

Catch-Up Briefing Report
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An annotated compilation of selected Wisconsin health and health care news stories from September 1, 2016 – November 15, 2016. Archived editions can be found [here](#).



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In This Issue

STATE NEWS

- [Health Care Reform Implementation in Wisconsin](#)
- [Medicaid/BadgerCare](#)
- [Workforce/Health Professionals/Training & Education](#)
- [Public Health](#)
- [Clinics, Hospitals, and Health Plans](#)

RESEARCH AND PROGRAM TOOLS

EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SELECTED TWEETS FROM OUR TWITTER FEED

STATE NEWS

Health Care Reform Implementation in Wisconsin

[High Obamacare Enrollment in Counties Carried by President-Elect Trump](#)

The *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* reports that people living in the 59 counties won by President-Elect Donald Trump enroll in the Affordable Care Act's Marketplace plans at a higher rate than the 13 mostly urban counties that backed Clinton. Consumers in these counties are enrolling in Obamacare coverage much higher than average, highlighting the difficult task ahead for a repeal and replace effort.

Other Wisconsin-Specific Post-Election Reports

- [State Sees Intense Interest In ACA Plans, Wisconsin Health News](#)
- [ACA Enrollment Spikes After Presidential Election, WPR](#)
- [Obamacare is Doomed. Now What? Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#)
- [Businesses, uninsured prepare for what's next for Affordable Care Act – Channel 3000](#)

[Wisconsin 2015 Uninsured Rate 5.7%, down from 9.1% in 2013; 87% of Governor's 2015 Goal](#)
U.S. Census Bureau [data](#), *Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2015* reveals a steady decline in Wisconsin's uninsured rate, decreasing from 9.1% in 2013 to 5.7% in 2015. The state has 195,180 fewer uninsured residents, which is 87% of the [2015 goal Governor Walker set](#) in 2013. At 5.7%, Wisconsin is 3.7 percentage points lower than the U.S. average (9.4%), tied for the 6th lowest uninsured rate in the United States, and has the lowest uninsured rate among states that did not accept Affordable Care Act funds to expand Medicaid eligibility.

[Many WI Uninsured Eligible for Medicaid or ACA Tax Credits](#)

The Kaiser Family Foundation reports that, among Wisconsin's 353,000 non-elderly uninsured individuals (as of 2016), 124,000 (35.13%) are eligible for Medicaid. An additional 82,000 (23.23%) are eligible for a tax credit to attain health insurance via the ACA Marketplace (Healthcare.gov). Researchers have suggested outreach and education efforts, particularly addressing misperceptions about cost. The remaining 42.64%, or 147,000 individuals, are ineligible for financial assistance due to income, ESI offer, or citizenship. Separately, US DHHS [reports that about 51,000 Wisconsin residents](#) who current directly purchase health insurance off the ACA Marketplace are eligible for federal subsidies to purchase coverage through Healthcare.gov.

[ACA Compliant Insurance Plan Rates Increase 15.9%](#)

After a regularly scheduled review of health insurance rates and forms filed by insurers, the Wisconsin Office of the Commissioner of Insurance (OCI) has found an average rate increase of 15.88%. Commissioner Ted Nickel notes that rates in some areas the increase could reach as high as 30.37%, but did not mention the lower range of rate change, which falls below the 15.88% average. The [national average rate of increase](#) for benchmark plans on Healthcare.gov is about 25%. Most consumers, however, receive federal subsidies to purchase their ACA plans, and these [subsidies will offset the premium increases](#).

[Senator Ron Johnson Introduces the "Protection from ObamaCare Monopolies Act"](#)

Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI) alongside five other republicans including Senator John McCain (R-AZ), introduced a bill, named the "Protection from ObamaCare Monopolies Act," to provide an exemption from the individual mandate for residents of counties with fewer than two health insurance issuers offering plans on an Exchange. [For Wisconsin's current \(2017\) enrollment period](#), one Wisconsin county (Menominee) has only a single insurer offering plans through the ACA Marketplace, while 56 out of 72 counties have three or more insurers offering plans.

