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The HealthWatch Wisconsin Update Newsletter

Your Source for Strategies, Suggestions & Stories on Accessing Health Care and Coverage in Wisconsin

March 1, 2010

Vol. 6 No. 4

New Format!

The HealthWatch Wisconsin Update is getting a make-over, with wider columns and easy to read colors. **Having troubles watching our videos?** We're using NEW software! You may have to download [Microsoft Silverlight](#). **Want to print this newsletter** and read it later? Access an easy-to-print version [HERE](#).

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Local HealthWatch Coalition Meetings:

Coverage Expansions and Retention Strategies: A Full Day of Workshops!

Space is Limited!

If you are in northwestern Wisconsin, this workshop is for you! Join ABC for Health at a conference for Public Health, Advocates, and Volunteer Attorneys. We are limited in space--able to accommodate only the first 40 registrants! Register early to reserve your spot!

Event: Health Care Reform & Medicaid Eligibility: Coverage Expansions & Retention Strategies

Time: 9:00am-4:00pm

Date: Tuesday, April 13

Place: Western Regional Office, 610 Gibson Street, Room 123, Eau Claire, WI

Cost: Free for members of HealthWatch Wisconsin, low cost for all other registrants. Option for all to purchase a box lunch

To Register: [Click here](#) for more information and a registration form.

9:00am-12:00pm Morning Session: "Medicaid Changes with Health Reform"

We'll start the day with eligibility and coverage options for Adults with No Dependent Children: BadgerCare Plus Core Plan (and re-certification!); BadgerCare Plus Basic Plan; and the future of these Medicaid programs after health reform (learn the latest!).

12:00pm-1:00pm LUNCH: Feel free to network and mingle over the lunch hour! Please indicate on the registration form if you would like to purchase a box lunch.

1:00pm-4:00pm Afternoon Session: "3 Steps to Family Health Coverage" including a review of program eligibility; strategies to promote retention of Medicaid/BadgerCare Plus coverage for children; and troubleshooting common problem areas and identify local funding options to support your work.

Miss the HealthWatch Wisconsin Conference? CDs Available for Sale!

If you were unable to join us at the Third Annual HealthWatch Wisconsin Conference and would like a copy of all the session powerpoint presentations, publications, resources and tools on BadgerCare Plus, BadgerCare Plus Basic Plan, Health Reform and more, purchase the Conference CD! You may also receive all 12 ABC for



Barron: TBA, 12:00-1:00pm. 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 9, 2010, 10:45am-12:00pm. Chippewa County Courthouse, Room 121, 711 N. Bridge St., Chippewa Falls. Contact Rose Marsh at 1-800-400-3678 or rmarsh@co.chippewa.wi.us with questions.

Dane: March 1, 9:00-11:00am. Harambee Center, 2202 S. Park St., Madison. Contact Erin McBride at (608) 261-6939, ext. 211 or emcbride@safetyweb.org with questions.

Dunn: TBA, 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 11, 2010, 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 10, 2010, 9:30am-11:30am. 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): TBA, 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: March 18, 2010, 10:45am-12:00pm. Polk County Health Department, Conference Room A & B, 100 Polk County Plaza, Balsam Lake. **This meeting will include a teleconference with United HealthCare, Providers and others in Polk County.** Contact Mike Rust at (715) 485-8525 or miker@co.polk.wi.us with questions.

Health publications and resources, a \$185 value, on your CD if you are a HealthWatch Wisconsin Member! [Click Here to view a CD Table of Contents](#). **Price:** HealthWatch Wisconsin Member \$65; Non-Members \$135. **To Purchase a Conference CD**, please print and mail/fax a [CD order form](#), or call ABC for Health 608-261-6939 ext. 210.

Members of HealthWatch Wisconsin: VOTE for the Next Leadership Council

All HealthWatch Wisconsin members have the opportunity to vote for the leadership of the HealthWatch Wisconsin organization--the HealthWatch Council. If you attended the 3rd Annual Conference in February, you had a chance to vote in person. If you were unable to attend, a ballot was emailed to you! If you did not receive a ballot, please contact the [HealthWatch Staff](#). The new HealthWatch Wisconsin Council will serve approx. 3-year terms, helping to guide the leadership, training and sustainability of the HealthWatch organization.

All ballots must be received by the end of the day on Friday, March 26. The election results will be announced in the HealthWatch Wisconsin Update Newsletter on April 1.

Coming Soon: Immigrant Health Coverage Workshops

Stay tuned for an announcement about our **Immigrant Health Coverage Trainings** for 2010 that will include the latest information on expansions in health coverage under the new CHIPRA legislation. Weigh in on where you would like to see this spring training as we plan the details for this event. Call Brynne at (608)261-6939 ext 210 or email: bmcbride@safetyweb.org.

Cover the Uninsured Week is March 14-20

ABC for Health is preparing to participate in the upcoming "Cover the Uninsured Week," an annual event to spread the word about the many people throughout our state and country who go without health insurance. Here are a few things to watch for:

- Bobby and Erin will film a special edition of the HealthWatch WatchDog from the ABC for Health Studio in Madison. The episode will explore outreach strategies to get uninsured individuals enrolled in insurance programs and keep them enrolled.
- ABC will send a press release to area media to show what coordinated patient advocacy can do to eliminate the instances of uninsurance in Wisconsin
- ABC will make one of its popular Fact Sheets available for FREE, for a limited time!

Plan Your Own Events or Projects!

