

[refresh page](#)

The HealthWatch Wisconsin Update Newsletter

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

April 1, 2010

APRIL FOOL'S EDITION

Vol. 6 No. 6

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](#).

In This Issue:

HEALTH REFORM BECOMES LAW!!

Limited Space Remaining for Eau Claire Workshop!

Welcome New Members of the HealthWatch WI Council!

Family Health Benefits Bill-Status Report!

Coalition Round-Up!

Legislative Action Alerts!

BadgerCare Plus Basic Plan: Tracking through the Legislature

Updates from DHS

CASE TIP: Federal Poverty Guidelines Stay at 2009 Levels

Grapevine Issue: Vandals Strike Cover the Uninsured Week!

Mark Your Calendars Now

NEWS: Health Care in Wisconsin

NEWS: Health Care Reform

NEWS: Opinion

NEWS: Health Care Costs and Access

Local HealthWatch Coalition Meetings:

Barron: TBA, 12:00-1:00pm. Barron County Workforce Resource, Inc., 331 S.

HEALTH REFORM BECOMES LAW!!

...AND THAT'S NO FOOLIN'!

After nearly a century of contentious debate, health care reform is finally the law of our land. The need for health insurance reform crossed many lines of income, race, gender, and political parties. The lack of reform had stymied Americans as they stumbled through the maze of private coverage and public programs that should help people, but left over 48 million uninsured.



The [Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act](#), which includes health insurance exchanges, changes to private insurance regulation, a boost to local Medicaid programs and more, was signed into law on March 23 by President Obama. Meanwhile, a [reconciliation bill](#) with a [manager's amendment](#) went from the House to the Senate, back to the House, then to the President, who [signed the bill](#) into law in on Tuesday, March 30.

The vote on Reconciliation came after Senate Democrats defeated more than 40 Republican amendments intended to slow or stop the legislation. The final House vote was [220 to 207](#), and the Senate vote was [56 to 43](#), with the Republicans unanimously opposed in both chambers.

According to David Herszenhorn and Robert Pear of the [New York Times](#), "the reconciliation bill makes numerous revisions to many of the central provisions in the measure adopted by the Senate on Dec. 24, including changes in the levels of subsidies that will help moderate-income Americans afford private insurance, as well as changes to the increase in the [Medicare](#) payroll tax that will take effect in 2013 and help pay for the legislation."

Health Reform Highlights:

Below are just a few highlights of health reform set for immediate implementation. For a full listing, [visit the fact sheet](#) prepared by the National Conference of State Legislatures:

- Prohibits plans from imposing pre-existing condition exclusions on children: *effective 6 months after enactment. (Beginning in 2014, this prohibition would apply to all persons.)* See the latest discussion of whether insurers would comply with this provision! Robert Pear, writing for *the New York Times*, has been tracking the conversation: March 28: [Coverage Now For Sick Children? Check the Fine Print](#);

Main St., Ste. 6, Rice Lake. Contact [Mike Rust](#) or (715) 485-8525 with questions.

Chippewa: May 11, 2010, 10:45am-12:00pm. Chippewa County Courthouse, Room 121, 711 N. Bridge St., Chippewa Falls. Contact [Rose Marsh](#) or 1-800-400-3678 with questions.

Dane: April 5, 9:00-11:00am. Harambee Center, 2202 S. Park St., Madison. Contact [Erin McBride](#) or (608) 261-6939, ext. 211 with questions.

Dunn: TBA, 11:45am-1:00pm. Red Cedar Medical Center (Education Center), 2321 Stout Rd., Menomonie. Contact [Patrick Rebman](#) or (715) 233-7309 with questions.

Eau Claire: May 6, 2010, 12:00-1:30pm. Luther Hospital Cafeteria, Dining Room 1, 1221 Whipple St., Eau Claire. Contact [Lou Kelsey](#) or (715) 834-4455 or [Pat Perkins](#) or (715) 839-4718 with questions.