[Estimated 37,000 Need to Select New ACA Health Plan through ACA Exchange](#)

[Wisconsin Insurance Commissioner Ted Nickel](#) reports that 37,160 people are expected to lose their current plan providing individual health insurance due to the exit from or change of service area by some insurers within the ACA Marketplace. These individuals are encouraged to actively re-enroll and select a new plan by December 15, 2016 in order to have coverage on January 1, 2017. If they do not do so, CMS will [automatically re-enroll](#) the participant in a different matched product, a measure [criticized by Commissioner Nickel](#), unless they otherwise opt-out of re-enrollment. However, even if re-enrolled in a new plan, the member can decide against paying the premium when due and therefore not effectuate coverage.

[Many WI Insurers Offer Obamacare Plans; Employer-Sponsored Insurance Increasing](#)

A new chartpack by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute shows Wisconsin had solid participation in the Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplace and an increase in employer-based health insurance coverage. Data show that, unlike many other states, Wisconsin has very strong participation by health insurance carriers in the ACA marketplace (Healthcare.gov), with 15 insurers offering a variety of health plans, and 56 of the state's 72 counties having at least three insurance carriers offering health plans through Healthcare.gov. A review of ACA Marketplace [insurer entries and exits](#) reports that Ambetter (MHS), United, Physicians Plus, and WPS (Arise) are exiting the exchange at the end of 2016, while Children's Community Health Plan and Aspirus Arise are joining.

[Employer-Based Health Insurance Costs Outpace Income, but Slowing Since ACA](#)

Premiums and deductibles for employer health insurance have risen more slowly in Wisconsin and nationally since 2010, when the Affordable Care Act was adopted, than in previous years, [reports the Commonwealth Fund](#). However, incomes do not keep pace with the rise in premiums and deductibles. An [interactive map](#) shows detail on premium changes, deductibles, and incomes from 2010-2015. While premiums for family coverage increased 4.0% a year that period, median family income only increased 3% per year over the same period.

Medicaid/BadgerCare

[Wisconsin DHS Requests \\$450 Million For Growing Medicaid Costs; Later, Lowers Request](#)

In the [2017-2019 Biennium Agency Budget Request](#), the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) requested \$450 Million to cover the expanding costs of Medicaid. This increase was lower than the last three biennial budgets, in which the DHS had submitted requests ranging from \$650 million to \$1.6 billion. Later, [DHS submitted a subsequent lower request](#). These reductions reflect increased federal Medicaid matching rate (FMAP), declining BadgerCare enrollment, slower growth in some managed care and fee-for-service costs, and decreases in nursing home utilization. WCCF provides a [review and analysis](#).

[DHS Proposes Converting SeniorCare into Medicare Part D Wraparound Program](#)

DHS has submitted a plan to the Governor that includes changing SeniorCare to a Medicare Part D Wraparound Program, which would reduce enrollment fees by \$660,000 annually. The proposed change is not included in the biennial budget request. Governor Walker had proposed

a similar request in the previous biennium, which would have required seniors to apply and enroll in Medicare Part D, but state lawmakers rejected the provision.

[DHS Overreached in Medicaid Recoupment from Private Duty Nurses](#)

As early as 2012, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) sought recoupment of Medicaid funds for services from private nurses due to varying rule and documentation errors. The Professional Homecare Providers, Inc. sued the DHS arguing that it lacked authority to recover such past Medicaid payments. [Judge Foster's court order](#) ruled that DHS exceeded its authority in asking private nurses to return Medicaid payments because cause for recoupment was not met, citing multiple statutes. The DHS has until November 11th to appeal the decision.

Workforce/Health Professionals/Training & Education

[Rural Wisconsin Initiative to Expand Rural Health Care Workforce](#)

Representatives Romaine Quinn (R-Rice Lake), Ed Brooks (R-Reedsburg), and Travis Tranel (R-Cuba City) collectively released a package of legislative proposals called the [Rural Wisconsin Initiative](#) in the second round of legislative agenda setting to address sustainable growth in rural communities by providing financial support to health care workforce expansion, improve health care quality, and incentivize the development of community wellness initiatives. The Rural Wisconsin Initiative was developed collaboratively with input from the Wisconsin Hospital Association's members and policy staff.

