

Catch-Up Briefing Report Vol. 17, No. 3



An annotated compilation of selected Wisconsin health and health care news stories from April 1, 2017 – July 5, 2017. Archived editions can be found [here](#).



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STATE NEWS

Health Care Reform Implementation in Wisconsin

[CMS: Projected Insurer Participation Remains Strong in WI, Weak Elsewhere](#)

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released an updated county-level map of projected Health Insurance Exchanges issuer participation for Plan Year 2018 based on the current information available as of June 27, 2017. This information is from a point in time and will continue to change as insurance companies finalize their rates, submit their final Qualified Health Plan (QHP) offerings, and their intentions to expand or retract their service areas.

[Wisconsin Health Insurance Coverage Expanded in 2015](#)

The Wisconsin Family Health Survey (FHS) reports that, in the 12 months prior to the interview, 91% of respondents were covered by insurance, 5% held insurance at some point during the interval, and only 3% reported having no insurance. While improvements were made statewide, African Americans and Hispanics were 9% less likely to have health insurance coverage and socioeconomic disparities persisted.

[Wisconsin's ACA Plan Selections Grow From 2016-2017: ~ 240K Residents Select Plans](#)

Wisconsin residents seeking health insurance through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Marketplace in Wisconsin has reached high in 2017 with plan selections reaching 242,863 individuals, a small increase from 2016 (239,034). About 82% of Wisconsin consumers received federal tax subsidies, with the subsidy averaging \$399 and the average premium after subsidy at \$131/month. About 52% of consumers also receive cost-sharing reductions, federal subsidies that reduce their deductibles and co-payments. CMS released [preliminary figures about "effectuated enrollment"](#) (the people who have paid their first month premium), but didn't yet count consumers whose plans began March 1.

[Anthem, Health Tradition Pulls from WI Individual Market; 13 Carriers Remain](#)

[Anthem has pulled its products with the federal exchange in Wisconsin](#) and other states. Anthem cited market instability due to a shrinking and deteriorating individual market, continual changes and uncertainty in federal operations, rules and guidance, including cost sharing reduction subsidies and the restoration of taxes on fully insured coverage. While Anthem was present in 34 Wisconsin counties, it was a small share of the market. [Multiple carriers continue](#) to offer products in these counties.

[Report: House GOP Reform Bill Places WI at Disadvantage](#)

A report by the Missouri Hospital Association documents significant funding disparities under the House GOP American Health Care Act (AHCA) between states that participated in the ACA's Medicaid expansion compared to those, like Wisconsin, that did not. The 19 states that opted out of the ACA's full expansion for Medicaid will receive \$680 billion less than expansion states. Wisconsin's portion of that total is estimated at almost \$37 billion over 10 years.

WI Senators Johnson and Baldwin, Health Care Providers, Oppose Senate Health Care Bill

- [Senator Johnson: Where the Senate Health Care Bill Fails](#)
- [U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin Statement on CBO Score](#)
- [WPR: Governor Walker backs Senator Johnson's opposition to GOP health bill](#)
- [WI Hospital Association: U.S. Senate Health Care Bill Falls Far Short](#)
- [Multi-Stakeholder Joint Letter to Senator Johnson](#)

[Wisconsin Congressional Delegation Votes Along Party Line on AHCA](#)

In the Congressional House of Representatives, Speaker Paul Ryan spearheaded the American Health Care Act (AHCA) as the repeal and replacement plan for the ACA. Wisconsin members voted along party lines: all five Wisconsin Republicans voted in favor while all three Democrats voted in opposition.

[Senator Erpenbach and Representative Riemer Introduce Bills in Response to AHCA](#)

After the GOP-backed American Health Care Act (AHCA) passed the House, Wisconsin Democratic Senator Erpenbach (D-Middleton) and Representative Riemer (D-Milwaukee) introduced a package of bill that would restore at the state level the ACA's existing provisions related to [lifetime limits](#), [pre-existing conditions](#), coverage of preventative services, [essential health benefits](#), and Medicaid payment for family planning clinics. The action is largely symbolic, with Republicans in control of the legislature.