Milwaukee: April 14, 9:30am-11:30am. Aurora Family Services, 3200 W. Highland Blvd., Milwaukee. Contact [Kari Mattson](#) or (414) 449-4777, ext. 145 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](#) or (414) 266-3189 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](#) or (715) 485-8525 with questions.

Coalitions Under Development

La Crosse: Contact [Lindsey Schwarz](#) or (608) 785-5841 with questions.

Tri-County Coalition: Winnebago, Calumet and Outagamie Counties. TBA, 9:00-10:00am, Goodwill Community Center, Menasha Room. Contact [Susan Garcia Franz](#) for more information.

Coming Soon: Immigrant Health Coverage Workshops

March 30: [Insurers to Comply with Rules on Children](#)

- Assists states in providing health insurance consumer information: Provides aid to states in establishing offices of health insurance consumer assistance in order to help individuals with the filing of complaints and appeals. *Effective beginning in FY 2010.*
- Prohibits plans from imposing lifetime limits on coverage. *Effective 6 months after enactment.*
- Begins to phase out the Medicare Part D "donut hole": A rebate of \$250 is available to Medicare beneficiaries who reach the donut hole in 2010. Beginning in 2014, this prohibition would apply to all persons. *Effective calendar year 2010. (Beginning in 2011, a 50% discount on brand name drugs will exist in the donut hole. The donut hole will be closed by 2020.)*

Limited Space Remaining for Eau Claire Workshop!

HealthWatch Training: BadgerCare Plus, Core Plan and More!

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. 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

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 a registration form or **Call to register:** 608-261-6939 ext. 210.

Welcome New Members of the HealthWatch WI Council!

The results of the 2010 election for the HealthWatch Wisconsin Council members are in! Congratulations to:

- Dr. Tom Schlenker, Madison Dane County Public Health
- Susan Garcia-Franz, Well Woman Coordinator/Planned Parenthood
- Jodi Joyce, Group Health Cooperative
- Jennifer Winter, Managed Health Services
- Julie Baryluk, Polk County Health Department

The HealthWatch WI Council serves as the advisory committee for the HealthWatch Wisconsin Organization and helps guide the project's activities toward achieving our goals. The Council provides leadership and advice to HealthWatch Wisconsin as we work to transform the public health landscape and increase access to care and coverage for people in Wisconsin through training, education, and collaborative partnerships.

Council members were formally adopted by the HealthWatch Executive Committee on April 1, 2010. The three-year term for each new Council member will officially begin on July 1, 2010, to coincide with the new membership year of HealthWatch Wisconsin. The next meeting of the full

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.

Miss the HealthWatch Wisconsin Conference? Buy a CD!

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 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.

Links of Interest

The Kaiser Family Foundation has updated information on their website, including:

- [Summary of Final Healthcare Reform Law](#)
- [A printable comparison](#) of the new health reform law (the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act), the House-passed Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010, and last year's House-passed bill

Kaiser's Consumer-Directed Health Care (CDHC) Resources: Better Care--Lower Costs: Exploring the Promise of Patient Engagement ([click here](#)). Diagnosing what works for State

Council will be in October 2010. Help us welcome these new members to the Council!

Family Health Benefits Bill-Status Report!

Health Reform is the law of the land and people across the country are preparing for changes. Bobby Peterson of ABC for Health comments, "Wisconsin is in better shape than most states, but we can do better. The health reform bill's new rules and requirements may be overwhelming for consumers. We need to help people connect to new and emerging public and private health insurance programs. The new changes will be confusing and we must prioritize actions that help people obtain and maintain health care coverage."

In preparation for a changing health care landscape, ABC for Health partnered with the Department of Health Services and the Office of The Commissioner of Insurance as well as lead sponsors Senator Miller and Representative Donna Seidel to develop the "Family Health Benefits Bill" (AB 878/ SB 633) to lay the foundation to support a statewide network of Health Benefits Counselors in Wisconsin.