[DHS Funds Graduate Medical Education Grants](#)

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) has awarded \$3.375 million to four grant recipients to offer 12 new medical residents positions in rural and underserved areas of the state, beginning July 1, 2017. Recipients include Fox Valley Family Medicine (\$675,000), University of Wisconsin-Madison Family Medicine (\$675,000), University of Wisconsin-Madison Psychiatry (\$900,000), and Medical College of Wisconsin General Surgery (\$1.125 million) Service through the Graduate Medical Education (GME) initiative began in 2014 and has seen increased funding annually since its launch.

[UW Launches the Nation's First Rural OB-GYN Residency Program](#)

Funded by the Rural Physician Residency assistance Program and the UW School of Medicine and Public Health, the University of Wisconsin has launched the nation's first rural obstetrics and gynecology residency program. The program places recent medical school graduates in rural communities to complete their residency program, a four-year commitment. The first committed resident, in the 2021 rural OB-GYN residency program, will begin training in Madison in July 2017 and move out to work in rural communities from there.

[\\$813 Million Surplus Raises Questions About Malpractice Compensation Fund](#)

The [Injured Patients and Families Compensation Fund](#), a state-run fund, provides excess medical malpractice coverage to Wisconsin health care providers to ensure that funds are available for payouts to injured patients when in excess of \$1 million, the required amount of

malpractice coverage health care providers must have. Healthcare providers pay into the state fund annually, [ranging from hundreds to tens of thousands of dollars depending on the purchaser](#). However, consistent annual payment into the fund, and steady declines in malpractice suits and payouts have resulted in the fund's \$813 million surplus (as of March 2016), more than double the recommended maximum amount of \$376.6 million, giving the fund a total of \$1.2 billion.

[Wisconsin Board of Nursing to Draft Responsible Prescription Drug Guidelines](#)

In response to Representative John Nygren's [Heroin, Opioid Prevention, and Education Agenda \(Hope\), 2015 Wisconsin Act 269](#), the Wisconsin Board of Nursing Chair, Jeff Miller, announced the creation of a three-person committee to tasked with drafting a best practices guideline for the prescription of opioids and other controlled substances. These best practices will follow recently written guidelines established by the [Wisconsin Medical Examining Board](#) as well as those [created by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

[Aspirus Invests \\$14 Million in Health Care Workforce Program](#)

To address the national physician shortage and meet the needs of communities in north central Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, Aspirus, alongside community partnerships, announced the Aspirus Scholars Program. The program provides scholarships (\$70,000 to \$150,000) to medical students and advance practice provider students whom agree to an employment term with Aspirus in primary care, psychiatry, or general surgery. Employment periods range from three to five years.

[USDA Award Ministry Health \\$432,258 to Expand APNP Telemedicine Program Across Wisconsin](#)

Ministry Health Care, Inc. is receiving a \$432,258 grant to expand Ministry Health Care's Advanced Practice Nurse Practitioners (APNP) telemedicine program to clinics across seven rural counties. APNPs in rural areas will communicate directly with physicians in other areas who will consult on cases and provide direction when needed. As the program evolves over the next three years, Ministry Health Care envisions being able to add therapeutic services; such as dietary and diabetic counseling, tele-psychiatry, post-hospitalization, post-surgical follow-up and cardiac stress testing.

Public Health

[Wisconsin Lead Poisoning Among Children Nears Flint, Michigan Rates](#)

An [analysis](#) of lead poisoning rates in Wisconsin revealed that among children under age 6, 4.6% tested positive for lead poisoning in 2015; the 2015 rate in Flint, Michigan was 4.9%. When isolating Milwaukee, the rate nearly doubles as an estimated 8.6% of children under 6 had high levels of lead in their blood. Analytics reveal a racial disparity among lead poisoning as well. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has allocated \$14.5 million in fiscal year 2016 to replace lead lines in 38 municipalities, but the report's author asserts that replacing Milwaukee's lines alone will cost an estimated \$756 million. The Milwaukee Health

Department is providing [free water filtration devices](#) to Milwaukee residents living in homes with lead service lines.

