

Catch-Up Briefing Report
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An annotated compilation of selected Wisconsin health and health care news stories from November 2014 – January 15, 2015. Archived editions can be found [here](#).



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The UW Population Health Institute's *Catch-Up Briefing* is delivered bi-monthly. Check our web site for additional information and updates: <http://www.pophealth.wisc.edu/uwphi/news.htm>. To subscribe or unsubscribe, reply to alfisher5@wisc.edu with the word "subscribe" or "unsubscribe" in the subject line. *Sources for the Catch-Up Briefing are listed at the end.*

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STATE NEWS

Health Care Reform Implementation in Wisconsin

HHS Releases Report on First Month of Open Enrollment

As of January 9, 2015, [169,704 Wisconsin residents have enrolled](#) in a health plan through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Health Insurance Marketplace. Earlier, the federal Health and Human Services (HHS) released the first detailed [data report](#) from 2015 open enrollment, with state specific enrollment figures. 90% of Wisconsinites who enrolled during the first month of open enrollment qualified for financial premium assistance. HHS has also been releasing [weekly snapshots](#) of federal information on enrollment, including assistance wait times and volume.

[Office of the Insurance Commissioner \(OCI\) Renewals FAQ](#)

OCI released a ‘frequently asked questions resource’ regarding the Marketplace renewal process. The document outlines how to renew coverage, shop for new coverage, and ensure that consumers are receiving the correct subsidy if they purchase a Marketplace plan.

[Report: Why Are Dane County’s Exchange Premiums Lower?](#)

A [report](#) by Community Advocates Public Policy Institute and UW-Madison researchers highlights the impact that the state employee health plan has made on controlling costs in the Dane County, Wisconsin health insurance market. The researchers note that the lower premiums in Dane County largely stem from the high proportion of individuals enrolling in Dane County through the state employee health plan, the relatively higher median income of the population, and the exchange’s use of high-quality integrated delivery systems in Dane County.

[Congressman Ryan Opines: “Obamacare is beyond repair”; Media respond](#)

Wisconsin Congressional Representative Paul Ryan authored an op-ed that appeared in the January 6, 2015 issue of USA Today, in which he argues that the Affordable Care Act is “fundamentally broken,” can’t be fixed with a few tweaks, and “will collapse under its own weight.” The New Republic published [a response](#), which asserts that the data say otherwise: “Health care costs are growing at a slower pace—although it’s unclear how much that is due to Obamacare or other outside factors. Premiums haven’t skyrocketed. Insurers aren’t fleeing the exchanges.”

[RWJF: Bundled Payment in Wisconsin- Success and Challenges](#)

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Aligning Forces for Quality project authored [a brief](#) on the successes and challenges of a bundled payment pilot project on total knee replacement conducted by the Wisconsin Partnership for Payment Reform. The brief concludes that despite administrative challenges, a relatively modest change in reimbursement methodology in Wisconsin resulted in significant changes to data analysis and health care delivery design.

[Rep. Kind Sponsors Bill to Repeal ACA Medical Device Tax; CRS Analysis Challenges Repeal Arguments](#)

Wisconsin Representative Ron Kind, along with a bi-partisan group in Congress, has introduced a bill to repeal the medical device tax that raises revenue to support the Affordable Care Act. These lawmakers argue that the tax impedes innovation, and encourages manufacturers to move operations overseas. But a [report by the Congressional Research Service](#) challenges these arguments and says that many of these concerns are unfounded, finding that the effects on jobs, research, and company profits are “relatively modest.”

[DHS Kicks Off State Innovation Models Initiative with \\$2.5 Million CMS Grant Award](#)

The Department of Health Services (DHS) announced that Wisconsin has received a \$2.5 million State Innovation Models (SIM) award from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Innovation Center to develop a comprehensive State Health Care Innovation Plan. One of DHS’s primary partners is the Statewide Value Committee (SVC), which is comprised of leaders from more than 30 organizations representing both private and public sector health care and employer organizations that are seeking to realize greater value in health care faster by better aligning efforts and incentives to deliver better quality care at lower cost.