Next Steps: The Family Health Benefits Bill went to Executive Session in the Senate Committee on Health, Health Insurance on March 30 for a vote--ending in a tie. The Bill went to the Assembly Committee on Health and Healthcare Reform on March 31 for a vote and passed 8-4. The Bill will move to the Joint Finance Committee and to the full Assembly for a vote during the April floor session.

Media Attention: CBS news affiliates, the Wisconsin State Journal, and Wisconsin Public Radio have all covered our progress on the "Family Health Benefits Bill" Assembly Bill 878, Senate Bill 633.

- Listen to Bobby Peterson's comments on [Wisconsin Public Radio](#), March 25
- Watch Health Benefit Advocate, [Kenton Zink describe his work with patients](#), March 24
- Read the ABC for Health [Press Release regarding Public Hearings](#), March 24

Coalition Round-Up!

New to the HealthWatch Update Newsletter is a feature that looks at a few HealthWatch Coalitions across the state and shares information being discussed locally. Guest speakers, hot topics, local elections, or special events will be highlighted. Coalition contact people will be listed if you have questions on a story or would like to follow up with the coalition directly. Enjoy this new feature to the HealthWatch Update Newsletter!

The Polk County HealthWatch Coalition Meeting Summary:

On March 18, the Polk County HealthWatch Coalition, along with providers and key stakeholders held a teleconference with United HealthCare to discuss HMO enrollment questions. Contact: [Mike Rust](#) at (715) 485-8525 with questions.

Dane County HealthWatch Schedules Guest Speaker

Rhonda Grabko of Automated Health Systems will join the Dane County Coalition on Monday, April 5 at the Harambee Center (2202 S. Park Street,

Medicaid and CHIP Programs - ([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. [click here](#) to read the article and corresponding reports. A narrated slide tutorial on principles and different models of CDHC.

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](#).

Data Updates!

[Statehealthfacts.org](#) has recently added new and updated data on [Demographics & the Economy](#), [Health Status](#), [Health Coverage & Uninsured](#), [Medicaid & CHIP](#), [Health Costs & Budgets](#), [Providers & Service Use](#), and [Minority Health](#). You can also view a list of all [recent updates](#).

Demographics & the Economy

Children of Immigrants

New data from the Urban Institute on the growth in number and the share of children of immigrants from 1990 to 2005-2006 are now available for all states.

Taxes

New data from the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids on [cigarette](#) excise tax rates have been added for all states and the nation for 2009. Updated data on additional state sales taxes on [soft drinks](#) and [chips/pretzels](#) have also been

Madison). Rhonda will discuss HMO enrollment for BadgerCare Plus Core Plan and SSI, and share thoughts on the various kinds of enrollment exemptions.

Contact: [Erin McBride](#) at (608) 261-6939 ext. 211 with questions.

Legislative Action Alerts!

As the Wisconsin legislature prepares for the final floor vote of this legislative session (April 13-22), we will bring you updates on bills important to HealthWatch Wisconsin! For the first three editions of the "Action Alert," visit our website where the [Legislative Action Alert](#) series issued by HealthWatch Wisconsin is posted.

BadgerCare Plus Basic Plan: Tracking through the Legislature

The BadgerCare Plus Basic Bill, [SB 484](#), was on the Wisconsin Senate Floor for exciting debate a few weeks ago passing with a [vote of 17-16](#). The Bill went to the Assembly Committee on Health and Healthcare Reform on March 31 for a vote and passed 8-4. The Bill will move to the full Assembly for a vote during the April floor session.

Updates from DHS

Medicaid Eligibility Handbook

Release [10-01](#) of the [Medicaid Eligibility Handbook](#) was made today, effective April 2, 2010.