[Governor Scott Walker Confirms Executive Order For Opioid Task Force ; Members Selected](#)
Two months after 46 governors signed the National Governors Association's [Compact to Fight Opioid Addiction](#), Governor Scott Walker implemented [Executive Order #214](#), Relating to the Creation of the Governor's Task Force on Opioid Abuse ("Task Force"), which appoints several agency secretaries to explore solutions to the opioid epidemic. The Governor's Task Force on Opioid Abuse met Friday, October 28th in Green Bay, WI. It includes Lieutenant Governor Kleefisch, Representative Nygren, Attorney General Schimel, as part of 20 professionals from around the state.

[Wisconsin Republican Assembly Release Forward Agenda, Focus on Mental Health](#)
Assembly republicans are focusing on mental health and opioid addiction among other health issues noted in [Forward Agenda](#). Initial recommendations in the agenda for the upcoming legislative session include addressing healthcare worker shortages (CNA positions, Alzheimer and dementia professionals, mental health professionals, and sexual assault nurse examiners), structure changes to Medicaid, development of a long-term care investment fund, [lifting restrictions on end-of-life experimental therapies](#), lifting restrictions in access to Cannabidiol Oil, and expanding the Volunteer Health Care Program.

[Representative Nygren's HOPE Agenda Grants 45 TAD Recipients](#)
The Wisconsin Department of Justice, as part of the recently passed Heroin, Opioid Prevention, and Education Agenda (HOPE), which includes the Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD) program, has awarded over \$6 million to [45 recipients](#) (counties and tribal communities) throughout Wisconsin. TAD offers local jurisdictions the option to transfer non-violent offenders to substance abuse treatment programs. The program is intended as safer and cost-effective alternative to jail or prison confinement.

[With Three Months Left, Narcan Uses in Wisconsin Nearly Meet 2015 Total Count](#)
In central Wisconsin, Naloxone, or Narcan, has been administered 95 times in 2016 to prevent opioid overdose, nearly meeting 2015's 109 total uses. These estimates exclude uses from hospitals and small fire departments. The enactment of Governor Scott Walker's Standing Order (August 26, 2016), which allows for pharmacists to dispense Narcan without individual prescriptions, may have played a role in this increased usage.

[2015 Wisconsin Death Report Shows Continued Increase in Opioid-Related Overdoses](#)
The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) has released the 2015 Annual Death Report, an examination of mortality trends by cause in Wisconsin and the U.S. A major take away is the increase in the age-adjusted death rate for deaths related to overdoses (opioids and opiates). While Wisconsin's mortality rate is not significantly different from the U.S. rate, the average percent change in deaths related to overdose has increased significantly over time (39% from 2010 to 2014 compared to 20% in the U.S. over the same period). Among all drug-related deaths, opioids represented 70% of all overdose deaths.

[Study: Minnesota Is Healthier Than Wisconsin](#)

A new study in the *Wisconsin Medical Journal* reports that Minnesota has better overall health than Wisconsin. Researchers used County Health Rankings methods to determine summary ranks and examine the potential impact of state-based programs and policies on health outcomes. Minnesota out-ranks Wisconsin in 23 of the 29 measures. These differences were explained primarily by healthier behaviors and better scores on socioeconomic factors.

[Sexually Transmitted Disease Rates Increase In Wisconsin](#)

Though lower than the national average, STDs in Wisconsin in 2015 increased nine percent, according to a [report](#) by the Department of Health Services (DHS). The 2015 rate of 523 per 100,000 is potentially the result of social media as a means to meet new sexual partners, suggests DHS. People ages 15 to 24 as well as gay and bisexual men are at highest risk to contracting an STD.