[ACO and Payment Reform Agreements: Anthem, Aurora, Humana, United](#)

The following new agreements have been announced recently for promoting value-driven care and shared savings between health care organizations:

- [Humana and Aurora Health Care Partner on Accountable Care Organization for 2015](#)
- [Humana and United Hospital System Partner on Three-Year Accountable Care Organization](#)
- [Anthem BC/BS and Aurora Announce Shared Savings and Care Coordination Agreement](#)

[Efforts Underway to Enroll Wisconsin Latino Residents in Coverage](#)

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reports on the efforts of the Milwaukee Enrollment Network and of Covering Kids and Families to reach the area's Latino community and help them find health insurance coverage through the Affordable Care Act. Wisconsin's Covering Kids and Families [Navigator project is making special efforts](#) to help the Hispanic community attain health insurance coverage via the ACA or BadgerCare.

Medicaid/BadgerCare

[Family Care Expanded to Seven Northeast Wisconsin Counties](#)

The Wisconsin Joint Finance Committee unanimously approved WI Department of Health Services (DHS) contracts to provide Family Care services to Northeast counties starting March 1, 2015. Counties include: Brown, Door, Kewaunee, Marinette, Menominee, Oconto, and Shawano. The Legislative Fiscal Bureau estimates the expansion will require an overall increase in state funds of \$1.8 million for the upcoming three-year period. The [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#) covered the story.

[Wisconsin Recommends Extension of CHIP Funding](#)

In response to a request for states' input from the federal House Committee on Energy and Commerce, DHS Secretary Kitty Rhoades recommended extending funding for the Children's Health Insurance Plan (CHIP) prior to the program's expiration in September 2015. The Wisconsin Budget Project provides further context for this decision in their [blog post](#).

[Wisconsin Well Woman Program New Model Recommendations Released](#)

The Wisconsin Well Woman Program, which provides preventive health screening services to women with little or no health insurance coverage, is undergoing an organizational change, including a more limited provider network. In December, nearly 800 women were enrolled in the program. DHS has been working with partners to examine options, and the local health department work group proposed [recommendations](#) on the new model plan. They have also released the formal [bid](#) for providers.

[Wisconsin Medicaid Eligibility Handbook Released](#)

DHS released a new handbook outlining the Wisconsin Medicaid program's eligibility requirements and benefits specific to elderly, blind, and disabled individuals. The [BadgerCare Plus handbook](#) continues to provide information on the health programs for families, pregnant women, and low-income individuals on BadgerCare Plus.

Workforce/Health Professionals/Training & Education

[Implementation of the IOM Future of Nursing Report: A Wisconsin Profile](#)

The Wisconsin Action Coalition, a partnership of the Wisconsin Center for Nursing (WCH) and the Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative (RWHC) inventoried nurses throughout the state to assess the degree to which organizations where nurses work are implementing the recommendations of the [2011 Institute of Medicine \(IOM\) report](#) and the 2013 [Wisconsin Nursing Workforce report](#). The report concludes that implementation activities are underway in the all recommended areas including: doubling nurses with

doctoral degree by 2020, implementing more nurse residency programs, increasing workforce diversity, enhancing inter-professional education and practice, and standardizing data collection.

[DHS Grant for Graduate Medical Education Residency Programs at UW-Health and Mayo Clinic](#)

The state 2014-15 budget authorized DHS to support the development of new graduate medical education programs and expand existing residency programs, particularly in rural and underserved areas. The second round of funding was distributed to the University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics for three new residents, and to the Mayo Clinic Health System- Eau Claire for a new family medicine program supporting fifteen new residents.

[Telemedicine: A Prescription for the Future of Health Care? Materials Available](#)

The UW Population Health Institutes' Evidence-Based Health Policy Project provided an overview of telemedicine in Wisconsin and potential improvements to program design and policy. [Materials](#), including a summary, are available.

Public Health

[City of Madison Introduces Amendment to Include e-Cigarettes in City Smoking Ban](#)

The Madison Common Council introduced an ordinance that will amend the city smoking ban to include electronic delivery devices. It has been referred to committee for further action. The [Wisconsin State Journal](#) covered the story.

[Environmental Groups File Lawsuit on Air Quality Standards Enforcement](#)

Midwest Environmental Defense Center, Inc. and Clean Wisconsin have filed a lawsuit arguing that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has failed to update regulations of ambient air quality standards under the Federal Clean Air Act. They are petitioning for judicial review in Dane County Circuit Court. The regulations are aimed at fine particulate matter that can pass through the nose and throat to enter the lungs and cause health problems. The Star Tribune [reported](#) on the suit.