Medicaid/BadgerCare

Biennial Budget Provisions

[Biennial Budget: Health-Related Omnibus Motion](#)

The following items are included among the provisions approved by the state legislature's budget-writing Joint Finance Committee as part of an Omnibus Motion related to Medicaid, Mental Health, Public Health, and Other Programs:

[Program to keep chronically ill out of emergency rooms](#)

\$2.3 million for a program to reduce emergency room costs within the state's Medicaid program. Will pay health care providers to manage care for patients with conditions such as asthma and heart disease. Hospitals and health systems would get up to \$1,000 a year for each frequent emergency room patient enrolled in a care management program, and share in any Medicaid cost savings. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services in 2014 released a [plan for addressing "super-utilizers"](#) but has not since then implemented these plans.

[Increase Medicaid DSH Funding by \\$37 Million](#)

Funding expansion for the Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) program and a new Rural Critical Care supplement program. The DSH program approved for a \$25 million increase in state funds and \$37 million in federal funds over the biennium. The Rural Critical Care program approved for an additional \$1.2 million over the biennium. Cumulatively, bill would provide Wisconsin's Medicaid DSH and Rural Critical Care supplement hospitals \$137 million.

Expand [Family Care Statewide](#): Directing DHS to submit a request for a waiver from CMS to expand Family Care statewide by December 31, 2017.

[WI Submits Waiver Request: Changes BadgerCare for Adults without Dependent Children](#)

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services submitted a Medicaid [waiver application](#) to the federal CMS to change coverage for adults without dependent children ("childless adults"). [Framed](#) as a program to improve workforce participation, the plan includes, monthly premiums and co-payments, work requirements, time limited benefits, drug screening and testing, and measures to expand access to treatment. The drug-testing component would be a [first in the nation](#), and near universal criticism of this component emerged within an [AP review of the more than 1,000 comments](#) submitted to DHS.

[Wisconsin DHS Agree to Pay \\$6.99 Million for Falsified SNAP Control Methods Allegation](#)

Applicable to years 2009 through 2011, the [U.S. Department of Justice](#) accepted the Wisconsin Department of Health Services' (DHS') resolution to pay back \$6,991,905 for allegedly "implementing improper and biased quality control methods that decreased the state's reported error rate" and resulted in performance bonuses. The infraction is a violation of the U.S. False Claims Act.

[Medicaid program ends biennium with estimated \\$325 million positive balance](#)

The Department of Health Services reports that the Medicaid program will finish the current biennium with a positive balance, estimated at \$325 million as of June 30, 2017. The report attributes the balance to one-time factors, including a slower enrollment growth than expected, an improved federal matching rate, and improved better HMO rate setting methods. The report also includes a list of state plan and waiver amendments that DHS has submitted to the federal government in the most recent quarter.

Workforce/Health Professionals/Training & Education

Biennial Budget Provisions

[Biennial Budget: Health-Related Omnibus Motion](#)

The following items are included among the provisions approved by the state legislature's budget-writing Joint Finance Committee as part of an Omnibus Motion related to Medicaid, Mental Health, Public Health, and Other Programs:

[Bills and Funding to Improve Rural Health](#)

Rural legislators affiliated with the Rural Wisconsin Initiative have introduced bills that have passed both houses and attained funding support from the Joint Finance Committee. These include:

- \$1 million in the biennium funds approved by the Joint Finance Committee for training consortia for allied health professionals – such as physical therapists and certified nursing assistants, , [Senate Bill 165](#), [Assembly Bill 224](#)
- \$1 million in the biennium funding approved by the Joint Finance Committee for hospitals and clinics that provide training opportunities for advanced practice clinicians – such as physician assistants and advanced practice nurses, [Senate Bill 161](#), [Assembly Bill 227](#)

[Grants to establish and expand graduate training in an addiction specialty](#)

The Joint Finance Committee has approved grants to hospitals under an existing graduate medical training grant program to increase the number of physicians trained in an addiction specialty. These are in addition to the Joint Finance Committee's omnibus motions inclusion of \$1.5 million for grants to establish graduate medical training programs.

[Senate Bill 172](#) and [Assembly Bill 252](#), passed by both houses, allowing pharmacy students the ability to provide vaccinations for children as young as six pending completion of training and pharmacists' supervision.

[Dental Hygienists to Practice in More Settings with Fewer Restrictions](#)

After widespread recognition of the state's shortage of access to dental care, Governor Scott Walker has [signed 2017 Wisconsin Act 20](#), which allows dental hygienists to work for hospitals, medical clinics, group homes, correctional facilities, shelters, nursing homes, day care centers for children and adults without the direct supervision or authorization of a dentist. Their standard scope of practice includes professional teeth cleaning, fluoride treatments, dental sealants, non-surgical periodontal treatments, oral cancer screenings and preliminary oral evaluations.