Need some help getting started? Visit: CoverTheUninsured.org, a project of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. They have some ideas and planning guides available for free:

- Host an [enrollment event \(pdf\)](#) at a local hospital, community center or school and [register](#) your event;
- Organize a [health coverage forum \(pdf\)](#) with the community or key stakeholders; or

Coalitions Under Development

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

Tri-County Coalition: Winnebago, Calumet and Outagamie Counties. March 23, 2010, 9:00-10:00am, Goodwill Community Center, Menasha Room. Contact Susan Garcia Franz at susan.garciafranz@ppwi.org for more information.

Comments From the Wisconsin Senate Floor During the BadgerCare Plus Basic Debate:

- "These people need health insurance and they need it today." (Erpenbach)
- "To do nothing is to turn our backs on them. To do nothing is to guarantee that for those with insurance, the costs go up!" (Erpenbach)
- "We are a compassionate people- we will not leave these people out in the cold." (Erpenbach)
- "Will you be the Good Samaritan or will you walk pass these people." (Sullivan & Jauch)
- "If this plan can save one life at the people's option of electing this policy we're doing our job." (Hansen)
- "Rhetoric aside, this is a self-funded plan, meant to be transitional. Let's put a real face to the people on the [Core Plan Waiting] list." (Robson)
- "All of us [Senators] have wonderful health insurance. You can go into the doctor today and not have to have cash on the barrel head to see the doctor. I can't understand why all of you *with* insurance would deny others from having insurance." (Robson)
- "Basic Plan is adverse selection (Lazich)"
- "Basic cost shifts to those of us with insurance because it reimburses at MA rates. (Lazich)"
- "Let's be honest, these people weren't denied insurance from private companies, they are on the waiting list because the state

- Distribute [information](#) about available low-cost and free health coverage programs to uninsured individuals and families.
- Reference the *Cover the Uninsured* [planning guides](#) online to help you get started
- Check out the latest [news](#), as well as [facts](#) on the issue
- Visit "[How to Help](#)" to learn more.

Let's Get America Covered!

BadgerCare Plus Basic Plan: Passes in the Senate

The BadgerCare Plus Basic Bill, [SB 484](#), was on the Wisconsin Senate Floor last week Thursday for almost 3.5 hours of debate. In a [vote of 17-16](#), the bill passed. The bill now goes to the Assembly for approval. [Watch our video: "Advocates' Reaction"](#) to both the Senate vote and the national healthcare summit in the latest HealthWatch WatchDog.

Bill History: [Senate Bill 484](#): On Thursday, February 11, the State Senate committee on Health, Health Insurance, Privacy, Property Tax Relief and Revenue debated the BadgerCare Plus Basic legislation introduced by Senator Erpenbach. On February 12, the Senate committee adopted [Senate Amendment 1](#) to SB 484 by a vote of 7 to 0, and recommended the bill for passage by a vote of 4 to 3. The bill went to the Senate floor on February 23, but was re-scheduled to go back to the floor on February 25. After extensive debate:

- A vote to send the bill back to committee didn't pass;
- [Amendment 1](#) was adopted (15 ayes, 18 noes);
- Sen. Kathleen Vinehout spoke to amendments 2, 3, and 4 (termination provision, performance audit, and explaining options to people-cascading eligibility procedure);
- A vote to table [Amendment 2](#) (17 ayes, 16 noes). Amendment 2 laid on the table;
- A vote to table [Amendment 3](#) failed (16 ayes, 17 noes). Refused to table Amendment 3; Discussion on Adoption of Amendment 3; A vote on adoption of Amendment 3 (23 ayes, 10 noes) Amendment 3 of an audit adopted;
- A vote to table [Amendment 4](#) (17 ayes, 16 noes) Amendment 4 laid on the table;
- Sen. Sullivan asked for [Amendment 5](#), [Amendment 6](#), & [Amendment 7](#) to be withdrawn and returned to author (Sullivan);
- Comment on [Amendment 8](#): Combines 5-7. Sen. Sullivan; Unanimous vote to adopt Amendment 8: The amendment passed; and
- Final vote on the bill. The bill passed with a vote of 17 to 16.

Watch an archived Senate debate and vote on the [WisconsinEye Network](#).

Senators speaking for the bill on the floor included: Mark Miller-Monona; Jon Erpenbach-Middleton; Dave Hansen-Green Bay; Judy Robson-Beloit; Lena Taylor-Milwaukee; Robert Wirch-Pleasant Prairie; Jim Sullivan-Wauwatosa; and Rob Jauch-Poplar

Senators speaking against the bill on the floor included: Scott Fitzgerald-Juneau; Mary Lazich-New Berlin; Ted Kanavas-Brookfield; Luther Olsen-Ripon; Alberta Darling-River Hills; Randy Hopper-Fond du Lac; Dan Kapanke-LaCrosse; Glenn Grothman-West Bend; Dale Schultz-Richland Center; Robert Cowles-Green Bay; Joseph Liebham-Sheboygan; Michael Ellis-Neenah; and Kathleen Vinehout-Alma

turned them away [from Core]." (Fitzgerald)

- "Basic plan is a set up for failure. It's adverse selection. The healthy people will jump into the private insurance plans, they won't jump into this 'adverse selection thing.'" (Lazich)
- "We're going to over promise and under deliver one more time." (Kanavas)
- "We will be the board of directors of our own insurance company if this passes. We need to know that we have enough premiums to meet the responsibilities we're picking up. If we were a private company taking this to OCI, they would tell us we were nuts." (Olsen)
- "Doing something now is dangerous and not responsible." (Darling)
- "Basic is a false promise that has major cost shifting." (Darling)

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,

View more comments as reported by [WisPolitics in "Quorum Call"](#)

UPDATE: Assembly Bill 697: On Wednesday, February 10, the Wisconsin Assembly Health and Healthcare Reform Committee held a hearing on the proposed BadgerCare Plus Basic Plan. The bill was introduced by Representative Jon Richards. No action has been taken by this committee.

