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A Project of ABC for Health, Inc.
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HealthWatch Wisconsin Update

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February 16 , 2009

Volume 5, Number 3

In This Issue

2nd Annual HealthWatch Wisconsin Conference is a success!
 WI Hospital Assessment Proposal
 Case Tip: BC+ "Spend-Down" for Some, Even if Over Income
 Shelly's Section: PBS Series on Uninsured on America
 NEWS: Health Care in Wisconsin
 NEWS: Health Care & the Economic Stimulus Package
 NEWS: Health Care Reform
 NEWS: Covering Children
 NEWS: Health Care Costs & Access
 NEWS: The Uninsured
 NEWS: Medicaid
 Featured Link: New Cover the Uninsured Web site
 Mark Your Calendars Now
 Now Hiring
 Produce your own webcast! Rent the ABC for Health Studio!
 Specialized Training Opportunities
 Support Our Efforts!

Coalition Meetings by County

Barron: TBA, 1:00-2:00pm.
 Barron County Workforce Resource, Inc., 331 S. Main St., Ste. 6, Rice Lake. Contact Mike Rust at (715) 485-8525 or miker@co.polk.wi.us with questions.
Chippewa: March 10, 10:45am-12:00pm. Chippewa County Courthouse, Room 121, 711 N.

2nd Annual HealthWatch Wisconsin Conference is a success!

The second annual HealthWatch Wisconsin Conference was a great success! Thank you to the 165+ attendees, speakers and representatives from throughout the state who joined us to help make it such an informative and useful event.



This year's conference was spread over 1 1/2 days and, according to the post-conference evaluations, the opening plenary session on Monday was a popular addition. The legislative panel on Tuesday was once again well received and everyone who returned the evaluation agreed that it was both interesting and informative.

Some of the most popular breakout sessions from Day 1 were "Three Steps to Badgercare Plus," "BC+ for Non-Qualified Immigrants," and "Patient Navigators." Day 2's more popular sessions included "Benefits Counseling in Wisconsin" and "Digging into BC+ Core Plan for Childless Adults."

To view video and audio links from the conference, please [click here](#) to be transferred to the WisconsinEye Network Web site. The state cable network filmed select sessions over the two day period and have posted them online.

Here's what some people said about their experience:

- "This year's conference was much better in that it was spread over 2 days."
- "Ever since last year's experience I looked forward to this year's."
- "Tuesday opening plenary was great ... They offered up-to-date policy info and vision. Eco-friendly packets a plus. Thanks!"

Bridge St., Chippewa Falls.
Contact Rose Marsh at 1-800-400-3678 or rmarsh@co.chippewa.wi.us with questions.

Dane: March 2, 9:00-11:00am. Campus Community Partnerships, 2300 S. Park St., Ste. 1B, Madison. Contact Nora Foshager at (608) 261-6939, ext. 204 or nfoshager@safetyweb.org with questions.

Dunn: April 8, 11:45am-1:00pm. Red Cedar Medical Center (Education Center), 2321 Stout Rd., Menomonie. Contact Patrick Rebman at (715) 233-7309 or rebman.patrick@mayo.edu with questions.

Eau Claire: March 5, 12:00-1:30pm. Luther Hospital Cafeteria, Dining Room 1, 1221 Whipple St., Eau Claire. Contact Lou Kelsey at (715) 834-4455 or lkelseyefww@sbcglobal.net or Pat Perkins at (715) 839-4718 or pat.perkins@co.eau-claire.wi.us with questions.

Milwaukee: March 11, 10:00am-12:00pm. Aurora Family Services, 3200 W. Highland Blvd., Milwaukee. Contact Kari Mattson at (414) 449-4777, ext. 145 or karim@communityadvocates.net or Tanya Atkinson at (414) 289-3749 with questions.

Milwaukee CHASE (Children's Health Access for the Special and Equal): February 19, 11:30am-1:30pm. ARC of Milwaukee, 7203 W. Center St., Milwaukee. Contact Brad Holman at (414) 266-3189 or bholman@chw.org with questions.

