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HealthWatch Wisconsin Update

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Please Register Now for HealthWatch Wisconsin

and receive a free PDF copy of the 2007 *AdvoKit!*

The HealthWatch Wisconsin Update will soon be available only to registered members of the HealthWatch Wisconsin organization. We encourage those people who currently receive the Update to register now for HealthWatch Wisconsin. In the near future, a membership fee will be instated and people who have not registered will not be eligible for the benefits of membership, such as free trainings, webcasts, and publications (see below), so take advantage of this free registration opportunity. **If you are already subscribed to the HWW Update list, you will still need to register for HealthWatch Wisconsin.**

To register, please go to:

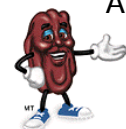
www.healthwatchwisconsin.org

and click on the link that says, "Register to Join." You will be able to indicate whether or not you already receive the HWW Update.

GET A FREE *ADVOKIT*

The *AdvoKit*, ABC for Health's most recent publication, is now available **free of charge** to members of HealthWatch Wisconsin. After you register, staff will email a PDF version of the *AdvoKit* to the address you provide. If you have already registered, expect to receive your copy soon. For more information about the *AdvoKit*, please [click here](#).

Heard It Through the Grapevine...



ABC for Health has heard reports that some medical providers are **requiring** patients to pay for services with credit cards if they do not have insurance or cash. ABC for Health has also received reports that some providers are **requiring** patients to pay off their medical debts with high-interest financing

HealthWatch and Covering Kids and Families – Meetings by Region

Southern: July 9, 9:00-11:00am. Harambee Center, 2202 S. Park St, Madison. Contact ABC for Health's Annie Trimberger at (608)261-6939 ext. 203 or atrimberger@safetyweb.org with questions.

Southeastern: June 13, 10:00am-12:00 pm. Aurora Family Services, 3200 W. Highland Blvd, Milwaukee. Contact Tracy Wymelenberg at (414)449-4767 ext. 144 or tracyw@communityadvocates.net with questions.

Children's Health Access for the Special and Equal (CHASE) Meeting – June 21, 11:30am-1:30pm. ARC of Milwaukee, 7203 W. Center St. Contact Brad Holman at (414)266-3189 or bholman@chw.org with questions.

Northeastern: June 14, 9:00-10:30am. Allouez Prevea Building – St. Vincent Conference Rm. (3rd Flr.), 1821 S. Webster Ave., Green Bay. Special Topic: Children's Mental Health Access and Coverage. Contact Steve Gerczak at (920)433-8154 or sgerczak@stvgb.org with questions.

Western: July 10, 10:45am–12:00pm. Room 121, Chippewa County Court House, 711 N. Bridge St, Chippewa Falls. Contact Rose Marsh at 1-800-400-3678 or rmarsh@co.chippewa.wi.us with questions.

Coalitions Under Development

Barron: Contact Mike Rust at (715) 485-8525 or MikeR@co.polk.wi.us with questions.

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

Polk: Contact Mike Rust at (715) 485-8525 or MikeR@co.polk.wi.us with questions.

company loans. Remember that most hospitals and medical providers have a legal and ethical responsibility to help patients who do not have the financial means to pay for needed health care. Requiring low-income patients to pay with high-interest credit cards or finance company charges is NOT in those patients' best interests.

Do other advocates, caseworkers, or families have details on any of the following?

- How medical providers are striking partnership deals with credit card companies and other financial firms;
- How financial products are being sold to patients – are they being told to take out the credit card, loan, or other financial product?;
- How patients are being asked to move their medical payment plans onto the credit card or other financial product; or
- How patients are being told they risk losing future medical care if they do not use the credit card.

ABC for Health is interested in learning whether this is a common practice throughout the state and how much it affects patients and taxpayers. Let us know if you have heard of similar incidents so we can investigate this issue further.

Read the following article for a closer look:

[The Poverty Business; Inside U.S. companies' audacious drive to extract more profits from the nation's working poor](#) - Brian Grow and Keith Epstein for *BusinessWeek*, May 21

...What Have You Heard?