Operations Memos

Below, find Wisconsin's Department of Health Services (DHS) Operation Memos (Ops Memos) or information updates, with brief summaries and/or 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 10-30](#): Wisconsin Works (W-2) Policy Updates on Cooperation with Child Support and Child Support Assignment and Distribution (Released March 31, 2010)

New Policy: This Memo focuses on improvements to: Communication and collaboration between the W-2 Agency and CSA; and updated information by W-2 Agencies to W-2 applicants/participants about assignment and distribution of Child Support payments, to improve W-2 applicants'/participants' choices regarding the financial well-being of their families.

[Ops Memo 10-29](#): W-2 Screening and Assessment (Released March 30, 2010)

New Policy: The memo includes a new release of Chapter 5 of the W-2 Manual, now titled *Screening and Assessment*. It also provides an overview of the screening and assessment policies that have changed in Chapter 5 and includes the release of two new W-2 medical assessment forms.

[Ops Memo 10-28](#): Disregarding Making Work Pay (Released March 30, 2010)

added for 2009 from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

State or Federal Inmates

New information from the Bureau of Justice Statistics on the number of adult prisoners under state jurisdiction and the incarceration rate per 100,000 population has been added for all states and the nation for 2008.

Union Workers

The latest information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) on the number of workers represented by unions has been updated and is available for all states and the nation for 2009.

Food Stamp Program

The latest data from the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service on monthly food stamp enrollment are available for all states and the nation for December 2009. Also available are data on average monthly participation in the food stamp program, average monthly food stamp benefits, and total food stamp program benefits for fiscal year (FY) 2009.

Unemployment

The most recent unemployment rate data have been added from the BLS for all states and the nation for February 2010.

State Fiscal Distress

Measures of aggregate state rankings in foreclosures, unemployment, and food stamp participation have been updated with the latest data from the BLS and the USDA.

Health Status

Newborn Screening

The most recent information on states that require newborn hearing screening and newborn cystic fibrosis screening are now available from the National Newborn Screening and Genetics Resource Center for 2010.

Childhood Immunization

The latest information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on the percent of children ages 19-35 months who are immunized has been added for all states and the nation for 2008.

Child Oral Health

New state-by-state data from the Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health (DRC) on the percent of children with oral health problems have been added for 2007.

Child and Teen Death Rates

New Policy: The purpose of this memo is to instruct local agencies to exclude tax refunds from the Making Work Pay tax credit when counting income for the Wisconsin Shares eligibility or co-payment purposes, Wisconsin Works, Emergency Assistance, and Job Access Loans.

Ops Memo 10-25: Preprinted Mail-In Renewal Forms and Process (Released March 30, 2010)

New Policy: To help make it easier for children to retain their health care coverage, the State has made preprinted renewal forms available for children receiving BadgerCare Plus or Medicaid (This preprinted renewal form can also be used for EBD Medicaid, Family Planning Waiver, and Caretaker Supplement mail in renewals.) Starting April 1, 2010, the paper renewal forms can be used to complete the annual review required for each program. Individuals can also complete their review in person, over the phone, or using the new online renewal process (access.wisconsin.gov). When it is time for the annual review, families will receive the renewal packet in the mail from their case worker. This packet will include: a Printed Case Summary; a Renewal Cover Letter (dhs.wi.gov/em/forms/imforms.htm); and a Renewal Signature Page (dhs.wi.gov/em/forms/imforms.htm). Please note that individuals who also have FoodShare benefits can renew their benefits through the paper renewal form, but must also complete their FS interview.

Ops Memo 10-24: Earned Income, Homestead, and Other Tax Related Income (Released March 24, 2010)

New Policy: This Memo provides Tax Year 2009 information and reminds Wisconsin Works (W-2) Agencies and others of the importance of notifying program participants of the financial advantages of state and federal Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC), the State Homestead Credit (HC), the federal Child Tax Credit (CTC) and other available tax credits for low-income families. This memo also provides information on where low-income, non-English speaking and elderly families can obtain free tax return preparation assistance in Wisconsin.

Ops Memo 10-22: Wisconsin Works (W-2) Work Program Auto Disenrollment (published on March 17--not released until April 1, 2010).