About Basic:

The proposed BadgerCare Plus Basic Plan is a self-funded, state insurance plan for eligible people in Wisconsin. The program, pending legislative approval, would offer BASIC coverage to individuals on the BadgerCare Plus Core Plan waiting list--a group of over 25,000 individuals. Basic looks like catastrophic coverage, with limited services, a high deductible, and monthly premiums on the order of \$130 per month. The Basic Plan includes co-pays and like the BadgerCare Plus Core Plan, there is no backdating of eligibility. Here are some details:

- Up to 10 physician visits each year;
- Limited hospitalization;
- Coverage for first inpatient hospital stay and five outpatient hospital visits;
- Subsequent stays after \$7,500 deductible;
- Up to five emergency room visits each year;
- Some generic medications; and
- Badger Rx Gold discount drug membership.

About the Legislation: This bill authorizes DHS to establish and operate, no sooner than March 1, 2010, another health care benefit plan for individuals who are on the waiting list for the Core Plan. The health care benefit plan, which is not MA, will provide primary and preventive care, and the benefits may not exceed those provided under the Core Plan. The Basic Plan, including both benefits and administration, will be funded entirely from premiums set by DHS and paid by individuals with coverage under the Basic Plan.

Changes to BadgerCare Plus Benchmark Plan Included in the Bill: The BadgerCare Plus Benchmark Plan provides specified benefits including transportation to obtain emergency medical care. This bill expands the transportation benefit under the Benchmark Plan so that transportation to obtain medical care, rather than just emergency medical care, is covered. The bill also specifically adds as a benefit for recipients under the age of 21 early and periodic screening and diagnosis, and all services included under the federal definition of "medical assistance" that are found necessary as a result of the screening and diagnosis.

The [Legislative Fiscal Bureau published a memo](#) on the BadgerCare Plus Basic plan.

Health Coverage Tax Credit!

The IRS is expanding efforts to publicize the little-known [Health Coverage Tax Credit](#), which refunds 80 percent of health care premiums and can arrange to pay the bulk of those premiums each month going forward. The credit covers anyone whose job loss is certified under the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act, as well as anyone 55 and over whose pension plan has been taken over by the pension board. See [IRS Publication 502](#) for more details.

To Qualify for the Tax Credit:

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](#).

Links of Interest

North Central Wisconsin Area Health Education Center -All Things New: Spring Parish Nurse Workshop

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 Web site – Organization that sponsors annual Cover the Uninsured Week. <http://covertheuninsured.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

Spotlight Resources

DHS Community Training:
Re-enrollment for BadgerCare Plus (BC+) CORE Transitional Childless Adult (TCLA)
February 22nd, from 2:00 to 4:00 pm at Aurora Family Services (3200 W. Highland Blvd)
Sponsored by the Health Care Enrollment Task Force of the Department of Health Services and the

To qualify for the Health Coverage Tax Credit, you must:

- Meet the **candidate requirements**. Specifically, you must be:
 - Receiving **Trade Adjustment Assistance benefits** - including Reemployment or Alternative TAA **or**
 - Receiving **pension payments from the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC)** and be 55 years or older;
- Meet the **general requirements** which include not being enrolled in Medicare or Medicaid, and not receiving a COBRA subsidy;
- Be enrolled in a **qualified health plan**.

What is the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program?

The TAA program helps workers who have lost their jobs as a result of foreign trade. The TAA program offers a variety of benefits and services to eligible workers, including job training, income support, job search and relocation allowances, a tax credit to help pay the costs of health insurance, and a wage supplement to certain reemployed trade-affected workers 50 years of age and older.

On the Horizon: Trade Adjustment Assistance for Farmers Program

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 reauthorized and modified the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for Farmers program. The TAA for Farmers program helps producers of raw agricultural commodities and fishermen adjust to a changing economic environment associated with import competition through technical assistance and cash benefits. The **Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for Farmers Program has not yet been announced**. Once the program becomes operational, a listing of certified petitions under the TAA for Farmers program will be posted on the US [Department of Agriculture Website](#). Communities that are interested in the Community TAA program should contact the U.S. [Department of Commerce](#) to obtain information and eligibility requirements for that program.

Case Tip: It's Tax Season

It's tax season! Here's an important reminder as you file your returns:

- Income tax returns and Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) **do not** count as income for BadgerCare Plus ([BC+ Handbook 16.2](#))
- For EBD Medicaid and MAPP, income tax returns and EITC are counted as assets beginning 1 month after the month received. ([EBD Handbook 16.7](#))

Case Tip: Revisiting Compassionate Allowances- New Eligibility for 2010!

We reached back in the Case Tip vault--but not too far back--to re-visit the topic of Compassionate Allowances. You may remember our [August 15, 2009 newsletter](#) that defined Compassionate Allowances, and provided a link to the Social Security web page's listing of the first 50 conditions that qualify for faster disability determination processing. Effective March 1, 2010, the Social Security Administration has added **38 NEW conditions** that quickly target the most obviously disabled individuals for faster disability determination processing. Some of the new conditions include:

- Early-Onset Alzheimer's Disease

Milwaukee Health Care Partnership, this workshop is intended to ensure community and health care professionals are prepared to assist Milwaukee's 11,000 TCLA recipients with questions or required steps related to their re-enrollment.