Please contact ABC for Health if you have recently learned something that bothers you and would like to find out if it is an isolated incident or a state- or region-wide problem. Also, let us know if you have some good news to share on a strategy or a tip to help people obtain the coverage and care they need. Contact Annie Trimberger at atrimberger@safetyweb.org or (800) 585-4222 ext. 203 with information.

Letter to the Editor: Dental Care Access for Medicaid Recipients

The following letter was sent to ABC for Health staff on May 14, 2007.

"Dear Mr. Peterson,

A little background first. I am the Program Director for the Pediatric Dental Residency Program at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin. I have been in this position for 31 years and beyond duties as a dental provider and educator for our

Other Meeting Notices

- **LIVE Webcast: Elements of State Health Reform:** June 7, 11:30am CT. During this live, interactive webcast, a panel of health policy experts will explore state initiatives to incorporate prevention and wellness benefits into coverage programs, aiming to lower costs and promote healthier living with such strategies as wellness benefit packages and rewards for health behaviors. You can submit your questions to ask@kaisernetwork.org. To view the webcast, go to www.kaisernetwork.org/elements/07jun07 at the time mentioned above.
- **Young Adult Journey: Empowerment Through Knowledge and Support:** June 23, 8:00am-4:30pm at the Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, 2nd Floor, Briggs & Stratton Auditorium, Milwaukee. Adolescent and young adult survivors of childhood cancer, their families, and health care providers are welcome. RSVP is requested by June 13. For more information, please call (414) 266-2209.

pediatric dental residents, I have been active in advocating for dental care within the central city of Milwaukee. I have been involved with several organizations (Children's Health Alliance, Department of Community Medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Next Door Foundation) to build partnerships that might address the oral health disparity that the Medicaid-insured family faces on a daily basis.

What brought me to you was my recent attendance at the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics executive committee meeting. I am a liaison to the group and attend the quarterly meetings to present reports on the state of oral health for our Wisconsin children.

The oral health system for the Medicaid insured patient is appalling in this state. I would like to briefly share our personal experiences at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin (CHW). We have two clinics. Our main clinic is at CHW and our second clinic is located in the Milwaukee central city adjacent to Sinai-Samaritan hospital. We have nine pediatric dental residents and three full time attending faculty members. Each of us (residents and faculty) devotes 70% of our time to patient care. Our payer mix is approximately 65% Medicaid insured and 35% commercial insurance/private pay. Our clinics had >24,000 patient visits last year. This is our current situation:

- We currently have a 5 month wait for an appointment.
- We receive 15-18/day from families seeking care for their child who is experiencing either acute or chronic pain. 99% of these families are Medicaid-insured.
- More than 60% of the children we see at our downtown clinic have active dental disease with many of them in the advanced stages of the disease.
- A significant number of families access the system through the emergency room.
- On average, we admit one patient per week to the hospital for facial infection/abscess that needs to be treated with IV antibiotics.

Statewide, <20% of Medicaid enrolled children receive preventive dental care and <10% can access a dentist to receive definitive treatment for their disease. Literally and figuratively, the oral/dental health of the Medicaid insured child in this state is crumbling. In my 31 year career as a pediatric dentist, I have never seen a worse epidemic of dental disease or a greater incidence of debilitating pain in our disadvantaged children. This is a serious health care crisis.

I contact you in hope you might take an interest in the issue and to suggest some actions that we can take to improve the Medicaid enrolled patients access to dental care.

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 at www.mch-hotlines.org.

Thank you for considering this issue and I hope to further discuss this matter with you in the future.

A. Charles Post D.D.S."

Editor's note: This summer, ABC for Health legal intern Bryn Heimann will be researching legal issues related to dental care access in Wisconsin.

