#)** October 8, Madison

**[Wisconsin Health Information Organization \(WHIO\) Fall Learning Forum](#)**, October 16, Wisconsin Dells

**[Milwaukee Health Care Career Expo](#)**, October 22, State Fair Park, Milwaukee

**[Statewide Conference on Graduate Medical Education](#)**, WI Council on Medical Education and Workforce, October 24, 2013, Neenah, WI

[DHS: Webcast Trainings About 2014 BadgerCare Plus Policy Changes](#), On-Line Webinars, October 14 and November 11, archived webinars and follow-up Q&A available on-site

[MetaStar Health Care Quality Symposium](#), November 6, Wisconsin Dells

[WIPPS: It's Here: The Federal Health Insurance Marketplace in Wisconsin](#), November 7-8, UW Fox Valley, Menasha, WI

[Evidence-Based Health Policy Project: Any New Ideas to Fight Obesity? What Schools, Communities, and States Can Do](#), November 14, Madison

## **READING ROOM**

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### **[Report: Uninsured Children in WI and the Role for Schools](#)**

A brief report by the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (WCCF) highlights recently released U.S. Census Bureau Small Area Health Insurance Estimates. WCCF notes that, though Wisconsin has one of the lowest uninsured rates for children in the country, there are ways in which the Affordable Care Act (ACA) can ensure that even more children are covered. The report suggests ways that schools can help facilitate enrollment.

### **[Excise Tax on 'Cadillac' Plans](#)**

This *Health Affairs* Policy Brief outlines the excise tax in the ACA on high-cost health plans, scheduled to take effect in 2018. This brief explains the tax, projected effects, and what's next in the debate. As one of the many fees and taxes levied to help pay for health care reform, this excise tax on high-cost health plans was also intended to help slow the growth rate of health care costs. Many employers working on ways to avoid paying the tax, or to shift the cost of the tax.

### **[U.S. Dept of Labor Rule on Home Health Care Workers: Mandating Minimum Wage and Overtime Pay](#)**

Two years after the release of the proposed rule, the Department of Labor [released](#) a final rule subjecting home care workers to the Fair Labor Standards Act's minimum wage, overtime, and reporting requirements. Home care workers were previously exempted because their work was considered "companionship work," and not subject to pay rules. This new rule takes effect January 1, 2015. [Kaiser Health News](#) provides a summary of the rule and the Department of Labor has created a [webpage](#) to provide more information on the new requirements.

### **[Long-Term Care Commission Released Recommendations](#)**

The long-term care Commission was created to replace the voluntary long-term care program created by the ACA (the CLASS Act). The final report includes many concerns around long-term care, but offers few specific solutions, and the Commission did not agree on a program to help families pay for long-term care services.

### **[Annual Projections of Health Care Spending Released by CMS](#)**

The Office of the Actuary in the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) predicts that health care spending will grow at an average of 5.8 percent from 2012-2022, with health spending accounting for 19.9 percent of GDP in 2022. This rate is slower than past decades. The study also projects that there will be 30 million fewer people uninsured in the United States by 2022. An analysis of the report will be published in October issue of [Health Affairs](#), and are currently available online.

### [Wide Disparities in the Income and Assets of People on Medicare by Race and Ethnicity](#)

The Kaiser Family Foundation released a report in partnership with the Urban Institute that shows wide disparities in the income and assets for Medicare beneficiaries based on race and ethnicity. The mean income for white beneficiaries was more than \$9,000 higher than black and Hispanic beneficiaries. Median savings for white beneficiaries was seven times higher than black and Hispanic beneficiaries and the share and value of home equity was lower among black and Hispanic beneficiaries. Gains over the next decades are projected to be modest, and will continue to reflect the current disparities.

### [Understanding Obamacare, Politico's Guide to the ACA](#)

This is a plain-English explainer of how the law is supposed to work, and what's likely to happen when the coverage begins.

### [Navigating the Thorns that Await the ACA](#)

Health Affairs, in its September issue, provides a range of scholarly papers addressing the potential concerns and challenges associated with implementing the Affordable Care Act.