Please [RSVP to Mary Starr](#) if you plan to attend.

The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society Financial Aid Programs

1. The LLS Patient Financial Assistance Program provides \$150 to patients with any blood cancer diagnosis. Patients may apply at any time during the year. Applications are available [here](#) or by calling the Brookfield office at (262) 785-4220.

2. The National LLS Co-Pay Program covers some blood cancer diagnoses. [Check the website](#) for an updated list. Patients who meet financial guidelines may receive up to \$5000 per year for insurance premiums and reimbursements for out-of-pocket expenses, and benefits are retroactive to July 2009. Current eligible diagnoses include chronic myelogenous leukemia, Waldenstrom macroglobulinemia, Myeloma, Myelodysplastic Syndromes, all lymphomas, and chronic lymphocytic Leukemia. Call (877)557-2672 or go to www.lls.org/co-pay. You may also email requests to copay@lls.org.

North Country Transportation Voucher Program

North Country is proud to announce the launch of its 2010 transportation voucher program. The program provides people with disabilities transportation to medical appointments, shopping, educational and recreational destinations. For more information, please contact Bob Olsgard, Transportation Coordinator at: ncilbob@superior-nfp.org or toll free at 800-924-1220, extension 20.

Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program

The next opportunity to apply for Healthier Wisconsin Partnership Program (HWPP) funding is through the 6th Funding Cycle Request for Proposal (RFP). In conjunction with the release of this RFP, four teleconference [informational sessions](#) will be held the first week in March that

- Batten Disease
- Mixed Dementia
- Fukuyama Congenital Muscular Dystrophy

Case Tip: Expedited Disability Determination Bureau Processing for Social Security Disability Programs

The process for getting a disability determination can be a long and difficult process. There are a few shortcuts you should know that can help seriously ill clients get a determination of disability quickly. Social Security has an undertaken several initiatives to provide benefits quickly to applicants whose medical conditions are so serious that their conditions obviously meet disability standards. There are a several options for expedited Disability Determination decisions and SSA benefits: Quick Disability Determination (QDD) and Compassionate Allowances (CAL). QDD cases are identified by an electronic scoring system that takes multiple factors from the disability application into account. Compassionate Allowances are specific medical diagnoses that invariably qualify under the Listing of Impairments, based on minimal objective medical information.

Compassionate Allowances quickly target the most obviously disabled individuals for faster processing. The Social Security Administration rolled out an initial [list of 50 conditions](#) when the CAL program first started. These were determined after public hearings, comment and consideration. Public hearings are just ending on other conditions such as: Early Onset Alzheimer's Disease and related dementias, Brain Injuries and Stroke and Rare Diseases. There is no specific procedure for indicating you would like any of the expedited processes (as in an EBD Medicaid PD)—the diagnosis or condition itself is the trigger. [Click here](#) for more information on CAL.

EXAMPLE: Barbara is currently a patient in a local hospital with a new diagnosis of Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis. She has immediate need for services. Based on her income and health, she is an excellent candidate for SSI. By stating her diagnosis and medical situation on the paper or online Adult Disability and Work History Report, the diagnosis of Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis will trigger expedited processing of her disability determination.

Also New from the Social Security Administration:

[The Red Book - A Guide to Work Incentives](#)

SSA Publication No. 64-030, (2010 Red Book), January 2010 ICN 436900. The Red Book serves as a general reference source about the employment-related provisions of Social Security Disability Insurance and the Supplemental Security Income Programs for educators, advocates, rehabilitation professionals, and counselors who serve people with disabilities. Take a look at some of the

changes for 2010, available on the [Social Security Website](#):

- Increased Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) amount for individuals with disabilities, other than blindness, from \$980 to \$1000 for 2010. (The SGA amount for individuals who are blind is \$1,640 for 2010. The amount is unchanged from 2009.)
- Increased the monthly earnings amount used to determine if a month counts for the Trial Work Period (TWP) from \$700 to \$720 for 2010.
- For 2010, the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Federal Benefit Rates (FBR) is \$674 for an eligible individual and \$1,011 for an eligible couple. The amounts are unchanged from 2009.

focus on LOI submission instructions.

HealthWatch Wisconsin Membership

There has never been a better time to become a member of

HealthWatch Wisconsin. Whether you are joining for the first time or renewing your membership, you are teaming up with an impressive new effort in Wisconsin that will work to focus and amplify the voices of health care advocates across the state.

Your individual membership fee is still only \$20 and ensures that you are lending your voice and passion toward developing a more comprehensive system of health care and coverage. Your workplace can purchase an **organizational membership for just \$75.** [Click here](#) for more information about HealthWatch Wisconsin and the ticket drawings, or call Brynne at 1-800-585-4222 ext. 210.

New Materials

A [new report](#) by the National Center for Health Statistics found that less than one third of adults 20-29 had health coverage in 2008.

A report by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation examines steps states took to respond to the health care crisis while Congress was debating bills in 2009. [Read the report.](#)

Wisconsin's BadgerCare Plus Coverage Expansion and Simplification-Early Data [on Program Impact](#)

Health Reform Side-by-Side and Calculator Now Reflect White House Proposal

The Foundation has updated its [interactive side-by-side health reform comparison tool](#) to reflect provisions included in President Obama's health reform proposal, unveiled Monday morning in advance of Thursday's reform summit with congressional leaders. The new proposal is based on the bill passed by the Senate in December, but incorporates some elements from the House-passed bill and other changes outlined in the new

- For 2010, the income amounts that will have no effect on eligibility or benefits for SSI beneficiaries who are students is unchanged from 2009. For 2010, the monthly amount is \$1,640 and the yearly maximum is \$6,600.
- For 2010, the monthly Medicare Part A Hospital Insurance Base Premium is \$461, and the 45 percent Reduced Premiums is \$254. The Part B Supplementary Medical Insurance monthly Base Premium is \$110.50.