[Delta Dental of Wisconsin Continues Investment in Seal-A-Smile Program](#)

For the eighth straight year, Delta Dental of Wisconsin, a dental-insurance company, has funded the Seal-A-Smile Program in Wisconsin, which provides free oral exams and preventive care to low-income, school-aged children. Preventive care could include fluoride varnish and sealants, when needed, at no cost to families. Seal-a-Smile partners with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and Children's Health Alliance. Seal-A-Smile provides health education to 48,000 students annually and places sealants on more than 25,000 children each year. For the 2016-17 school, Delta Dental of Wisconsin has announced a \$350,000 grant awarded to the program, bringing the total investment to more than \$2.2 million.

[AIDS Resource Center of WI and Harvard Law School Partner for Patients' Rights Campaign](#)

The AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW) and the Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation of Harvard Law School, a partnership established in 2015, has developed a campaign to ensure that individuals with chronic diseases, particularly HIV, receive health care as the Affordable Care Act mandates. The program aims to ensure that both providers and required medications are covered under the same plan, closing discrepancies for individuals to choose between their doctor and their medication. The campaign will also include education and media efforts the will target federal and state official and insurers, according to Bill Keeton, ARCW Vice President of Government and Public Relations.

[Wisconsin's First Human-Case of West Nile Virus](#)

Though HIPAA laws limit details about the individual case at risk of revealing personal patient information, the first human-case of West Nile Virus in 2016 has been identified in Sheboygan County.

[Wisconsin Ranks 15th in Health of Woman and Children Report](#)

A recent report of women and children's health, conducted by America's Health Rankings, a division of UnitedHealth foundation, ranks Wisconsin 15th overall among all 50 states. The report involves four groupings: overall, women's health, infant's health, and children's health. Wisconsin, in these latter three categories, ranked 9th, 21st, and 15th respectively. Wisconsin

ranked in the top 16 in all subcategories except for behaviors (44th), mainly due to high rates of excessive drinking in women, alcohol consumption and smoking during pregnancy, and tobacco use and drug or alcohol dependence or abuse among youth.

[Wisconsin DHS Names New Medicaid Director; New Assistant Deputy Secretary](#)

Expected to start October 3rd, Michael Heifetz will replace Kevin Moore as Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) Medicaid Director. Prior to the new role, Heifetz served as the state budget director and administrator of executive budget and finance at the Department of Administration. Announced October 19th, the DHS appointed Jennifer Malcore to serve as the next Assistant Deputy Secretary, replacing Bill Hanna.

[Former DHS Medicaid Director Joins Aurora Health Care](#)

Former Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) Medicaid Director and Administrator of the Division of Health Care Access and Accountability, Kevin Moore, has accepted a senior vice president of Medicaid strategy with Aurora Health Care, Wisconsin's largest integrated health care system.

Funding Awards:

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

- [Wisconsin Partnership Program Awarded \\$1.5 Million to Three Multi-Disciplinary Initiatives](#)
- [Eau Claire County Health Department Awarded \\$50,000 to Prevent Drug Abuse](#)
- [City Of Madison Received \\$700,000 in Federal Grant to Launch Drug Diversion Effort](#)

Clinics, Hospitals, Health Systems, and Health Plans

Clinics, Hospitals, Health Systems

[Uncompensated Health Care Drops 31.1% from \\$1.3 billion to \\$918 million](#)

Data from 52 of Wisconsin's 149 hospitals, reported by the Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA), show a 31.1% decrease in uncompensated health care expenditures, from \$1.3 billion in FY14 to \$918.0 million in FY 15. Hospitals in Milwaukee accounted for 29.0% of the statewide expenditures in charity care and 23.6% of the statewide expenditures in care related to bad debt.

[Wisconsin Hospitals Report Steady Margins, Declining Charity Care Expenses](#)

The Wisconsin Hospital Association, in its *Guide to Wisconsin Hospitals, Fiscal Year 2015* report, examined 150 full-year hospital data. General Medical and Surgical Hospitals report a FY2015 operating margin of 11%, up slightly from 10.7% in FY2014. 29 hospitals lost money in fiscal year 2015, eight more than reported in fiscal year 2014. Wisconsin health systems, within which 95 Wisconsin hospitals operate, showed a 6.3% operating margin and 5.8% total margin, down from their FY2014 reported margins of 5.9% and 8.5% respectively. For General Medical and Surgical Hospitals, charity care declined to 0.9% of gross patient revenue, down from 1.7% in FY2014. Bad debt also declined slightly, from 2% in FY2014 to 1.7% in FY2015.

