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The HealthWatch Wisconsin Update Newsletter

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

October 15, 2010

Vol. 6 No. 19

HealthWatch Wisconsin

A Project of ABC for Health, Inc.

A statewide membership assuring a more competent, coordinated public health workforce.

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Local HealthWatch Coalition Meetings:

Barron: TBD, 9:00-10:00am. Barron County Workforce Resource, Inc., 331 S. Main St., Ste. 6, Rice Lake. Contact [Mike Rust](#) or (715) 485-8525 with questions.

Chippewa: TBD, 10:45am-12:00pm.

Health Reform Training!

Registrations are flying in! Join us at the October 28th event:

"The Changing Landscape of Health Insurance in Wisconsin after Health Reform"

Thursday, October 28, 2010

9:00am-4:30pm

Inn on the Park, 22 S. Carroll St., Madison

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER TODAY!](#)

Health care reform is unfolding before our eyes. The process of reform will take years, but many key questions and issues need your attention today! This workshop will continue the process of educating the public health workforce on health reform issues. Join sponsors HealthWatch Wisconsin and ABC for Health for sessions led by regulators, policy makers, and advocates in Wisconsin. Included in your registration is HealthWatch Wisconsin's newest publication: "My Health Reform Guidebook." Continuing education credits will be offered for attorneys and social workers. A continental breakfast, lunch and CD are included with your registration.

Reduced registration cost will be available for members of HealthWatch Wisconsin! [Join HealthWatch Wisconsin](#) to take advantage of savings throughout the year!

SPECIAL PRIZE DRAWING: GREEN BAY PACKERS DELUXE, INDOOR CLUB SEAT TICKETS!! One lucky winner will leave the workshop on October 28 with a pair of tickets to the December 5 **Green Bay Packers v. San Francisco 49ers Game!!**
To be eligible to win: you must be a 2010-2011 individual member of HealthWatch Wisconsin. We will include individuals joining HealthWatch WI while registering for this workshop in our drawing.

See you in Madison on the 28th!

RFP to be Issued This Year:

Opportunities to Develop New HealthWatch Coalitions!

Attention Local Public Health Departments: Opportunities exist to form new, sustainable HealthWatch Coalitions. ABC for Health, Wisconsin's Department of Health Services, and HealthWatch Wisconsin are helping to support a sustainable, inter-connected network of new community-based HealthWatch Coalitions to promote access to and retention of health care coverage for children. Coalitions are strongly



Chippewa County Courthouse, Room 121, 711 N. Bridge St., Chippewa Falls. Contact [Rose Marsh](#) or 1-800-400-3678 with questions.

Dane: Nov 1, 9:00-11:00am. **Waisman Community Outreach Center, 122 E Olin Ave, Ste 100, Madison, WI 53713.** Contact [Adam VanSpankeren](#) or (608) 261-6939, ext. 204 with questions.

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

Eau Claire: Nov 4, 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: Nov 10, 9:30am-11:30am. Aurora Family Services, 3200 W. Highland Blvd., Milwaukee. Contact [Kari Lerch](#) or (414) 449-4777, ext. 145 or [Ginger Dzick](#) at (414) 443-4527 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: TBD, 10:30am-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. Oct 26 at 9:00am at Goodwill Community Center, 1814 N Appleton Road, Menasha. Contact [Susan Garcia Franz](#) or [Connie Raether](#) for more information.

Coming Soon: On-Demand "Immigrant Health Coverage Options Training!"

This autumn, you'll be able to access a

encouraged to include local health departments as the key stakeholder. Your County can create a coalition to develop a sustainable plan to connect and maintain family connections to health coverage, care, and resources.