NEWS: Health Care in Wisconsin

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

[Universal Health Plan In Works; State Dems Are Close To Unveiling Proposal](#) - David Callender and Judith Davidoff for *The Capital Times*, May 31

[Web company gives prescription for competition; Site allows consumers to shop around for best deals on medications](#) - Amy Guckeen for the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, May 23

NEWS: Covering Children

Follow the links below for recent news related to children's health care and coverage:

[Lawmakers agree on children's health insurance funding](#) - Ben Evans for the Associated Press, May 23

NEWS: Medicaid in the News

Click on the following links to access recent news on Medicaid:

[An Initial Assessment of the Effects of Medicaid Documentation Requirements on Health Centers and Their Patients](#) - Peter Shin, Brad Finnegan, Lauren Hughes, and Sara Rosenbaum for The George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services Department of Health Policy, May 7

NEWS: Health Care Reform

Use the links below to navigate recent health care reform-related news articles:

[Obama Unveils Health Care Plan](#) - Mike Glover for the Associated Press/*San Francisco Chronicle*, May 29

[Clinton Revisits Health Care and Affordability](#) - Katharine Q. Seelye for *The New York Times*, May 25

[Groups want universal health care in '08](#) - Kevin Landrigan for the *Nashua Telegraph*, May 23

Links of Interest

Catalyst Center – A national center dedicated to improving health care insurance and financing for CYSHCN. www.hdwg.org/projects/catalyst.htm

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

Cover the Uninsured Week – CTUW 2007: April 23-29. <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 Annie Trimmerger at atrimberger@safetyweb.org.

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 atrimberger@safetyweb.org or call (800) 585-4222 ext. 203. If you would like to submit news and information for future HWW Updates, please send it to the attention of Annie Trimmerger. All submissions should be limited to 150 words.

Film Offers New Talking Points in Health Care Debate - Milt Freudenheim for *The New York Times*, May 22

Thompson focuses on health care - Erin Jordan for the *Des Moines Register*, May 18

NEWS: Health Care Costs and Access

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

[Mexican consulates offer healthcare help](#) - Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar and Anna Gorman for the *Los Angeles Times*, May 31

[The "Uninsurables"; CBS News Investigates The Tactics Used By Insurance Companies To Deny Health Coverage](#) - CBS News, May 23

NEWS: The Uninsured

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

[Hospitals' billing of uninsured questioned](#) - Daniel Yi for the *Los Angeles Times*, May 8

Featured Link: National Center on Educational Outcomes' Data Viewer

The National Center for Educational Outcomes' (NCEO) online Data Viewer lets you view information related to students with disabilities and create individualized reports based on criteria that you choose. Two major databases are currently available: (1) State Policies on Assessment Participation and Accommodations for Students with Disabilities and (2) Annual Performance Reports. Each of the interactive databases provides the following sections: Reports Overview (introduction and directions on how to use the site's functions), Report Designer (customizable data reports that allow for deeper analysis), and Summary Reports (customizable summary data reports). For more information, please visit <http://data.nceo.info/>.

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

Facilitated Conversation
on Developmental



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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

Screening and Referral

You are invited to participate in a "national conversation" on developmental screening and referral, entitled "Promising Practices for Coordination of Services," on June 21 from 12:30-2:30pm CT.

Intended audience: Pediatricians and Family Physicians, AAP and AAFP State Chapters, Early Childhood, Birth to Three, Headstart, and Child Care Leaders, State Health, Title V, and Public Health Leaders, State Part C Coordinators, Educational Program Leaders, Parent Advocates, and Parent Organization Leaders.

The event will include presentations on developmental screening recommendations and referral and early intervention services, as well as a facilitated conversation.

Please **RSVP by June 18** with your name, title, organization name, and email address to henning@waisman.wisc.edu, phone – (608) 265-9852, or fax – (608) 265-3441.

Mark Your Calendars Now: Two Excellent Conferences in 2007!

18th Annual National APSE Conference – Show Me the Future~It's Bigger than You Think! This event will be held July 16-18 at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center in Kansas City, MO. The early registration deadline is June 14. To view the brochure, visit www.apse.org.

Wisconsin APSE Conference – This event will be held October 3-5 in Elkhart Lake. More information to come.

Support Our Efforts!

You can donate to ABC through our website. Follow the link below, 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!

www.abcforhealth.org