New Policy: Several changes over the last couple of years (Ops Memo's 09-18 and 06-27) have been made to help ensure that W-2 cases are closed properly. This final phase will end activities and automatically disenroll W-2 participants who have no W-2 placement and no W-2 eligibility. This will help ensure that performance standards are not erroneously counting individuals who are not actually receiving W-2 services.

Ops Memo 10-21: Disregarding Income for Temporary Census Employment for FoodShare (Released March 22, 2010) Effective March 1, 2010

New Policy: The State announced a new policy change for individuals participating in or interested in participating in the Wisconsin FoodShare program who are temporarily employed by the US Census Bureau. Income for both full-time and part-time census takers and enumerators for the 2010 Census WILL NOT be counted as earned income in determining FoodShare benefits **as long as** the employment is temporary. (This income has always been disregarded for health care programs.) Please note that income from permanent employment with the US Census Bureau WILL be counted as income for FoodShare and Medicaid.

Ops Memo: 10-17: BadgerCare Plus Certification for Court Ordered Kinship

Updated data from the Annie E. Casey Foundation on the death rates of children ages 1-14 and teenagers ages 15-19 are available for 2006 for all states and the nation.

Violent Crime Offenses and Occupational Fatalities

Updated data from the US Department of Justice on the rate of violent crime offenses per 100,000 inhabitants are now available for 2008. Also added for 2008 are the latest state-level data from the BLS on occupational fatalities.

Disability Prevalence

The most recent information based on Cornell University's analysis of the American Community Survey (ACS) on the percentage of adults with disabilities is available for all states and the nation for 2008.

Cancer

The latest data from the CDC and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) on the overall cancer incidence rate per 100,000 population, the cancer incidence rate by gender, and the cancer incidence rate by race/ethnicity have been added for all states and the nation for 2006. Updated information from the Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research (AHRQ) on the rate of deaths due to colorectal cancer per 100,000 population is available for 2005.

Public Place Smoking Bans

New information from the American Nonsmokers' Rights Foundation on states that do not allow smoking in public places including workplaces, restaurants, bars and gaming areas have been added for all states for 2010.

Health Coverage & Uninsured Health Insurance Status by Income Level

2007 and 2008 Current Population Survey data on the health insurance status of the nonelderly with incomes up to 133% of the federal poverty level (FPL) are now available for all states and the nation.

Medicaid & CHIP

Per-Capita Clawback Rates under ARRA

New data from CMS on the phased-down state contribution per-capita rates with increased federal matching assistance percentages (FMAP) under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) have been added. The ARRA increased FMAP will be applied to so-called "clawback

Care Children

New Policy: If a child is in a court ordered kinship care placement, her Medicaid/BadgerCare Plus eligibility will now be determined by the **Child Welfare Agency, not the County Economic Support Worker**. (Children in VOLUNTARY kinship care placement will continue to have their eligibility determined by the County ES worker.) Families affected by this procedure change can expect to get a negative notice in the mail. **Pay close attention to that notice**, as that letter should simply terminate the county's handling of the case, and should NOT terminate the child's benefits. There should be no gap in coverage.

CASE TIP: Federal Poverty Guidelines Stay at 2009 Levels

Congress has taken action to keep the 2009 poverty guidelines in effect until at least March 31, 2010.

It took an act of Congress to keep the 2009 poverty guidelines in effect well into 2010. Why? The Consumer Price Index annual average for 2009 went down. Without action, Health and Human Services would have had to issue 2010 poverty guidelines that were **lower** than the 2009 poverty guidelines. The US Department of Health and Human Services Web Site provides the following detail on the actions Congress has taken on this matter:

1. On December 19, 2009, Congress enacted and the President signed the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2010, which included a provision to **freeze** the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines at 2009 levels in order to prevent a reduction in eligibility for programs including Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and child nutrition, through March 1, 2010. A Federal Register notice about this initial extension of the 2009 poverty guidelines was published on January 22, 2010.
2. On March 2, 2010, Congress enacted and the President signed the Temporary Extension Act of 2010, which included a provision that replaced "March 1, 2010" with "March 31, 2010".