Private Health Insurance: Coverage of Hearing Aids, Cochlear Implants and Related Treatment

The Office of the [Commissioner of Insurance](#) posted a [bulletin to all insurers](#) authorized to write group or individual health insurance with details on mandated coverage of hearing aids, cochlear implants and related treatment for infants and children. The legislation creating this coverage appears in [2009 Wisconsin Act 14](#) that created [s. 632.895 \(16\), Wis. Stat.](#) The Act applies to group and individual policies and to a self-insured health plan of the state or a county, city, town, village, or school district newly issued or renewed beginning after January 1, 2010. It does not apply to ERISA self-funded plans, which are not regulated by the State of Wisconsin.

The Act provides the following coverage:

- The cost of hearing aids and cochlear implants that are prescribed by a physician or by a licensed audiologist for a child covered under the policy or plan who is under 18 years of age and who is certified as deaf or hearing impaired by a physician or by a licensed audiologist.
- The cost of treatment related to hearing aids and cochlear implants, including procedures for the implantation of cochlear devices, for a child as described above.
- The cost of hearing aids is not required to exceed the cost of one hearing aid per ear per child more often than once every three years.
- Coverage may be subject to any cost-sharing provisions, limitations, or exclusions, other than a preexisting condition exclusion, that apply generally under the disability insurance policy or self-insured health plan.

The Commissioner of Insurance's bulletin includes information on consumer appeals: "Any denial, limitation or restriction of coverage of hearing aids, cochlear implants, and related treatment for infants and children under the age of 18 years as not medically necessary is eligible for the grievance and/or independent review process."

Updates from DHS

Update to the BadgerCare Plus Handbook

On Thursday, February 25, a new edition of the [BadgerCare Plus Eligibility Handbook](#) was released. [Changes are included below in RED:](#)

4.2.1.1 Exempt Populations (Exempt from Documenting Citizenship and Identity)

The following populations are exempt from the new citizenship and identity documentation requirement:

White House summary.

Calls for Submissions and Volunteers

ABC for Health is seeking legal interns for Summer 2010! All interested volunteers, students with public interest fellowships or work-study awards are encouraged to apply by sending an email with a cover letter and resume to mbcbride@safetyweb.org.

The Natural Supports Program at the [Waisman Center](#) seeks stories of youth ages 14-18 with developmental disabilities currently employed in community-based, competitive-wage jobs to be featured in a set of transition stories. Youth, family, teachers, friends, and other community members would be interviewed for the story. They are also looking to feature at least one individual with communication difficulties or who uses assistive technology. [Click here](#) for more information.

DHS Resources: BadgerCare Plus Core Plan:

- [To Apply Online \(ACCESS\)](#)
- [Core Plan Publications Page](#)
- [ForwardHealth Enrollment and Benefits Booklet](#)
- [BadgerCare Plus Policy Handbook \(Core Plan is Ch. 43\)](#)

Phone Support

- For questions from **applicants: The Enrollment Services Center: 1-800-291-2002**
- For questions from **advocates/professionals: (608)261-9305 or 1-888-415-2116**. (DHS has asked that this number not be shared with the public.)

For Milwaukee Residents--the new Milwaukee Enrollment Services (MiES) contacts:

Phone: 1-888-947-6583 (voice) 711 (TTY)
Mail : Milwaukee Enrollment Services

- Anyone currently receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).
- Anyone who is currently receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits.
- Anyone currently receiving Medicare.
- Anyone currently receiving Foster Care (Title IV-E and Non IV-E)
- Anyone currently receiving Adoption Assistance
- Anyone applying for or receiving BadgerCare Prenatal Program benefits.
- **Anyone who has ever been eligible for Wisconsin Medicaid or BadgerCare Plus as a Continuously Eligible Newborn (CEN)**

4.3.4 Immigrant Status Chart

New: Categories of Immigrant Status and Eligibility of Children under age 19 woman and pregnant women; Arrived on or after 08/22/96

7.6 Good Cause Reasons for Dropping Insurance

Any of the following reasons are considered "good cause" for dropping insurance coverage: 5. For pregnant woman (**enrolled or applying for Prenatal Services**) only

- A. Her coverage was COBRA continuation coverage and the coverage was exhausted in accordance with federal regulations concerning COBRA.
- B. The insurance does not pay for pregnancy-related services.
- C. The insurance is owned by someone not residing with the pregnant woman and continuation of the coverage is beyond her control.
- D. The insurance only covers services provided in a service area that is beyond a reasonable driving distance.

11.1 Out of Home Care (i.e., foster care) and Youths Exiting Out of home care (YEOHC)

BadgerCare Plus Benefits are available for all youths placed in:

1. Foster Care (either IV-E or non IV-E)
2. Subsidized guardianship
3. Court ordered Kinship Care

16.2 Income Types Not Counted 16.2.13p Disregard the first \$500 of the monthly income from Tribal Per Capita payments from gaming revenue. If the payments are received less than monthly, prorate the gross payment amount over the months it is intended to cover and disregard \$500 from the monthly amount. This applies to eligibility determinations for BadgerCare Plus effective 12/01/2008.