[Wisconsin to pay \\$1.6 million in Legal Fees to Family Planning Clinic](#)

Planned Parenthood of America, Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, and Affiliated Medical Services, after winning a civil rights claim, will receive \$1.6 million from the State of Wisconsin to cover legal expenses for the abortion providers. Due payments are the result of Governor Walker's requirement for doctors performing abortions to have admitting privileges at hospitals within 30 miles of the procedure site. Though passed in 2013, a final judgment by the [7th Circuit Court of Appeals in Chicago concluded that the law was unconstitutional](#), which was originally determined by [U.S. District Judge William Conley](#) in Madison, and was to be repealed.

[SSM Health St. Mary's Launches Recovery Coach Program to Support Opioid Addiction](#)

Set to launch on November 1st, SSM Health St. Mary's in Madison, WI has developed the first Recovery Coach Program to address the needs of patients struggling with opioid addiction. The program will place on-call recovery coaches in the emergency department where overdose patients are treated. Once medical staff medically clears a patient, they will be offered the opportunity to meet with a recovery coach to develop a personalized pathway to recovery. Within the initial nine-month period, developers aim to enroll 75 patients.

[Medical College of Wisconsin Notifies 3,200 Patients of Data Breach](#)

The email account of a Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) employee was broken into by an unknown third party, leaving 3,200 patients potentially vulnerable. MCW did not offer details on how the breach occurred, but did contact the 3,200 patients via letter.

[Ascension Health Larger Than Ever After Merger](#)

Newly released data reveals that, after a merger with Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare and Ministry Health Care in 2013, Ascension Health has expanded to become Wisconsin's second largest health care system behind Aurora, whose annual \$4 billion revenue comes nearly exclusively from Wisconsin. Ascension's operating income increased from \$20.5 million in fiscal year 2015 to \$753.2 million in fiscal year 2016. The first post-merger quarterly report shows a three-fold increase in hospital patient volume, a 314% increase in discharges, and a 356% increase in acute patient days in Wisconsin.

[Union Members Petition Job Losses after Wheaton Franciscan - Ascension Merger](#)

Ascension Health, now the owner of Milwaukee's St. Francis Hospital after a merger with Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare, is under criticism as unionized nurses and other employees circulate a petition in fear of job losses and department closings. Ascension Wisconsin will close the 30-bed Wheaton Franciscan – Midwest Spine and Orthopedic Hospital and Wisconsin Heart Hospital in Wauwatosa on July 8, 2017. Sources note that the majority of the 192 displaced employees affected by the closure are being offered positions at other Wheaton hospitals and within Wheaton Franciscan Medical Group.

[Integrated Health Network Shifts Focus With 40% Staff Layoff](#)

Integrated Health Network (IHN) has laid off 21 employees, approximately 40% of its staff, in a shift of functions to member health care systems. IHN anticipates additional staff changes over the next 12-months with the implementation of a new operating model and that many of those whom lost their job are being considered for positions with health care systems in the network.

[Three Wisconsin Hospitals Named in Top 100 Heart Programs](#)

Becker's Hospital Review, in their annual edition of "100 Hospitals and Health Systems with Great Heart Programs," has named three Wisconsin hospitals in their top 100: Aspirus Wausau Hospital (Wausau), Children's Hospital of Wisconsin (Milwaukee), and University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics (Madison). The Becker's editorial team examined several reputable ranking and award agencies to composite their list of hospitals leading the nation in cardiovascular healthcare and patient care.

Health Plans: Insurers and HMOs

[Health Groups Memo to Governor Urge Caution on State Self-Insurance Model](#)

Fourteen Leading Wisconsin Health Care Stakeholders" sent a letter to Governor Walker and key legislators urging consideration of the possible negative effects in changing how the state insurance its 250,000 public employees. Wisconsin's Group Insurance Board is [exploring](#) a change from the current model of contracting with 17 HMOs to a system of self-insurance, whereby the state directly pays for health care and takes on actuarial risk.