[WI law limiting medical malpractice payouts ruled unconstitutional](#)

Wisconsin's [state law](#) that caps noneconomic damages in medical malpractice cases is unconstitutional because it puts severely injured patients at a disadvantage, a state appeals court ruled Wednesday. The 1st District [Court of Appeals' decision](#) clears the way for unlimited compensation for pain, emotional anguish and loss of enjoyment or reputation.

[Assembly Passes Bill Allowing Chiropractors as Providers of Physicals to Student Athletes](#)

The Assembly has [passed AB260](#), which authorizes chiropractors to conduct physicals for student athletes. Currently, doctors and physician assistants perform these sports physicals to determine if a youth can play organized sports. A vote on the [Senate bill](#) has not yet been scheduled.

The [Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel reports](#) that Wisconsin's physicians, hospitals, nurses, insurers and the state's school sports association all oppose the bill.

[Ambulance Service Assessment Report Released](#)

In a joint effort to measure and assess the quality and aptitude of Wisconsin's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) and the Wisconsin Office of Rural Health (ORH) partnered to survey to 416 ambulance services measuring eighteen attributes of a successful rural ambulance service. With 324 (78%) respondents (47% rural and 22% urban), researchers found that rural agencies were struggling more than the small urban and urban counterpart agencies. Statewide, EMS agencies have room for improvement in all eighteen measurement areas across all geographies.

[DHS Use \\$2.3 Million in CMS Funding to Add 3,000 Nurse Aides to Workforce](#)

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) has approved the use of \$2.3 million in federal funding from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to add 3,000 nurse aides to the workforce through the Caregiver Career Program (CCP). The program uses marketing and recruitment efforts, training, and promotes nursing home engagement. The DHS has partnerships with nursing homes, LeadingAge Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Health Care Association, and the Wisconsin Technical College System to implement the program.

[Concordia University Wisconsin Launches Medication Management Accelerator Program](#)

Funded by the Dohmen Company, Mequon-based Concordia University Wisconsin has launched the Concordia Medication Management Accelerator program, which awards more than \$50,000 to innovators with the best business plans for addressing comprehensive medication management from chronic conditions. Participants will receive business coaching in preparation to the fall 2017 live pitch event. The program is set to begin summer 2017.

[MCW Leads, UWSMPH Joins National Transformation Network](#)

The National Transformation Network, a collaborative of medical schools from around the country, are changing how physicians learn. The Network is led by the [Medical College of Wisconsin \(MCW\)](#), and includes [Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth](#), [Mayo Clinic School of Medicine](#), [University of California](#), [San Francisco School of Medicine](#), [University of Texas at Austin Dell Medical School](#), [University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health](#), and [Vanderbilt University School of Medicine](#).

[Medical College of Wisconsin Granted \\$37.8 Million for Medical Education Transformation](#)

The Medical College of Wisconsin has received the largest philanthropic gift in its history. The grant of \$37.8 million came from the Kern Family and the Kern Family Foundation and is slated to establish the Robert D. and Patricia E. Kern Institute for the Transformation of Medical Education. The Kern Institute will drive a national movement to transform medical education by proposing a Triple Aim for Medical Education: character, competence and caring.

[Employ Milwaukee to receive \\$150,000 health care employment grant](#)

[Employ Milwaukee](#), Milwaukee county's workforce development board, will receive \$150,000 from [J.P. Morgan Chase](#) to allow employers to collectively hire 500 new employees from low income zip codes in Milwaukee. The grant will support the efforts Employ Milwaukee and most of the region's major health care providers — Froedtert Health, Aurora Health Care, Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare and Columbia St. Mary's — to build the state's health care workforce.

Public Health

[Biennial Budget: Health-Related Omnibus Motion](#)

The following items are included among the provisions approved by the state legislature's budget-writing Joint Finance Committee as part of an Omnibus Motion related to Medicaid, Mental Health, Public Health, and Other Programs:

[Communicable Disease and Prevention Funding](#)

The Joint Finance Committee has voted to provide \$1 million over the biennium for local health departments to control and prevent communicable diseases; distribute funds to local health departments to use for communicable disease control and prevention measures, specifically, disease surveillance, contact tracing, staff development and training, improving communication among health care professionals, public education and outreach, and other infection control measures

[HIV/AIDS Services Grants](#): Increase funding for life care and early intervention service grants by \$323,000 GPR annually, increasing the total to \$4 million annually for DHS to award annually.