16.2.35 Lump Sums Payments Lump sum payments (rather than recurring payments) from such sources as insurance policies, inheritance, sale of property, Railroad Retirement, Unemployment Compensation benefits, retroactive corrective financial aid payments, etc. are counted as an asset when received. There is no asset test for BC+ (20.1). **The payment can be either unearned or earned income. However, do not include payments that are included in farm or self-employment income.**

16.2.38 The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 Disregard the one time payments of \$250 sent to SSI, Veterans, Railroad Retirement, and Social Security recipients as a result of The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Effective 02/01/2009, disregard the \$25 per week, temporary supplement benefits from Unemployment Compensation (UC).

28.6 Refer to District Attorney See [IMM Chapter 11 Program Fraud Overview](#) for referral criteria when fraud is suspected. The agency may refer

Center (MIIES), P.O. Box 05676,
Milwaukee, WI 53205-0676
FAX: (414) 438-4580
In Person: 1220 W Vliet Street -or-
UMOS Job Center Southeast, 2701
South Chase Ave. -or- clients can call
211 for information on a community
access point in their area

Emails:

dhsmlies@wisconsin.gov - for new
applications, verifications, etc.
dhsmlieschanges@wisconsin.gov - for
scanning changes (HTF only scanning
changes from cases)

dhsmliescustomerservice@wisconsin.gov
- Note: This is an email for advocates
only: use to email MIIES with advocate
questions.

**Contact Information in Milwaukee
County:**

- [Contact Information Fliers](#)
- [Online Order Form](#)
- [Referral Sheet](#)
- [Guide to Applying](#)

Help Wanted

The Project LAUNCH Young Child
Wellness Coordinator position is posted
with the City of Milwaukee Health
Department. [Click Here](#) to find the link
for this posting.

**Previous Issues of the
Update:** (in PDF form)

[February 15](#)

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the case to the state fraud investigation service provider where fraudulent activity by the member is suspected. If the investigation reveals a member may have committed fraud, refer the case to the district attorney or corporation counsel for investigation. The district attorney or corporation counsel may prosecute for fraud under civil liability statutes. The agency may seek recovery through an order for restitution by the court of jurisdiction in which the member or former member is being prosecuted for fraud.

32.1 Express Enrollment (EE) For Children Children can be temporarily enrolled in the BC+ Standard Plan through the Express Enrollment program, if they meet the following financial and non-financial criteria:

1. Under age 19 and applying with a parent/guardian.
 2. A U.S. citizen.
- If the child is younger than age 1, the family's gross income must be at or below 250 % of the Federal Poverty Level.
 - If the child is age 1 through 5, the family's gross income must be at or below 185 % of the Federal Poverty Level.
 - If the child is age 6 through 18, the family's gross income must be at or below 150 % of the Federal Poverty Level.

Effective 04/01/2009, there is no asset limit for Express Enrollment.

Express Enrollment can begin on the day on which a qualified provider determines that the child meets the criteria listed above by completing an Express Enrollment for Children application.

A child is allowed to have only one period of temporary enrollment in a 12 month period. Qualified certifying agencies who can enroll children include...

39.1 Emergency Services

BC+ Emergency Services Income Limit

Group	Income
Pregnant Women	Up to 300% FPL
Newborns to age 1	Up to 300% FPL
Children ages 1 - 5	Up to 185% FPL
Children ages 6 - 18	Up to 150% FPL
Youths Existing Out of Home Care	Any FPL Level
Parents and Caretakers	Up to 200% FPL

40.1 Family Planning Waiver Program In certain circumstances, women enrolled in FPW may be eligible for the WWWMA plan. (See [MEH chapter 36](#))"

43.7 Renewals ...If the **renewal** request is not received by the 5th of the renewal month there may be a delay and/or loss of coverage. If the request is received after the 5th but before the last day of the renewal month, the request is processed and all eligibility actions completed by the agency timely (within 10 calendar days), enrollment resumes on the first day of the next available enrollment period after confirmation.

Example 1: Angie's request for renewal was due July 5th. She submitted her request on July 25th. The agency processed the request on July 30th and requested verification of income. The verification was turned in on August 2nd. The agency processed the verification and confirmed the Core Plan eligibility on August 10th. Angie's enrollment in the Core Plan began August 15th. She had a gap in coverage from August 1st through August 14th.

Example 2: Alyssa's request for renewal was due August 5th. She submitted

[October 20 Special Edition](#)

[October 15](#)

[October 1](#)

[September 15](#)

[September 1](#)

[August 15](#)

[August 1](#)

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

Recent HealthWatch WatchDog Episodes:

Did you miss an episode? [Visit our WATCHDOG LIBRARY to view videos](#) from 2008-present.

Lifeline and Link-Up Services!

Telecommunications assistance is available for many in Wisconsin! If you receive health benefits, housing, FoodShare or other public program assistance, and are under 135% FPL, you may qualify. To learn more, watch the new video filmed by ABC for Health on Lifeline and Link-Up services. Please [click here](#) to view the video.

We're on Facebook and Twitter!

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Rent the ABC for Health Studio

ABC for Health has developed a web

her request on August 31st. The agency processed the request on September 8th and requested verification of income. Alyssa returned the verification on September 17th. The ESC updated the verification information and confirmed the Core Plan eligibility on October 3rd. Because the ESC did not process her verification timely, eligibility for the Core Plan will go back to October 1st. She will have a gap in coverage from September 1 through September 30.

43.12 Enrollment Cap (Waitlist) Core Plan applications received after 5:00 P.M. on October 9, 2009, will not be processed. A Waitlist was established on October 9, 2009 because the total number of applications received is greater than the amount of funding available.