[Wisconsin Health Plans Rate Well in NCQA Health Insurance Plan Review](#)

A recent evaluation of health insurance plan ratings by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) rated Wisconsin health insurers ranging from 3.0 to 4.5 out of 5.0. Security Health Plan of Wisconsin, Inc. attained top spot for Medicaid quality, with an overall rating of 4.5. For Medicare health insurers, Group Health Plan, Inc. and Gundersen Health Plan, Inc. topped the list with perfect scores of 5.0. Another nine health insurers scored in the high performance group, earning an overall rating of 4.0 or higher. NCQA also rated a wide array of private/commercial health insurance plans, most scoring in the high performing category.

[AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin Files OCR Complaint Against Blue Cross and Blue Shield](#)

The AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin, with the Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation of Harvard Law School, has filed a formal administrative complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office for Civil Rights (OCR), charging Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield (ABCBS) with violations of the Affordable Care Act's Anti-Discrimination Regulation section 1311 and 1557. ABCBS Marketplace Silver level plans do not cover 12 of the 16 drugs required of the six HIV-regimens, allegedly discouraging purchasers with HIV from enrolling in its plan.

[My Choice Family Care Converts to Private, Not-For Profit](#)

My Choice Family Care, a Wisconsin contract provider of Medicaid serving nine counties and 8,800 older adults and individuals with disabilities, has completed its transition to becoming a private, not-for-profit entity. No longer a department of county government, the transition makes My Choice Family Care eligible for HMO licensure and is a key step toward implementing a fully integrated model of care, consistent with the direction of the DHS Family Care Partnership program.

Mergers, Partnerships, Expansions, Service Changes

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

- [Eight Wisconsin clinics and hospitals adopt “SSM Health” name change to reflect partnership](#)
- [Ascension Undergoes National Rebranding Campaign; All Entity Names To Begin With Ascension](#)
- [Aurora Health to Expand New Emergency Department Technology to Two Hospitals](#)
- [United Hospital System Approved for 194,888-Square-Foot Expansion in Pleasant Prairie](#)
- [Aurora Health Care and ProHealth Care End Partnership With UW’s Medical Center in Pewaukee](#)
- [Security Health Plan to Expand “Select Product” to Seven Additional Counties](#)
- [Humana launches Wisconsin Value Network HMO with four major health care systems](#)

RESEARCH AND PROGRAM TOOLS

- [Chartpack: Affordable Care Act & Medicaid Reform in Wisconsin](#)
- [Interactive Map: See Obamacare Rates for Every County in the Country](#)
- [CMS Health Insurance Marketplace Public Use Files for Researchers](#)
- [QHP landscape files: health and dental datasets for researchers](#)
- [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: [WIpricepoint.org](#)
- [50-State Survey Results: Medicaid Reforms to Expand Coverage, Control Costs, Improve Care](#)
- [Covering Wisconsin “Find Local Help” Connector Tool](#)
- [Commonwealth Fund Health Reform Resource Center](#)
- [Enroll America](#) Resources
 - [Get Covered Plan Explorer](#)
 - [2015 State and County-Level Coverage Data](#)
- [2016 and 2017 Wisconsin Health Plans in Exchange by County](#)
- Healthcare.gov [2017 health insurance plans and prices tool](#)
- Key Health Data About Wisconsin, 2016, from [TFAH](#)
- [Wisconsin Department of Health Services Cancer Fact Sheets, Fifth Edition](#)

EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- [WI Alzheimer's Institute's 14th Annual Alzheimer's Disease Update](#), Nov. 17-18, Madison
- [Wisconsin Group Insurance Board Meeting](#), Nov 30 and Dec 13, Madison
- [WHN Panel: Scope of practice, team-based care & future healthcare workforce](#), Dec. 6, Madison
- [WTN Media Disruptive Healthcare Conference 2016](#), Dec. 7-8, Madison
- [Greater Milwaukee Business Foundation on Health – Factors influencing Hospital Payment Levels](#), Dec 15, Brookfield

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.

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.