[Joint Finance Committee Approves Opioid-Related HOPE Agenda Funding](#)

With 17 bills already signed into law as part of the Representative Nygren's Heroin Opiate Prevention and Education (HOPE) agenda, the Wisconsin Joint Finance Committee furthers the effort to combat heroin and opioid abuse by approving a package of bills recommended by Gov. Scott Walker's Task Force on Opioid Abuse. Related News: [Wisconsin DHS Received \\$7.6 million from HHS to Combat Opioid Addiction](#)

[Wisconsin 2020 State Health Plan Released](#)

After a year of collaboration with organizations around that state, the Department of Health Services (DHS) has released the [Healthy Wisconsin 2020](#) plan focused on improving the state of health in Wisconsin in five areas: Alcohol, Nutrition & Physical Activity, Opioids, Suicide, and Tobacco. The report pays particular attention to the role of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and its predictive relationship with poor health outcomes and risky health behaviors.

[Population Health Institute Releases 2017 County Health Rankings](#)

Released by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, the eighth annual county Health Rankings examines and ranks (within state) health factors and outcomes for every county in the United States. This year's iteration of the rankings looked at premature deaths and found that 39 counties in Wisconsin have improved premature death rates between 1997 and 2014. For more detailed rankings, visit the [County Health Rankings website](#).

[Wisconsin Ranks 12th in Overall Child Wellbeing](#)

The [2017 Kids count Data Book: State Trends in Child Well-Being](#) by the Annie E. Casey Foundation ranks Wisconsin 12th in overall child being. The data book utilizes state rates and percentages to a develop composite, unweighted index across four categories: economic well-being (8th) education (9th), health (28th), and family and community (16th) as well as an overall rank (12th).

[UnitedHealth Foundation Rankings Wisconsin 10th in Senior Health](#)

In the latest release of the three-decades-old America's Health Rankings Senior Report by the UnitedHealth foundation, Wisconsin ranked 10th overall in senior health. These rankings examine

national health, environmental, and socioeconomic data. Wisconsin has fluctuated since 2013, spanning rank from 19th to 6th. Most notably, seniors in Wisconsin rank better in physical activity (10th), diabetes management (5th), and health screenings. Wisconsin seniors struggle with obesity (47th), excessive drinking (49th), and receiving the flu vaccine (48th).

[Wisconsin Attorney General Schimel Announces Pharmacy Robbery Prevention Initiative](#)

To deter pharmacy robberies and promote safety during robbery situations, Wisconsin's Attorney General Brad Schimel and the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin (PSW) introduced the Pharmacy Robbery Prevention and Response Training. The tool is provided amidst the *Dose of Reality* marketing campaign intended to prevent opioid-related abuse. The training provides pharmacy personnel with deterrent strategies such as stock management and security equipment. Wisconsin had [the third highest number of pharmacy robberies in the nation](#).

[Increase in Injection Drug Use Part of 450% Increase in Hep C Over Five Years](#)

[Wisconsin Hepatitis C Virus Surveillance Annual Review](#) by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) reports that acute Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) infections have increased 450% between 2011 and 2015. In 2015, of the 61 confirmed cases of acute HCV, a rate of 1.1 per 100,000, 67% reported injection drug use, a primary risk factor. The report further examines age, sex, and race/ethnicity disparities, all of which show increases, along with wide differences among groups.

[Federal Judge Ruled Wisconsin's "Cocaine Mom" Statute Unconstitutional](#)

Often called the 'Cocaine Mom Law,' [1997 Wisconsin Act 292 \(Unborn Child Protection Act\)](#), allows that adult pregnant women suspected of current or past drug or alcohol use that could affect their fetus be held in secure custody and subjected to involuntary medical treatment. The Legislative Council had deemed its constitutionality 'highly doubtful' prior to its passing. U.S. District Judge James Peterson, in ruling on the Tamara Loertscher v. Brad Schimel case, ruled the law unconstitutionally vague. The decision prevents the state from enforcing the law.