51.1 Medical Status Codes: [Table updated](#)

Operations Memos

Below, find Wisconsin's Department of Health Services (DHS) Operation Memos (Ops Memos) or information updates, with brief summaries and rationales drawn from the information provided by DHS. Any "Opinions" highlighted below are interpretations of HealthWatch Wisconsin staff and Update editors. Follow the links to view the actual memos:

[Ops Memo 10-12:](#) Wisconsin Works (W2)/Child Care (CC) Eligibility Review Due Letter (released January 27)

New Policy: As of February 12, 2010, DCF and DHS will split up the 45-day Eligibility Review Due Letters by program. The letters will be referred to as CMRV letters. Income Maintenance Review Due letters will still be issued separately.

Rationale: To make process and instructions to consumers easier to understand and to streamline processing.

CKSN Corner Covering Kids with Special Needs



Mark Your Calendars Now

Check Out These Excellent Events in 2010!

- **Autism Society of Southeastern Wisconsin Parenting Series - Oct. 17 through May 15**, Nicolet High School, D-Wing Library, Glendale, WI, 9:30-11:30am. Call (414)427-9345 or email info@assew.org to register.
- **Recreation and Respite Resource Fair - March 13, 2010**, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm, Steinhafels Community Room, Hwy. 94 and Hwy. F. Special Services Advisory Committee presents an informational resource fair, free of charge, for families of children with special needs. Please park to the south of the grassy area and main entrance.

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.

Support Our Efforts!

On behalf of the staff and students at ABC for Health, thank you for being a subscriber to the HealthWatch Wisconsin Update and WatchDog!! Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to ABC for Health, to keep projects like HealthWatch Wisconsin sustainable! **To make a donation, please click the donation button** to be re-directed to our PayPal site where you can donate with a credit card.

[Make A Donation](#)

To donate via check, please make the check payable to "ABC for Health, Inc.," at 32 N. Bassett St., Madison, WI 53703. We greatly appreciate your generous donations. ABC for Health is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization, and your contribution is deductible to the extent allowed by law. **Thank you and Happy New Year!**

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 mlarowe@safetyweb.org or call (800) 585-4222 ext. 216. If you would like to submit news and information for future HWW Updates, please send it to the attention of Marysa LaRowe. All submissions should be limited to 150 words.

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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

Questions? Contact [Heidi Schwendimann](#): 262-548-7353.

- **ASW Annual Conference: "Positively Autism" - March 18-20, 2010**, Keynote speakers include Paula Kluth, Ph.D., Temple Grandin, Ph.D. and Eric Courchesne, Ph.D. For more information, visit www.asw4autism.org.
- **9th Annual Wisconsin Youth Leadership Forum - June 22 - July 2, 2010**, Edgewood College campus, Madison. A FREE weeklong leadership and development program for high school students with disabilities. Students will sharpen leadership and self-advocacy skills, increase career opportunity awareness, experience college life, hear from successful speakers from across the state, and develop their own Personal Leadership Plan. Applications are due March 1, 2010, and include 2 brief essays and 3 letters of recommendation. To apply, click [here](#).

Wisconsin First Step Help Book 2010 A Directory of Services for Children with Special Needs Directories are now [available on-line](#). Five regional directories are available, each serving specific counties in Wisconsin. Directories are produced in "real-time" with the most up-to-date information provided at the time they are downloaded. For information or assistance in downloading the directories please contact Teresa Halverson or Karen Brandt at [Wisconsin First Step](#); 1-800-642-7837.

Updated Contact Listing (12/10/2009) for the Regional CYSHCN Centers. Questions? [Email Jayne Vargas](#)

Katie Beckett Program Consultants: [View the Map and Listing of Consultants](#)

CDC Materials on H1N1 for Parents of Children with Complex Medical Needs: Earlier this month, the Center for Disease Control released [this brochure](#) for parents of children with special health needs who may be more at risk for contracting the virus.

Tip Sheets for Siblings of People with Disabilities: [Adolescent and Young Adult Siblings](#); [Adult Siblings](#); [Information for Parents](#)

Champions for Inclusive Communities published a [fact sheet](#) on the 2005/6 National Survey of CSHCN.

Special Issue of *Pediatrics* Devoted to Analyses from the 2005-2006 National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs.

The survey can be [accessed online](#). You can also request a paper copy by e-mailing [Steph Toomer](#). The articles can also be [accessed online](#).

NEWS: Health Care in Wisconsin

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

- [Study: Most Medicaid children lack dental care - by Ashley Smith for the *Wisconsin Rapids Tribune*, February 28](#)
- [Washington County Sheriff's Department adds pharmaceutical examiner - by Tom Kertscher of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, February 28](#)
- [Wisconsin could take lead on health reform - by John Torinus for the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, February 27](#)
- [Wisconsin Senate approves new BadgerCare Basic health program for poor - by Ryan Foley for *Green Bay Press Gazette*, February 26](#)
- [Rep. Steve Kagen seeks to amend President Obama's health care](#)

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 >>](#)

- proposal - by Larry Bivins for [postcrescent.com](#), February 26
- Two Wisconsin Republicans vote against repeal of antitrust exemptions for insurers - by Diana Marrero of the [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#), February 25
- Anthem Blue Cross plans 17.2% rate hike for Wisconsin customers - by Center for American Progress Action Fund in the [Milwaukee Business Journal](#), February 25
- Priebus reaction to Health Care Summit - by Reince Priebus for the Republican Party of Wisconsin, February 25
- Senate OKs BadgerCare Basic-press release from Sen. Judy Robson, February 25
- Rep. Smith Supports Consumer Health Care Rights-press release from Rep. Smith, February 25
- Amended BadgerCare Basic Bill Passes Senate for [MacIver news service](#), February 25