Polk: TBA, 10:45am-12:00pm. Polk County Health Department, Conference Room A & B, 100 Polk County Plaza, Balsam Lake. Contact Mike Rust at (715) 485-8525 or miker@co.polk.wi.us with questions.

- "All sessions attended were well done and informative."
- "CD rom is wonderful, especially when you wish you could attend more than one breakout session."

97% of respondents replied that they would be interested in attending future HWW conferences, workshops and events, so we look forward to working with you again in the future!

WI Hospital Assessment Proposal

On February 11, Governor Doyle and other legislative leaders introduced the Hospital Assessment Proposal to the Wisconsin Legislature as a part of a state stimulus and budget deficit reduction bill.

By using an assessment on hospital revenues, this plan would give the state an additional \$300 million in federal funding. This will result in increased Medicaid reimbursement rates for hospitals and will provide more funding for other health care programs. A portion of the funds will be used to help implement the BadgerCare Plus Core Plan for Childless Adults, set to begin in July 2009.

The bill, LRB-1999, is set to be discussed on Tuesday, February 17, in a meeting of the Joint Finance Committee. To view the entire bill in PDF form, please [click here](#). To view a detailed summary of the bill, please [click here](#); information regarding the Hospital Assessment can be found on page 103 of this PDF.

Case Tip: BC+ "Spend-Down" for Some, Even if Over Income

Use the Family's Medicals Bills to Gain "Blanket" BadgerCare Plus Eligibility

In general, if children or pregnant women have access to private insurance and are over a certain income limit, they may get a denial for BadgerCare Plus benefits. However, they could gain eligibility for benefits by requesting a "deductible."

Don't think of a Medicaid/BC+ deductible in the same way you would for private health insurance. For Medicaid and BC+ purposes, a deductible is the amount by which the family's net income exceeds 150% of the Federal Poverty Limit (for children with access to private insurance) or 300% of the FPL (for pregnant women who are over income), over a 6-month period. The individual does not have to pay this amount; rather, s/he would need to "meet" this calculated amount by submitting medical bills or proof of medical debt to his or her county

Coalitions Under Development

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La Crosse: Contact Lindsey Schwarz at (608) 785-5841 or Schwarz.lindsey@co.la-crosse.wi.us with questions.

Other Meeting Notices

Senator Russ Feingold Listening Sessions -

- **Sauk County:** Tuesday, February 17, at 9:00am at the Spring Green Fire Station, 327 South Winsted Street in Spring Green

- **Price County:** Thursday, February 19, at 11:15am at the Prentice Town Hall, 400 Center Street in the Town of Prentice

- **Taylor County:** Thursday, February 19, at 1:45pm at the Taylor County Community Center, northeast corner of Highways 64 and 13 at the Taylor County Fairgrounds in Medford.

For more information about Sen. Feingold's listening sessions, please [click here](#).

·
Emerson Hunger Fellow's Public Presentation - This event will take place on February 18 at 5:30pm at Hunger Task Force, 201 S. Hawley Court in Milwaukee. To RSVP, please contact Cheryl Antzoulatos at 414-777-0483 or Cheryl@hungertaskforce.org. For more information, visit www.hungertaskforce.org.

·
The Transition from GAMP to BC+ Core Plan for Childless Adults - This meeting will take place on February 19, 10:00am-12:00pm at Aurora Family Services, 3200 W. Highland Blvd. in Milwaukee. It will provide an update on the transition and answer any questions that may

Economic Support worker. The amount of medical debt or bills owed is then subtracted from the deductible amount. In this way, the individual is using the medical bills to "spend down" or decrease the amount by which his or her income exceeds the eligibility limit.

Please note that an individual must request a deductible; it is not automatically assigned. This permits an individual some freedom in determining when s/he wants the deductible period to begin (the deductible period gives the individual six months to meet the calculated deductible amount) and what bills/debt s/he would like to use to meet that deductible. While this is important, individuals have been uninformed or misinformed of the option to use a deductible to gain eligibility, and thus have received denials from BadgerCare Plus and gone without needed benefits.