[Governor Walker Signs CBD Oil Bill into Law](#)

Governor Walker's signature has enacted [2017 Senate Bill 10](#) into 2017 Wisconsin Act 4. The law ends penalties for possession of marijuana-derived cannabidiol (CBD) without psychoactive effective with certification from a doctor. CBD oil is used to treat seizures in children and the law requires the Wisconsin Controlled Substance Board include its permitted uses within 30 days of enactment.

[State Grant Funds to Help Young People Battling Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders](#)

Wisconsin DHS has been awarded \$3 million federal grant over four years to improve treatment for adolescents and youth with substance use and mental health disorders. Funds will be used to expand treatment services, develop policies, expand workforce capacity, disseminate evidence-based practices, and implement financial mechanisms and other reforms.

[Clean Wisconsin Wins Lawsuit Against the EPA in Federal Court](#)

A joint lawsuit filed February 2016 by four environmental groups ([Clean Wisconsin](#), [Blue Ridge Environmental Council](#), Sierra Club, and Midwest Environmental Defense Center) sues the U.S. EPA on behalf of communities exposed to toxic emissions for failing to update hazardous air pollution rules for 13 types of industrial air pollutants. The EPA is years overdue in fulfilling requirements in reviewing toxic air pollution mandated by the Clean Air Act. A federal court ruled that the EPA was negligent and is "required to review health threats and technological updates and strengthen air standards" for seven industrial sources by December 31, 2018 and the remaining six industrial sources by June 30, 2020.

[Alcohol Use Rates Rise Among 65 and Older, Leads to More Deaths from Alcohol-Related Falls](#)

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services has released the [2016 Wisconsin Epidemiological Profile on Alcohol and Other Drugs](#) report. Rates of alcohol use have been historically higher in Wisconsin than the national average and remain so. This most recent report shows that alcohol use, binge drinking, and heavy drinking among Wisconsinites 65 and older were higher than the previous year. Among older adults, deaths from alcohol-related falls increased 36% from 2010 to 2015. Drinking and binge drinking among high school students as well as the proportion of students whom initiate drinking before age 13 has decreased since 2005.

[Wisconsin Health Committee Approves Expansion of Experimental End-of-Life Drugs](#)

With bipartisan support, opposed by only two Democratic Representatives (Rep. Debra Kolste and Rep. JoCasta Zamarripa), the Wisconsin Health Committee approved a “Right to Try” bill. This would expand experimental drug treatment to terminally ill patients prior to Food and Drug Administration approval. Opponents of the bill, including the Wisconsin Medical Society, argue that hasty approval and utilization of experimental drugs bypass processes set to protect patients. Federally, Senator Paul Ryan’s [A Better Way](#) healthcare plan includes deregulation of medical device and therapy development.

[Report: Dental Some ER Visits Decline But Total Dental ER Charges Rise](#)

In recently released [data](#) from the Public Health Madison & Dane County, from 2010 to 2015, the number of dental health related emergency visits declined from 2,549 to 2,093. Urgent care visits for similar dental health services also declined from 3,211 to 2,141. However, emergency room charges for non-traumatic dental visits increased from \$1.6 million to \$2.5 million.

[Assembly Committee on Health Approves Abortion Bill](#)

Introduced without bipartisan sponsorship, Wisconsin Republican’s submitted [2017 Assembly Bill 128](#), which would prohibit the state health plan and some local employees from providing coverage for abortion. With limited exceptions in cases of rape, incest, and/or life-saving circumstances for mothers, the Group Insurance Board would be prohibited from contracting with a health plan or offering a self-insured health plan that covered abortion.

News from MCW and UW Partnership Program Funding Awards:

Grant updates from the foundation programs established by the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Endowment:

- [Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Second Phase of \\$20 Million Behavioral Health Initiative](#)
- [Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Awards \\$1 Million to Four Projects](#)
- [New Community Grant Programs Promote Health Equity](#)
- [New Project Seeks to Advance Health Equity Within Wisconsin Health Systems](#)

Clinics, Hospitals, and Health Plans

[Bills and Funding to Improve Rural Health](#)

Rural legislators affiliated with the Rural Wisconsin Initiative have introduced bills that have passed both houses and attained funding support from the Joint Finance Committee. These include:

- Wellness programs in rural areas [Senate Bill 164](#), [Assembly Bill 222](#): \$500,000 in grant moneys to hospitals located in a rural area or health systems with a hospital or clinic located in a rural area for wellness facilities and programs
- Wisconsin Hospital Association quality improvement initiatives: [Senate Bill 162](#), [Assembly Bill 255](#): \$100,000 per fiscal year to the WHA Foundation Quality Improvement Fund

[Rural WI Health Coop Awarded Federal Grant for Primary Care Quality Improvement](#)

Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative (RWHC) has received a \$300,000 grant from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) for a primary care quality improvement initiative for patients with diabetes and hypertensive disease. The grant award is for the first year of what is anticipated to be a 3-year project, a collaborative effort between RWHC, the Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality (WCHQ), the Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA), Physician Compass, and eleven RWHC member hospitals.

[Biennial Budget: Health-Related Omnibus Motion](#)

The following items are included among the provisions approved by the state legislature's budget-writing Joint Finance Committee as part of an Omnibus Motion related to Medicaid, Mental Health, Public Health, and Other Programs:

Finance Committee Approves Medicaid Boost for Milwaukee Dental Clinic

The Legislature's budget-writing committee has approved a motion that would double Medicaid reimbursement for dental services performed at facilities that provide at least 90% of their dental services to individuals with cognitive and physical disabilities. This targets specifically the [Gardetto Family Community Dental Clinic](#) in Milwaukee. At the same time, members of the legislature have sent a [letter to DHS](#) about its decision to eliminate its [grant funding](#) to the Gardetto clinic.

Disproportionate Share Hospital Payment and Rural Critical Care Supplements: Increase payments for Medicaid DHS funding and create a new supplemental payment for hospitals that would otherwise qualify for DSH but do not provide obstetric services.

[Joint Finance Committee Rejects Self-Insurance Proposal](#)

The Joint Finance Committee (JFC) has rejected Governor Scott Walker's [self-insurance proposal](#). Gov. Walker's original proposal called for the state to contract with [six] insurers and third-party administrators to pay for public employees medical bills directly rather than pay premiums to 18 HMOs across the state. The Governor's budget used an estimate of \$60 million in savings over the 2017-19 biennium. However, the [Legislative Fiscal Bureau \(LFB\) estimated total savings to be \\$47 million](#) (a midpoint between the consultants' estimate range of \$30 million and \$64 million), which partially informed the JFC's unanimous decision against the plan, directing the Group Insurance Board to find savings elsewhere.

[Legislative Fiscal Bureau Summary of Provisions Relating to Self-Insuring for State Employee Group Health Plans](#)

[SSM Health Dean Medical Group Commits to OpenNotes Implementation](#)

With 13 million Americans in 37 states able to access doctor notes, SSM Health Dean joins the OpenNotes initiative, sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), and plans to share doctor notes in medical records available to patients. The notes include medical history, the reason for a visit, a summary of the doctor's examination and test results, and a treatment plan. Beginning July, Dean doctors will have the option to share these notes, but starting early 2018, doctor note and medical record sharing with patients will be automatic.

[Marshfield Clinic Health System Distribute Public Medication Collection Kiosks Statewide](#)

Through a partnership with Security Health Plan of Wisconsin, Marshfield Clinic Health System has become the first health care system in central, northern, and western Wisconsin to offer year-round medication drop-off kiosks. Officials hope that the 14 kiosks offered at Marshfield Clinic pharmacy locations statewide will combat Wisconsin's opioid epidemic and prevent inappropriate disposal of medications.

[Multiple Wisconsin Hospitals Deemed 'Leaders' in LGBTQ Health Care Index](#)

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation has released its 10th annual [Healthcare Equality Index 2017](#) report, an analysis of equitable and inclusive health care for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) patients and their families. Scored out of 100, with a score of 80 or above earning the 'leader' distinction, 10 Wisconsin hospitals have earned the distinction 'leader,' with eight earning a perfect score (3 in Milwaukee, 4 in Madison, and 1 in Iron River).

[Two Wisconsin Hospitals Named in Becker's 100 Greatest Hospitals in America 2017](#)

Becker's Hospital Review has included Aspirus Wausau Hospital (Wausau) and Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin Froedtert Hospital (Milwaukee) in their top 100 hospitals in the United States. The report does not rank within the top 100 hospitals. Of the 100 hospitals, [26.4 percent operate in the Midwest region](#). The list uses data from the U.S. News and World Report's 2016-17 Honor Roll and specialty rankings, the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare star ratings, Leapfrog grades, Truven Health Analytics top hospitals, Most Wired hospitals, and Magnet accreditation.