NEWS: Health Care Reform

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

- White House: House Health Care Bill Should get 'Simple Up-or-Down Vote' - by Jim Kuhnhehn for the [Huffington Post](#), March 1
- Rescission is rare point of agreement in health care overhaul - [Kaiser Health News](#), March 1
- Carville on health care: Could be Obama's Waterloo - by George Stephanopoulos for [ABC News](#), March 1
- Public Option garners avalanche of support in Senate - by Adam Green for the [Huffington Post](#), March 1
- Reconciliation showdown ahead on health care? - by [CNN.com](#), March 1
- Pelosi says she'll get the votes needed for health bill - by Robert Pear for the [New York Times](#), February 28
- Partisanship's influence on health bill's future - by John Harwood for the [New York Times](#), February 28
- The Sunday Word: Health Care Wars - by Janie Lorber for the [New York Times](#), February 28
- Is healthcare bipartisanship down the drain? - by Brad Knickerbocker for [The Christian Science Monitor](#), February 27
- Pelosi, Democrats Push Ahead With Health Care - by Patrick Yoest for the [Wall Street Journal](#), February 26
- Healthcare summit ends in a dead-lock; single payer advocates excluded - by Amy Goodman for [Democracy Now](#), February 26
- Doctors' group: Obama plan leaves millions uninsured, boosts private insurers for Physicians for a National Health Program, February 24
- House votes to end health insurance industry anti-trust exemption press release from VT Rep. Peter Welch, February 24
- Republicans Plan to Stress Private-Sector Alternatives to the President's Plan - by Shailagh Murray and Perry Bacon Jr. for [The Washington Post](#), February 24
- Comparing the Health Plans-Interactive Graphic, the [New York Times](#), February 23
- The Cadillac Crunch - by David Corn for [Mother Jones](#), February 23
- Obama's Health Bill Plan Largely Follows Senate Version - by Sheryl Gay Stolberg and David M. Herszenhorn for [The New York Times](#), February 23
- Medical Insurers Slam Proposed Supervision - by Avery Johnson for [The Wall Street Journal](#), February 23
- President's Proposal Lacks Sufficient Detail for Analysis, Budget Office Says - by David M. Herszenhorn for [The New York Times Prescriptions](#)

[Blog, February 22](#)

- [Obama Releases \\$950 Billion Health Reform Plan - by Matthew DoBias for *Modern Health Care*, February 22](#)

NEWS: Opinion

Click below for editorials and opinion pieces about health care reform:

- [A No-Win Situation - by Kathryn Lopez for the *National Review*, March 1](#)
- [Op-Ed: Bi-partisan or not, time for a health bill - by Jules Witcover for the *Baltimore Sun*, March 1](#)
- [Op-Ed: Six Ideas for America! - by Michael Kinsley for the *New York Times*, February 28](#)
- [Op-Ed: No cure in sight: White House summit failed to move the ball on health care reform, for *New York Daily News*, February 26](#)
- [CPR for the Public Option - by Christopher Hayes for the *Nation*, February 25](#)
- [Don't blame the insurance companies - by James Burkee for *Biztimes.com*, February 25](#)
- [The missing voices at the health care summit - by John Nichols for *The Nation*, February 25](#)
- [A faulty prescription for reform - by Dr. Steffie Woolhandler for *Reuters*, February 25](#)
- [Doctors' group: Obama plan leaves millions uninsured, boosts private insurers, for Physicians for a National Health Program, February 24](#)
- [Editorial: Simple Fairness \(mental health parity\) - *The Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*, February 24](#)
- [Op-Ed: Health Care Summit: The Sham Before the Storm? - by David Corn for *Mother Jones*, February 24](#)
- [Op-Ed: The Democratic Plan: Finish This Bill - by Ezra Klein for *The Washington Post*, February 22](#)
- [Op-Ed: The Elephant at the Health Care Summit - by E.J. Dionne, Jr. for *The Washington Post*, February 22](#)
- [Op-Ed: Why Small Bore Health Reform Doesn't Work - by Kevin Drum for *Mother Jones*, February 21](#)
- [Editorial: Our View On Medical Insurance: Soaring Premiums Reflect Unstable Health System - *USA Today*, February 19](#)

NEWS: Health Care Costs and Access

Click the links below to read the latest news on health care costs and access:

- [Hoosiers and Health Savings Accounts - by Mitch Daniels for the *Washington Post*, March 1](#)
- ['Invasive' questions help companies cut health costs - by Mary Shedden for the *Miami Herald*, March 1](#)
- [Race to pin blame for high health costs - by Avery Johnson for the *Wall Street Journal*, February 26](#)
- [RNs Praise Atty. Gen. Move to Subpoena Insurance Plans press release from California Nurses Association/National Nurses Organizing Committee](#)
- [Wellpoint Raising Rates by Double Digits in at Least 11 States - by Scot J. Paltrow for *Center For American Progress Action Fund*, February 24](#)
- [Health Plans Profit Despite Recession - by Emily Berry for *American Medical News*, February 22](#)
- [Experts warn of medical industry cartel's power - by Carolyn Lockhead and Victoria Colliver for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 21](#)
- [Medicaid Enrollment Rises Nationwide, Analysis Finds - by Amy](#)

Goldstein for *The Washington Post*, February 19

- Press Release: Sebelius Unveils New Report on Requested Premium Increases in States Across the Country - Dept. of Health and Human Services, February 18

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