EXAMPLE: Tim is a child with special health care needs. He is covered under his father's employer-sponsored plan and, while the insurance is expensive, it is basic and does not meet his needs. Tim's therapy services usually run out after the first three months of the year and, as a result, his parents have about \$10,000 in unpaid bills. Because of the type of insurance Tim's family has (employer-sponsored insurance that pays 80% or more of the monthly premiums), he is ineligible for BadgerCare Plus due to crowd-out provisions. However, Tim's parents can request a BC+ deductible for him and create a 6-month deductible period, then use the medical bills to "spend down" to 150% of the FPL. This will secure BC+ Standard Plan services for Tim, which will help fill in the gaps in his private insurance coverage. Additionally, if Tim has any siblings, they too will be eligible for BC+ Standard Plan services.

Please note that after some advocacy and suggestions from HealthWatch Wisconsin, the State has modified the BadgerCare Plus application. Applicants can now request a deductible right on the application. They can now mark a check-box on the application to indicate that they wish their children to become eligible through a deductible. It may be beneficial for individuals to submit photocopies of medical bills along with the application for BadgerCare Plus to further streamline their eligibility determination. Please [click here](#) to view the BadgerCare Plus application with the "Checkbox for a Deductible" (see page 9, point H).

Shelly's Section: PBS Series on Uninsured on America

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 In my everyday work as the HealthWatch Wisconsin Update editor, I talk with interesting people, discover exciting video and web content, and learn about helpful reminders for complicated programs. In this section of the Update, I share my findings with you!

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 This edition, I'd like to highlight a series conducted by

arise. If you have questions about the meeting, contact Sarah Fraley at Sarah.Fraley@Wisconsin.gov or 414-220-5337.

Launching Maternal & Child Health: Opportunities for a New Era

- This annual conference, hosted by the Association of Maternal and Child Health, will be held February 21-25, 2009 at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, 2660 Woodley Road, NW, in Washington, DC. To learn more about the conference or to register, please visit www.amchp.org/events.

Questions? Please contact Helen Cedeno at hcedeno@amchp.org or 202-775-0436.

Hospital Training - This training will be held from 1:00-3:00pm on February 25, at Aurora Family Services in Milwaukee. The presentation will include information about hospital charity care programs, WHIE technology for emergency rooms, and financial counselors may be on hand to discuss other issues. For more information, please contact Kari Mattson at karim@communityadvocates.net.

Super Saturday - The Social Development Commission (SDC) is hosting this event on April 4 to help residents with various programs and services available to them, including free federal and state tax preparation and filing, BadgerCare Plus sign-up, and other services provided by the Milwaukee Health Department. This event will be held in three locations: 4041 N. Richards St., 931 W. Madison St., and 6848 N. Teutonia Ave. in Milwaukee. For more information, please visit www.cr-sdc.org.

PBS NewsHour titled "The Uninsured in America." They have recently produced and aired an episode that reflects the current economic situation; you can read and view (by streaming video or download) this episode [here](#). The series Web site also contains many useful resources, including state-specific information, maps, timelines, information on how the U.S. compares to other countries, and more. "The Uninsured in America" home page can be found at [this link](#).

NEWS: Health Care in Wisconsin

Use the links below to access recent news on health care and coverage in Wisconsin:

- [OPINION: Why the state's takeover is necessary - Karen Timberlake for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, February 10](#)
- [Legislators want restrictions on rescinding insurance policies - Guy Boulton for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, February 9](#)
- [OPINION: State's takeover plan is wrong approach - Corey Hoze for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, February 9](#)
- [New computer system at Medicaid agency creates backlog of cases - Ellen Gabler for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, February 4](#)
- [Doyle delays BadgerChoice implementation - Corri Hess for the Business Journal of Milwaukee, February 3](#)
- [State takes over county's public assistance programs - Steve Schultze for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, February 3](#)
- [Wis. state govt taking over Milwaukee Co. aid - Associated Press/Chicago Tribune, February 3](#)

NEWS: Health Care & the Economic Stimulus Package

Follow the links below to access recent news articles on possible economic stimulus for health care:

- [How the economic stimulus plan could affect you - The Associated Press, February 15](#)
- [U.S. to compare medical treatments - Robert Pear for the New York Times, February 15](#)
- [Obama wins his economic stimulus package, but without the bipartisanship he sought - Gail Russell Chaddock for the Christian Science Monitor, February 14](#)
- [Stimulus bill to cover 65 percent of COBRA costs for 9 months - Michelle Andrews for the U.S. News & World Report, February 13](#)

Resources

Energy Services, Inc. of Dane County:

The home energy plus program can help with high energy costs. To apply for energy assistance, call (608) 267-8601. Grants are available, as well as home weatherization. For those who are homebound due to physical disability, a worker will visit the home. ESI also provides emergency after-hours assistance – just call! Call ESI for more information on qualifying and applying.