Grapevine Issue: Vandals Strike Cover the Uninsured Week!



Late in the evening on March 18, the 'Cover the Uninsured Week' banner was stolen out from the front of ABC for Health's Madison office, located in the former Mifflin Street Co-op Grocery. "It's an ironic theft to have our banner stolen during the week when Congress is considering historic health care reform," said Bobby Peterson, public interest attorney and director of ABC for Health. "We are surprised and even saddened that this non-partisan, community-oriented symbol would be the target of theft. Our staff and students would love to have our banner - a memento, a symbol of our work, and an item we've used for the last five years to commemorate Cover the Uninsured Week - returned!"

ABC for Health would be grateful for any help in getting the banner back! If you have any information, don't hesitate to contact us.

CKSN Corner
Covering Kids with Special Needs

payments," the amount states pay to the federal government as required by the Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003 (MMA). Data are available for the first quarter of 2009 through the second quarter of 2010.

Health Costs & Budgets

Tobacco Settlement

New data from the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids on tobacco settlement payments received by the states are now available for all states and the nation for 2009.

Providers & Service Use

Rural Health Clinics

Updated information from CMS on the total number of Medicare certified rural health clinics as of January 2010 is now available for all states and the nation.

Medical School Graduates

The latest data from the Association of American Medical Colleges on total medical school graduates and medical school graduates by gender have been added and are available for all states and the nation for 2009.

Minority Health

Medical School Graduates

Updated state-by-state information from the Association of American Medical Colleges on medical school graduates by race/ethnicity and medical school graduates by Hispanic ethnicity has been added for 2009.

Statehealthfacts.org is a Kaiser Family Foundation website.

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.



Mark Your Calendars Now

Check Out These Excellent Events in 2010!

- **Family Voices of Wisconsin - A Training on Health Care and Community Supports for Children with Special Health Care Needs and/or Disabilities - April 15 and 22**, Waisman Center, Olin Outreach Office, 122 E. Olin Ave, Madison, WI. 5:00-9:00pm. For more information, [click here](#).
- **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.
- **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.

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 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 bmcbride@safetyweb.org.

DHS Resources: BadgerCare Plus Core Plan:

- [To Apply Online \(ACCESS\)](#)

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:

- [New law gets Wisconsin close to health care for all - by Julie Sneider for the *ThirdCoast Digest*, March 29](#)
- [What impact will the new health care law have on Wisconsin - Joy Cardin with DHS Secretary Karen Timberlake, *Wisconsin Public Radio*, March 29 \(Click to Listen\)](#)
- [Health care status quo was unsustainable, Obey says in teleconference - by DJ Slater for the *Wausau Daily Herald*, March 29](#)
- [National health care reform will significantly impact insurers - by Corrinne Hess for the *Milwaukee Business Journal*, March 29](#)
- [Wanted: Doctors for rural clinics - by David Wahlberg for the *Wisconsin State Journal*, March 28](#)
- [Special training programs help place rural docs - by David Wahlberg for the *Wisconsin State Journal*, March 27](#)
- [Health care reform is good for small business and job growth in Wisconsin - by Harry Sanders, Jr for *The Cap Times*, March 27](#)
- [Health leaders view reform as starting point - by Corrinne Hess for the *Milwaukee Business Journal*, March 26](#)
- [Rep. Steve Kagen, Rep. David Obey receive threats for their support of health care reform - by Larry Bivins for the *Post Crescent*, March 26](#)
- [Small business owners wary of health care reform - by Stacy Vogel Davis for the *Milwaukee Business Journal*, March 26](#)
- [Van Hollen wants to sue over health care law - by Scott Bauer for the *Associated Press*, March 25](#)
- [Counselors tend to patients worries - by Mark Johnson for the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, March 24](#)
- [Lack of doctors derails MilwaukeeCares program - by Guy Boulton for the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, March 23](#)
- [Health care reform will provide coverage for thousands in Wisconsin - by David Wahlberg and Mary Spicuzza for *The Wisconsin State Journal*, March 23](#)
- [Obey says health care bill was a long time coming - by Diana Marrero for the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, March 23](#)
- [Vital Signs: Health care victory at last - by Shawn Doherty for the *Cap Times*, March 22](#)
- [Health care reform mirrors Wis. Programs - by Tony Galli for *WKOW*, March 22](#)
- [Wisconsin Insurance Commissioner Statement Regarding House of Representatives Vote on Health Insurance Reform, March 20](#)
- [Seclusion and restraints in schools: readers respond - by Shawn Doherty for the *Cap Times*, March 20](#)
- [Wisconsin providers support health care measure - by Guy Boulton for the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, March 17](#)
- [Health centers sharing \\$1M GE grant - by the *Milwaukee Business Journal*, March 15](#)