Getting Started:

1. Start by identifying community partners and leaders, including representatives from hospital systems, Head Start, parents, Birth-to-3 Coordinators, public health nurses, economic support workers, school nurses and counselors, advocates, employers, and members of the faith community.
2. Watch for an RFP. Before the end of 2010, we will issue an RFP for Coalition Building and Development. There will likely be a fast turn-around on applications for funding. We hope to have new coalitions begin work in early 2011!
3. We will encourage anyone who is interested in competing for this grant award to call HealthWatch Wisconsin in advance of submitting an application to discuss ideas and strategies.
4. Review: We will prioritize coalition development for low-enrollment, under-performing or health disparity locations across Wisconsin. In fact, HealthWatch Wisconsin will prioritize coalition development where local health departments take a leading role.
5. After funding, HealthWatch Wisconsin will continue to help with ongoing technical consultation and leadership training. We will be looking for areas that can DEVELOP and SUSTAIN a coalition, after the start-up assistance is complete.

Have questions or want more information at this time? Contact [Brynne](#) at ABC for Health (608) 261-6939 ext. 210.

Digging into Health Reform: The Medical Loss Ratio Explained

What is the Medical Loss Ratio?

In order to ensure value to a health plan's participants, the Affordable Care Act has implemented a financial guideline on insurance companies to encourage quality care and improvement. Otherwise known as a medical loss ratio (MLR), if 80 cents of one premium dollar is put toward medical claims and activities that improve a patient's health, 20 cents is then left for overhead administrative costs, salaries, etc., deeming the company's medical loss ratio of 80%. Insurers in the large group market are required by the new health reform law to have an 85% MLR and those in the individual or small group market are required to have an 80% MLR. Insurers not meeting these guidelines (for example, only meeting a 60% MLR) will have to provide rebates to policyholders. However, as in the case of McDonald's and CVS companies who offer a "mini-med" limited, low-cost benefit to their associates, plans of that nature (which currently do not appear to comply with the regulations set for 2011), may no longer be an option unless a potential waiver can get government approval.

Complications: Implementation of this provision proves difficult, however, as the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) and federal officials struggle to establish a consistent definition and clear method of calculation concerning rebates for health insurance premiums. If clarifications are too broad, insurers may attempt to frame certain administrative costs as promoting policy holder health. In contrast to this, a definition that is too narrow could erroneously cut provisions that truly benefit individual consumers. The NAIC's Health Insurance and Managed Care Committee scheduled an evaluation of draft regulations on Oct. 14, allowing a final draft to be approved by the full body at the NAIC's fall national meeting Oct. 18-21. Experts expect that final MLR regulations will dictate whether or not more money will genuinely go towards patient care.

Wisconsin's Plans? The Department of Health and Human Services says that it is "committed to implementing the law in a way that minimizes disruption to coverage

comprehensive web cast on the issues of public benefits relevant for Wisconsin's immigrant populations. In September, ABC for Health Staff presented its popular "Immigrant Health Coverage Issues" training in front of energetic audiences in Madison and Milwaukee. We promised that if you lived or worked outside the Greater Madison or Milwaukee Area, you, too, could have exclusive access to this workshop on-demand--delivered straight to your desktop. HealthWatch Wisconsin staff are putting the finishing touches on the new HealthWatch Training Portal to make this special training possible. Watch future editions of the Update Newsletter for information on how to register for this training. Want to be extra sure you don't miss an announcement? [Send us an email](#) at HealthWatch Wisconsin to have a training registration page emailed directly to your inbox when the Immigrant Health Coverage Webcast link is active. Don't miss this opportunity for a great training!

It's Not Too Late To Join HealthWatch Wisconsin!

The 2010-2011 membership year has begun, but it's not too late to join! Take 5 minutes to complete and return our [MEMBERSHIP FORM](#) to make sure you are connected to great materials, information and events.

Join as an individual member for \$30 - OR -
Get together with co-workers and join as an organization for only \$120.