[Wisconsin Health System Performance Ranked 11th in Nation by Commonwealth](#)

Ranked on more than [40 measures of health system performance](#) in five broad categories, the Commonwealth Fund places Wisconsin 11th overall, 13th in access, 7th in prevention and treatment, 14th in avoidable hospital use and cost, and 16th in healthy lives. While Wisconsin did improve overall from baseline, health gaps persist in the sub-category rankings. Wisconsin ranked 27th in equity with significant gaps in outcomes based on income and race/ethnicity.

Hospital Mergers, Partnerships, and Expansions

Health systems across the state are merging, expanding, consolidating and partnering in new ways. This list provides an overview of recent merger and partnership announcements:

- [Ascension Sells Saint Joseph's Hospital to Marshfield Clinic Health System](#)
- [Aurora Health Announced Oncology Precision Medicine Program in Milwaukee](#)
- [United Hospital Systems in Kenosha Partner to Share EHR with Froedtert & MCW](#)
- [UW-Eau Claire, Mayo Clinic Health System to boost research collaboration](#)

RESEARCH AND PROGRAM TOOLS

- [Guide to Finding and Utilizing Health Statistics \(U of Michigan\)](#)
- [SHOW Data Portal](#): A Compendium of Population Health Data Across Wisconsin Counties
- WHIO Health Ratings for Selecting a Primary Care Physician: [MyHealthWI.org](#)
- WHA PricePoint Resource with Data on Hospital Charges and Services: [Wlpricepoint.org](#)
- [50-State Survey Results: Medicaid Reforms to Expand Coverage, Control Costs, Improve Care](#)
- [CMS: 2017 Marketplace Open Enrollment Period Public Use Files](#)
- [CMS: Reports on Effectuated Enrollment and Payment of Premiums](#)

- [CMS: County Map of Projected Insurer Participation in 2018 Marketplace](#)
- [Health Affairs: From Obamacare to Trumpcare](#) – Research and Blog pages
- New and Updated Resources from the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#)
- New and Updated Resources from the [Commonwealth Fund](#)
 - [Health Reform Resource Center](#)
- [WI OCI Individual Health Insurance Carriers in WI Map](#)

EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- [Health Reform: What Does It Mean For Wisconsin](#), Madison, July 19
- [Wisconsin Technology Council: R&D front in 'war on cancer](#), Madison, July 25
- [WI Women's Health Foundation GrapeVine Session: Diabetes Prevention](#), Madison, July 27
- [Unraveling Current Asthma Challenges](#), Milwaukee, July 27
- [2017 NALBOH Annual conference](#), Cleveland, August 2-August 4
- [2017 WPHA Public Health Nursing Conference](#), Stevens Point, August 8
- [Wisconsin Sections ACOG 2017 Annual Conference](#), Sheboygan, August 11-August 12
- [NRHI: Leading Transformation Efforts to Improve Health](#), Madison, August 15
- [WI Women's Health Foundation GrapeVine Session: Mental Health](#), Sun Prairie, Aug 16
- [WHA Emergency Preparedness Conference](#), Madison, September 20
- [ACHE-WI Amer College of Healthcare Executives 2017 Conference](#), Elkhart Lake, Sept. 18-20
- [2017 WI Health Insurance Enrollment Conference](#), Wisconsin Dells, October 10-11
- [Midwest Forum on Hospitals, Health Systems, and Population Health](#), Chicago, Nov 28- Dec 1

Tweets from our Twitter Feed

Please follow us on [Twitter @UWHealthPolicy](#) to receive notice of relevant reports, research, federal and state news. Tweets below include national news and resources.

Information for *Catch-Up Briefing* is compiled from several sources, including websites and lists from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Commonwealth Fund, Georgetown Center for Health Insurance Reform and Center for Children and Families, Health Affairs, Kaiser Family Foundation, Milbank Quarterly, Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, Milwaukee Business Journal, The New York Times, Urban Institute, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, Wisconsin Health News, Wisconsin Hospital Association, Wisconsin Medical Journal, Wisconsin Office of Rural Health, Wispolitics.com, Wheeler Report, Wisconsin State Journal, Wisconsin Technology Network, and others.