NEWS: Health Care Reform

- [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 (MILES) contacts:

Phone: 1-888-947-6583 (voice) 711 (TTY)
 Mail : Milwaukee Enrollment Services Center (MILES), 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:
dhsmiles@wisconsin.gov - for new applications, verifications, etc.
dhsmileschanges@wisconsin.gov - for scanning changes (HTF only scanning changes from cases)
dhsmilescustomerservice@wisconsin.gov
 - Note: This is an email for advocates only: use to email MILES with advocate questions.

Contact Information in Milwaukee County:

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

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Recent HealthWatch WatchDog

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

- [Outreach aims for a trouble-free health care shift - by Richard Wolf for USA Today, April 1](#)
- [Overhaul will lower the cost of being a woman - by Denise Grady for the New York Times, March 29](#)
- [US health reform faces big test with implementation - by Donna Smith for Reuters, March 29](#)
- [No matter what, we pay for other's bad habits - by Sandeep Jauhar for the New York Times, March 29](#)
- [Mental Health Experts Applaud Focus on Parity - by Sarah Kershaw for the New York Times, March 29](#)
- [Consumers' Big Question: What's in it for Me? - by Tara Parker-Pope for the New York Times, March 29](#)
- [Options expand for affordable long term care - by Paula Span for the New York Times, March 29](#)
- [Coverage now for sick children? Check the fine print - by Robert Pear for the New York Times, March 28](#)
- [Does healthcare reform close a tax loophole or destroy wealth? - by Donald Marron for the Christian Science Monitor, March 29](#)
- [Medicare nominee would face big changes – by Janet Adamy and Laura Meckler for the Wall Street Journal, March 29](#)
- [Final Votes in Congress Cap Battle on Health Bill - by David M. Herszenhorn and Robert Pear for the New York Times, March 25](#)
- [How the health care bill will affect you - by Tara Parker-Pope for the New York Times, March 24](#)
- [Health Reform: What Changes for the Uninsured - by Ray Suarez for the PBS Newshour, March 23](#)
- [FACT CHECK: Spinning the new health care law - by Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar for the Associated Press, March 23](#)

Here are some of the responses that legislators, government officials, and local organizations had to the historic passage of health care through the House of Representatives:

- [Senate Passes Bill Including Feingold Amendment to Cancel Old, Unused Earmarks - Sen. Russ Feingold, March 22](#)
- [Feingold Statement on House Passage of Health Care Reform Bill, March 22](#)
- [Governor Doyle's Statement on the Passage of Health Insurance Reform, March 22](#)
- [Statement on House Passage of Historic Health Care Reform Legislation - Rep Tammy Baldwin, March 21](#)
- [Ryan: "This Heavy-Handed Overhaul is at Odds with What Made This Country the Greatest Nation on Earth" - Rep Paul Ryan, March 21](#)

Here's what people were saying before health care passed through the House

- [U.S. loves Social Security, will embrace health reform - by John Nichols for the Capital Times, March 21](#)
- [Big Insurance Rate Increases for Pennsylvania Poor - by Ian Urbina for the New York Times, March 16](#)
- [Without Reform, Family Health Care Spending to Skyrocket; 34% Increase by 2015, 79% by 2020 - The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, March 15](#)

NEWS: Opinion

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.