[First Child Death of Flu Season Reported](#)

The first reportable death of the 2014-15 flu season in Wisconsin was confirmed in Milwaukee on January 7, 2015. Nationally, 21 deaths have been tied to influenza. This season, 2,441 hospitalizations for the flu or flu-like symptoms have been reported to DHS.

[Smoking Causes 15% of Annual Deaths Among WI Persons Aged 35 years and Older](#)

A report by the UW-Milwaukee Center for Urban Initiatives estimates that, during the period 2008-2012, smoking-related illnesses account for nearly 15% of all annual deaths of Wisconsin residents over age 35. Nearly a million Wisconsinites were cigarette smokers during 2012, including approximately 43,000 youth. The annual economic toll of tobacco in Wisconsin was approximately \$3.0 billion paid in direct health care costs and \$1.6 billion in lost productivity.

Clinics, Hospitals, and Health Plans

[Wisconsin In Line with National Moderation in Premium Growth, Increase in Cost-Sharing](#)

Wisconsin had the 12th highest employer-sponsored health insurance premiums in the nation, reports the Commonwealth Fund, with average annual family premium of \$16,665 in 2013. But the average annual growth decreased, from the period 2003-2010 when the annual rate was 6.2% in Wisconsin and 6% nationally, to the period 2010-2013, when the rate was to 4.6% in Wisconsin and 4.9% nationally.

The average combined employee contribution and deductible as percent of median household income grew from 5.1% in 2003 to 8.2% in 2013.

[Arise Health Plan Announces RightCarePlus Plan](#)

Arise, a subsidiary of WPS Insurance, introduced a new product to provide large, fully insured and self-funded employers with plans that selects providers for their high-quality, cost-efficient care. The plan will provide access to seven new statewide health system partnerships.

[Racine Community Health Center Closing](#)

A Racine health center geared toward low-income residents will end its services. Beloit-based Community Health Systems, operates the Racine center, and filed for bankruptcy in 2014 in an effort to reorganize and reduce a deficit. The facility opened in 2007 and has about 20 employees. The center annually sees about 6,000 patients for dental work and about 4,000 to 4,500 for health care. In addition to medical and dental, the organization offers services such as pregnancy testing, health education and mental health counseling,

[Milwaukee Business Health Care Group Forges Exclusive Agreement with United Healthcare](#)

The Business Health Care Group, a coalition that represents more than 1,000 employers in the 11-county region of southeast Wisconsin, reached a multiyear agreement with UnitedHealthcare that will enable coalition members to offer a health plan that gives employees and their family members a financial incentive to get care through UnitedHealthcare's preferred network. These providers have been determined to provide quality care at a lower cost. About 107,000 employees and family members are covered by health plans offered by the coalition's members. Employers in the coalition still can offer traditional health plans.

[Wisconsin Hospitals Show Significant Decline in Healthcare Associated Infections \(HAIs\)](#)

The U.S. CDC released a report showing significant reductions at the national level in 2013 for nearly all healthcare-associated infections. Wisconsin hospitals for which data are reported show significant declines between 2012 to 2013 in five of six measures. Wisconsin's hospitals also performed either comparably or better than the national baseline and to a comparison group of states. Despite this progress, the nation did not reach the 2013 goals established by the HAI Action Plan in 2009.

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:

- [UW Health, Meriter-UnityPoint Health to Expand Partnership for Mother-Baby Services](#)
- [AIDS Network and AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin Merge](#)
- [Froedtert Health and Ministry Health Complete Agreement to Co-Own Network Health Insurance](#)
- [Hospital Sisters Health System and Prevea Health Join Integrated Health Network of Wisconsin](#)

New Funding Awards

Many academic institutions and research partners received funding to further education and research on health topics. Links below provide information on the award:

- [The UW School of Medicine and Public Health received its largest ever grant. \\$70 million from the NIH National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease will go to the Inner-City Asthma Consortium.](#)

- [Four Wisconsin agencies received preliminary awards totaling \\$8.4 million as part of the HHS Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership and Early Head Start Expansion grants.](#)
- [Aurora Health Care announced a one-time contribution of \\$10 million to expand and enhance community health and wellness in eastern Wisconsin, to be awarded through the Greater Milwaukee Foundation.](#)
- [The Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin and the Medical College of Wisconsin receive \\$3 million from the Kelben Foundation to address community mental health.](#)
- [Obesity Prevention Initiative launched with the support of a five-year, \\$7.5 million grant and a \\$1.1 million grant from the Wisconsin Partnership Program.](#)
- [Wisconsin Community Health Centers received \\$377,429 from HHS for quality improvement.](#)
- [Medical College of Wisconsin received four-year, \\$5.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Defense to study concussions.](#)
- [Wisconsin Alzheimer’s Institute Awarded \\$1.5 Million from Bader Foundation](#)
- [Bader Grants Over \\$1 Million to Various Alzheimer’s and Aging Programs](#)