[Joining or Renewing your HWW membership today gives you:](#)

- Access to 12 publications valued at over \$200 including the NEW "My Guide to National Health Reform," available Fall 2010.
- Access to reduced trainings, workshops, and conferences on health care hot topics, including online trainings through the HWW Training Portal site.
- A voice in a state-wide advocacy organization that works toward quality and accessible health care for people across Wisconsin!

that is available today while also ensuring that consumers receive the benefits the (Affordable Care Act) provides," but how does Wisconsin plan on complying with this new regulation? Beginning with the 2010 Annual Financial Statement, a rebate calculation form is to be filed April 1 of every year so that state and federal regulators may be able to document trends and evaluate the finances of the health care businesses.

For more information on this topic:

- [Health Care Law May Hamper Limited Insurance Plans](#) - by Tom Murphy for the *Associated Press*, September 30.
- [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) Glossary of Key Health Reform Terms.
- [National Association of Insurance Commissioners](#), Regulation for Uniform Definitions and Standardized Rebate Calculation Methodology, October 5.
- [Office of the Commissioner of Insurance](#), Bulletins to Insurers: PPACA of 2009, Issued September 3.

Join us at the [Health Reform Training on October 28](#) for information on this and other important changes to private insurance in Wisconsin in a session led by Guenther Ruch from Wisconsin's Office of the Commissioner of Insurance.

Update: HHS Awards \$727 Million To Community Health Centers As Part Of New Law

Update to a Story Previously Reported on in the Update Newsletter:

In the September 15 edition of the Update Newsletter, we brought you an article called "Health Reform: A Closer Look at Support for Community Health Centers." At that time, we reported that the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009 called for an investment of \$2 billion in health care center expansion, which included funding for more sites and better health information technology. The Affordable Care Act adjusted the policy in 2010 to include additional funding for health care centers nationwide.

Just last week, the Obama administration announced it is awarding \$727 million to community health centers around the nation to help them build new clinics and improve the safety net, according to [The Washington Post](#). The US Department of Health and Human Services estimates that the \$727 million to 143 clinics will bring more health care to 745,000 underserved patients. Wisconsin will see well over \$15 million through the awards. Some funding distributions are as follows:

Health Center Grantee	City	Grand Total
16th Street Community HC	Milwaukee	\$1,648,791
Community Health Systems	Beloit	\$885,869
Family Health Center of Marshfield	Marshfield	\$2,799,686
Fox Cities Community Health Center	Menasha	\$618,659
Kenosha Community Health Center	Kenosha	\$766,040
Family Health and Dental Center	Wautoma	\$577,488
Access Community Health Center	Madison	\$957,201
Milwaukee Health Services	Milwaukee	\$1,758,011
N.E.W. Community Clinic	Green Bay	\$421,977
Northern Health Center	Lakewood	\$567,057
Westside Health Care Association	Milwaukee	\$603,996
Wisconsin Primary Health Care Assoc.	Madison	\$1,000,000

Join an organization committed to unifying the public health workforce, with emphasis on teaching, training, and information sharing! The membership year runs July 1, 2010-June 30, 2011. Questions? Call HealthWatch Wisconsin staff for more information: (608)261-6939 ext. 210.

Links of Interest

The Legislative Council Study Committees will continue to meet in the coming months. We will be tracking the meeting agendas and minutes at the Update. Check in here from time to time to see when the next meeting is, and what is developing.

[Interim Study Committee on Health Reform Implementation](#)
Next Meeting: October 21
Note: The Chairs and Vice-Chair of this committee have been invited to present at the HealthWatch Wisconsin Health Reform Training, October 28, 2010.

[Interim Study Committee on Access to Health Care](#)
Next Meeting: October 22

[Interim Study Committee on Infant Mortality](#)
Next Meeting: November 16

[Special Committee on Review of Emergency Detention and Admission of Minors Under Chapter 51](#)
Next Meeting: October 4

NEW from Kaiser! Health Reform: An Overview - Health Policy Education from Kaiser Family Foundation. Check out this very informative video and 18 slide power point [here](#).

Updates from DHS

DHS has released updated versions of its BadgerCare Plus and Access Handbooks!