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

- [Commentary: US will eventually love health care overhaul - by James Werell, *the Rock Hill Herald*, on *McClatchy*, April 1](#)
- [Health care reform and you: What goes into effect this year - by Ron Kind, *Wisopinion.com*, March 29](#)
- [Editorial: The Legal Assault on Health Reform, the *New York Times*, March 28](#)
- [Now's the time to rethink entitlements, *Wisconsin State Journal*, March 28](#)
- [Editorial: Health law passed, but problems remain, *Appleton Post Crescent*, March 28](#)
- [Op-Ed: The Rage is Not About Health Care - by Frank Rich for the *New York Times*, March 27](#)
- [Health care reform good for small business and job growth in Wisconsin - by Henry Sanders Jr for *the Cap Times*, March 27](#)
- [Opinion: The job done on health care? Don't bet on it, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, March 27](#)
- [11 predictions for the health-care reform bill - by Ezra Klein for *The Washington Post*, March 25](#)
- [Hands on Wisconsin: Health care ambulance is out of \(cost\) control - by Phil Hands for the *Wisconsin State Journal*, March 24](#)
- [Health Care Reform: An Opinion Summary - by Gary Langer, *ABCNews.com*, March 23](#)
- [Editorial: Out of the Thicket – by the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, March 22](#)
- [Editorial: Health Care Reform, at Last, *New York Times*, March 21](#)
- [Editorial: On the Verge of Health Care Reform, *New York Times*, March 18](#)

NEWS: Health Care Costs and Access

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

- [States Hope New Funding From Health Law Will Bolster Unique Programs - by Christopher Weaver for *Kaiser Health News*, April 1](#)
- [Insurers to Comply With New Rules for Children - by Robert Pear for the *New York Times*, March 30](#)
- [Health care reform offers greater hope of access to insurance - by Ann Meyer for *The Chicago Tribune*, March 29](#)
- [Options expand for affordable long-term care - by Paula Span for the *New York Times*, March 29](#)
- [Mental health experts applaud focus on parity - by Sarah Kershaw for the *New York Times*, March 29](#)
- [New health care reform law includes CSNA provisions to save billions - press release from Sen. Feingold, March 29](#)
- [White House: Health care financial benefits outweigh costs - by Joshua Miller for *ABC News*, March 28](#)
- [Some states find burdens in health law - by Michael Luo for the *New York Times*, March 26](#)
- [The First Test of New Health Law: Covering Hard-To-Insure People - by Mary Agnes Cary for the *Kaiser Health News*, March 26](#)
- [With insurance comes a new need: more primary care doctors - by James Warren for the *Chicago News Cooperative*, March 25](#)
- [Health reform could mean help for elder abuse victims - by Dean Mosiman for the *Wisconsin State Journal*, March 25](#)
- [Last Minute Deal On Medicare Highlights Dilemma On Curbing Costs - by Mary Agnes Cary for the *Kaiser Family Foundation*, March 24](#)
- [For many interest groups, health-care bill's passage isn't the end - by](#)

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HealthWatch Wisconsin Update Staff

[Bobby Peterson](#)

[Adam VanSpankeren](#)

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.

[Dan Eggen for the *Washington Post*, March 24](#)

- [Health bill spreads the pain, benefits - by Richard Wolf and Alison Young for *USA Today*, March 23](#)
- [The Cost of Failure to Enact Health Reform: 2010-2020 - by the *Urban Institute*, March 2010](#)
- [Summary of Key Medicare Provisions in White House Proposal and House and Senate Health Reform Bills - the *Kaiser Family Foundation*, March 15](#)

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