RESEARCH AND PROGRAM TOOLS

- Information on the Health Insurance Marketplace and Health Care Reform: healthcare.gov
 - [Spanish Language Marketplace](#)
 - [Marketplace Enrollment Data](#)
 - [HHS Partner Official Resources](#)
- Health and Human Services
 - [Preparing for the Upcoming Tax Season](#)
- [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services \(CMS\)](#)
- Internal Revenue Service
 - [ACA Tax Provision Resources](#)
- New and Updated Resources from the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#)
- New and Updated Resources from the [Commonwealth Fund](#)
 - [Health Reform Resource Center](#)
- [Enroll America](#) Resources
- New and Updated Resources from [HRSA](#)
- New and Updated Resources from [AHRQ](#)
- [State Refor\(u\)m](#)
- Value Penguin Map: [Changes to the Obamacare Exchanges 2015 v. 2014](#)
- Avalere Health Analysis: [2015 Exchange Premium File](#)
- Wisconsin Toolbox:
 - [Enroll WI](#) (Formerly E4Health)
 - [OIC Individual Health Insurance Carriers in WI Map](#)
 - [Wisconsin Epidemiological Profile on Alcohol and Other Drug Use](#)

EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- [Wisconsin Farmers Union State Convention](#), Eau Claire, January 23-25
- [Wisconsin Health News Prescription Drug Briefing](#), Madison, February 3
- [Opioid Abuse in Wisconsin: State Policy, Naloxone, and Prescribing Practices](#), Madison, Feb 18
- [Wisconsin Health Literacy Summit](#), Madison, April 14-15

Selected 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.

[#SCOTUS](#) to address whether health care providers can sue states to get [#Medicaid](#) fees increased, via [@KHNews](#) <http://huff.to/14RkWAR>

How Much Do Hospitals Cost Shift? A Review of the Evidence <http://bit.ly/1BZHPf5>

"Doing More for Patients Often Does No Good"- [@aaronecarroll](#) reviews new studies in [@JAMA_current](#) view [@nytimes](#) <http://nyti.ms/1Cf3KPH>

MN Releases Nation's First Total Cost of Care Data for Medical Groups - risk adjusted, via [@AligningForces](#) <http://bit.ly/1DyvrnG>

Debate on evidence, cost-effectiveness of [#ACA](#) preventive care mandate, via [@healthaffairs](#) <http://bit.ly/1BMlkdy> and <http://bit.ly/1xSizXx>

[.@RAND](#) tests pay-for-performance scheme that does not deter care for disadvantaged patients, via [@Health_Affairs](#) <http://bit.ly/1AsLOkH>

WI [@RepPaulRyan](#) op-ed: [#Obamacare](#) is beyond repair, via [@USATODAY](#) <http://usat.ly/1HOhAMp>

Changing the [#ACA](#) defined work week from 30 to 40 hours might reduce hours for more employees, via [@washingtonpost](#) <http://wapo.st/1tKoolQ>

[#uninsured](#) rate among US adults down from 17.1% a year ago to 12.9% now, reports [@GallupNews](#) <http://bit.ly/1DITiJN>

Health Impact Assessment on Madison alcohol density ordinance by [@UWiscPHI](#) [@EFhealthpolicy](#) selected as model [#HIA](#) <http://bit.ly/1s5PZIS>

Health costs concentrated among few - Top Ten Healthcare Charts of 2014, via [@danmunro](#) [@forbes](#) <http://onforb.es/1xqie0l>

Drop in Uninsured by 5 Different Surveys - Top Ten Healthcare Charts For 2014 via [@danmunro](#) <http://onforb.es/1xqie0l>

Great Research Roundup of [#ACA](#) matters going into open-enrollment 2 - premiums, young invincibles, from [@PennLDI](#) <http://bit.ly/1pfyeiL>

Some Experts Dispute Claims Of Looming Doctor Shortage, via [@KHNews](#) [@irovner](#) [#UnconventionalWisdom](#) <http://bit.ly/1v3RBuB>

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.