Kaiser's Consumer-Directed Health Care (CDHC)

Resources: A narrated slide tutorial on principles and different models of CDHC ([click here](#)), its companion issue module on the latest research and policy analysis on CDHC ([click here](#)), and the results of Kaiser's Health Poll Search on CDHC ([click here](#)) are all available from the Kaiser Family Foundation.

Knowledge Path is a web-based guide from the Maternal and Child Health Library at Georgetown University that points to current, high-quality resources on caring for CYSHCN. Separate sections list resources on specific aspects of care and development, such as adolescent transition, advocacy, financing, and screening. To access this resource, please [click here](#).

Wisconsin First Step can help you find resources for children birth to 21 with special needs. Staff are on-hand 24 hours a day to answer calls and can provide follow-up and materials on specific diseases or conditions. Call (800) 642-7837 with questions. Language interpretation and TTY services are available. You can also email wispubhealth@mch-hotlines.org or [visit their website](#).

NEWS: Health Care Reform

Follow the links below to access recent news articles on reforming the health care system:

- [Health care's 5 points of fight - Chris Frates for Politico.com, February 10](#)
- [Obama's promised health care overhaul delayed - Donna Smith for Reuters/Washington Post, February 6](#)
- [Health care reform not No. 1 on Hill - Sean Lenggell for the Washington Times, February 4](#)
- [Nominee slip hurts health care drive - Peter Baker and Robert Pear for the New York Times, February 3](#)
- [Economic crisis could jumpstart health care reform - Guy Boulton for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, February 2](#)
- [Some fear window is narrow for healthcare overhaul - Lisa Wangness for the Boston Globe, January 28](#)

NEWS: Covering Children

Visit the links below to read recent news articles about the State Children's Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP):

- [Obama ends children's care limits - Kevin Freking for the Associated Press/Philadelphia Inquirer, February 6](#)
- [Obama expands health care for children - Guy Boulton and Diana Marrero for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, February 5](#)
- [Obama Signs Children's Health Insurance Bill - Robert Pear for the New York Times, February 4](#)
- [Maximizing Kids' Enrollment in Medicaid and SCHIP: What works in reaching, enrolling and retaining eligible children - Victoria Wachino, MPP and Alice M. Weiss, JD for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, February 2009](#)

NEWS: Health Care Costs & Access

Click on the links below to access recent news articles on health care costs and access:

- [How to manage the maze of medical debt - Tom Murphy for the Associated Press/Washington Post, February 10](#)
- [Small Payroll, but Big Woes on Insurance - Kevin Sack for the New York Times, February 2](#)
- [Health Savings Accounts and High-Deductible Health Insurance Plans: Implications for Those with High Medical Costs, Low Incomes, and the Uninsured - Linda J. Blumberg and Lisa Clemans-Cope for the Urban Institute, January 2009](#)

Links of Interest

Catalyst Center – A national center dedicated to improving health care insurance and financing for CYSHCN.

www.hdwg.org/

The Commonwealth Fund – A private foundation working toward a high performance health system. <http://www.cmwf.org>

Cover the Uninsured Week – CTUW 2009: March 22-28.

<http://covertheuninsuredweek.org>

Family Voices– Speaking on behalf of CYSHCN.

www.familyvoices.org

Kaiser Family Foundation – A non-profit, private operating foundation focusing on the major health care issues facing the nation. www.kff.org/

Parent to Parent USA – A national non-profit organization committed to assuring access and quality in Parent to Parent support across the country. www.p2pusa.org

If you have any suggestions on websites or other resources that you have found helpful, please send them to Nora Foshager at nfoshager@safetyweb.org.

Previous Issues of the Update: (in PDF form)

[February 1](#)

[January 15](#)

[December 15](#)

NEWS: The Uninsured

Visit the links below to read recent news articles about the uninsured:

- [Ranks of uninsured to grow - Kevin Freking for the Associated Press/The Detroit News, February 11](#)
- [Report: Jobless struggle with health care coverage - Kevin Freking for the Associated Press/San Francisco Chronicle, February 6](#)
- [The new uninsured - John Fairhall and Kate Steadman for the Washington Post, February 3](#)

NEWS: Medicaid

Click on the links below to access recent news articles on Medicaid:

- [EDITORIAL: Sins of Omission: The Forgotten Poor - The New York Times, February 1](#)

Featured Link: New Cover the Uninsured Web site

Cover the Uninsured has launched their new Web site just as the health care reform debate is heating up.

One new feature is an email listserv featuring the latest news and updates from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which users can easily sign up for. The site also features recent information on legislation and how it will affect you, as well as state-specific information.

As usual, many free materials are available for Cover the Uninsured Week 2009 (March 22-28), including bookmarks, information cards, posters, banners and much more. All you have to do is register to become a member on the site.

To visit the recently updated Web site, go to www.covertheuninsured.org.

■ **CKSN Corner** ■
Covering Kids with Special Needs

[December 1](#)[November 15](#)[November 1](#)[October 15](#)[October 1](#)[September 15](#)[September 1](#)

All other issues can be viewed on our website at www.healthwatchwisconsin.org, under the "HWW Update" heading.

HealthWatch WatchDog Episode Archive:

Season 1:

Episode 1: ["Advocacy Strategies"](#)

Episode 2: ["HIRSP"](#)

Episode 3: ["ACCESS"](#)

Episode 4: ["Health Care Reform"](#)

Episode 5: ["Birth Cost Recovery"](#)

Episode 6: ["The Functional Screen"](#)

Episode 7: ["Back-to-School"](#)

Episode 8: ["Duplicative Service Denials"](#)

Episode 9: ["Private Health Insurance"](#)

Episode 10: ["Coalition Building"](#)



Mark Your Calendars Now

Six Excellent Events in 2009!

- **Wisconsin Community of Practice on Autism Spectrum Disorders** - This event will be held on March 5, from 10:00am-1:00pm at the Hilton Hotel at Monona Terrace in Madison. To obtain a registration form or if you have any questions about this meeting, please contact Amy Whitehead at 608-267-3861 or amy.whitehead@dhs.wisconsin.gov.
- **Medical Home Implementation Teleconference Series** - The American Academy of Pediatrics is hosting a teleconference series led by national experts. You must register separately for each conference call and space is limited; registration opens one month before each conference date. For more information, please visit www.medicalhomeinfo.org or email Brenda Amos-Lewis at blewis@aap.org. The schedule of calls are:
 - March 3, 12:00pm: Implementing Medical Home for all Children and Youth
 - March 25, 11:00am: Improving Communication and Co-management Between Specialty Providers and the Medical Home
 - April 20, 11:00am: Implementing Developmental Screening in the Medical Home
 - May 21, 12:00pm: The Role of the Medical Home in Family-Centered Early Intervention
 - June 24, 11:00am: Incorporating Family Participation Practices into your Practice and Project
- **WI FACETS Training of Trainers for Transition and Rehab. Act** - These free trainings will cover the transition from school to life, adults services, and other information. After participating, attendees can receive a \$50 stipend for presenting a powerpoint from the training to 10+ people. To register for a training session, please contact Sandra McFarland at smcfarland@wifacets.org or 877-374-0511. For more information, please contact Charlotte Price at cprice@wifacets.org or 877-374-4677. The trainings will be held:

Episode 11: ["Economic Stimulus"](#)

Episode 12: ["COBRA"](#)

Season 2:

Episode 1: ["Legislative Reform"](#)

Episode 2: ["State of the State"](#)

HealthWatch WatchDog episodes are now available to everyone who receives the HealthWatch Wisconsin Update! Visit the HealthWatch WatchDog webpage at www.healthwatchwisconsin.org. Just click on "HW WatchDog" from the menu on the left.

o March 20, 1:00-4:45pm, and March 21, 9:00am-3:45pm, at the Verona Public Library

o April 17, 4:30-8:00pm, and April 18, 9:00am-4:00pm, at Options for Independence in Green Bay

- **2009 "Did You Know? Now You Know!"** - Family Voices is planning its trainings across the state. Registration and contact information is available on the [Family Voices Web site](#). Here is a list of upcoming trainings:
 - o Portage: March 3 and 10 (4:30-9:00pm)
 - o Green Bay: March 21 and April 18 (9:00am-2:30pm)
 - o Black River Falls: March 27 and April 24 (9:00am-2:30pm)
- **"Destination Collaboration": 2009 Rehabilitation and Transition Conference** - This conference will be held April 1-3, at the American Club in Kohler. For more information and to download a registration form, please [click here](#).
- **Making Transitions Easier: Autism Training** - This training will be held on Friday, April 24, from 9:00am-3:00pm at MATC-Madison's Downtown Education Center, 211 N. Carroll St. For more information, please [click here](#) to view a PDF brochure and registration form - space is limited!
- **"There's No Place Like Home": Circles of Life 2009** - The 25th anniversary of this conference will be held April 30-May 1 at the Marriott Madison West; the featured speakers will be Julie and Katie Beckett. [Click here](#) to download a PDF version of the brochure and the registration form, which is due by March 27. For more information, visit the 2009 conference site at www.wfv.org/circle.
- **Welcome to My World: A Spectrum of Perspectives - ASW 2009 Annual Conference** - This event will be held May 7-9, 2009 at the Kalahari Resort & Convention Center in Wisconsin Dells. The final registration deadline is April 3. For more information about the conference and to download a PDF registration form, please visit www.asw4autism.org. Questions? Contact Jane Pribek at jpribek@asw4autism.org or 920-973-4080.

Contact Us

We need your help to develop content and tips for our bi-weekly HWW Update. Please let us know about your ideas, events, or success stories. Email your suggestions to nfoshager@safetyweb.org or call (800) 585-4222 ext. 204. If you would like to submit news and information for future HWW Updates, please send it to the attention of Nora Foshager. All submissions should be limited to 150 words.

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Now Hiring

Disability Rights Wisconsin (DRW) is now accepting applications for the position of Advocacy Specialist for their Schools and Civil Rights team (special education force). The individual will be responsible for individual advocacy and outreach, consultation and training, and other similar tasks. For more information about the position, please [click here](#) and scroll down to "Job Opportunity in

Shelly Flanders
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ABC for Health, Inc. is a Wisconsin-based, nonprofit public interest law firm dedicated to linking children and families, particularly those with special health care needs, to health care benefits and services. ABC for Health's mission is to provide information, advocacy tools, legal services, and expert support needed to obtain, maintain, and finance health care coverage and services.



(608)261-6939
info@safetyweb.org

If you know someone who might be interested, please [Forward this Newsletter >>](#)

our Madison Office." To apply by March 6, send a resume and cover letter describing (1) how your experience relates to the position qualifications and responsibilities, and (2) your commitment to social justice and people with disabilities and/or other vulnerable populations to: Disability Rights Wisconsin, 131 W. Wilson St., Suite 700, Madison, WI 53703 or email the information to info@drwi.org.

Produce your own webcast! Rent the ABC for Health Studio!

ABC for Health has developed a web casting studio with state of the art technology to reach a mass audience in the comforts of their own homes or offices. Agencies and organizations are invited to rent this studio space. [Click here](#) for more information.

Specialized Training Opportunities

Help HealthWatch Wisconsin develop a new web-based training format for Wisconsin's public health workforce! [Click here](#) for more information.

Support Our Efforts!

You can donate to ABC through our website. Please visit www.abcforhealth.org, then click on the button in the lower left-hand corner of our homepage that says "Make a Donation." We greatly appreciate your generous donations, which go towards helping to maintain ABC for Health, Inc. and our many projects, including HealthWatch Wisconsin. Thank you!

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