Here is a link to the [BadgerCare Plus Handbook](#) version 10-04; and to the listed [changes](#), effective October 1. Please click here to see the [Access Handbook](#) version 10-04; and its listed [changes](#), effective October 25.

Operations Memos

[CLICK HERE](#) to see a complete listing of Wisconsin Community Health Centers and the funding they can anticipate.

Accountable Care Organizations: What to Expect

The Affordable Care Act suggests that in a fee for service payment systems of Medicare and privatized insurance, there is a need to increase the overall quality of care and reduce the amount of fraudulent spending. The proposed solution is engaging in local accountability to impart change nationwide. The "means to the end" is the formation of "Accountable Care Organizations," (ACOs) designed to be teams of local health care providers who provide a full range of coordinated healthcare services to patients. They can be configured in a variety of ways, but all must consist of primary and tertiary care facilities, collaborating with specialty physicians and hospitals, and forming networks that are all willing to be accountable for patient care while working under a "particular payment and performance measurement framework."

Under this system, individual ACO spending benchmarks will be determined by past trends in patient population. Doctors and hospitals will be paid for the improvement of care, not for increasing the amount of care provided. Set to be phased in over the next 5 years, Congress will introduce a new Medicare project just to see if ACOs work; if they fail to meet cost savings and quality of care objectives at regional standards, Medicare will provide lower payments. On the other hand, if objectives are satisfied, ACOs will be awarded shared savings payments which can be divided up among providers and invested towards IT improvements, nursing homes, etc. If conditions prove successful over the next two years, the formations of more ACOs could be coming in our near future.

For More Information on Accountable Care Organizations:

- [Brookings-Dartmouth](#) Issue Brief: Accountable Care Organizations
- [Department of Health and Human Services](#) Glossary
- [ACO'S A Quick Primer](#) by the Kaiser Foundation
- [Prevention is the Best Practice](#)

Don't forget to join us at the [Health Reform Training on October 28](#) for information on this and other important changes to public and private insurance in Wisconsin!

Now Hiring:

ABC for Health, Inc. is seeking an interested and dedicated individual to fulfill the duties of a **Legal Assistant**, responsible for providing administrative support for attorneys and Health Benefits Counselors to advocate for clients. A qualified candidate will assist in conducting intake interviews with individuals requesting assistance, primarily families with children at a risk of receiving inadequate health care to obtain and maintain health care financing through public and private sources of benefits. Familiarity with civil legal procedures and citation form and Wisconsin's health and social service programs is desired. This position includes conducting a variety of research and analysis assignments, prepare legal or administrative hearings documents, and edit/review internal publications. A strong administrative/legal support background required. Please [Click Here for the Full Position Announcement](#). Please address interest with Cover Letter and Resume to: ABC for Health, Inc., Attn: Brynne McBride, 32 N. Bassett St, Madison, WI 53703 or bmcbride@safetyweb.org. ABC for Health, Inc. is an affirmative action employer.



[Ops Memo 10-59](#) Verification Notice Redesign *(released October 15)*

New Policy: Effective October 29, changes will be made to the CARES Worker Web to decrease agency workload and reinforce program policy. This includes a redesigned "verification checklist," with changes to verifying Wisconsin state residency an individual's social security number, allowing workers to put the application into pending status and request proof for either field of information.

[Ops Memo 10-75](#) Citizenship and Identity Auto Update in CARES *(released October 14)*

New Policy: Effective November 1, the state will submit a file to the SSA with an individual's name, social security number and date of birth to verify citizenship, as opposed to the current process, which requires the applicant to submit the verification to the local agency or to verify using available resources such as birth query or a DMV match. The new verification requirements apply to Medicaid and BadgerCare Plus applicants. Verified citizenship returned from the SSA will also meet the requirements for the FoodShare, Caretaker Supplement, Child Care and W-2 programs.

[Ops Memo 10-74](#) New Birth Query Functionality in CARES Worker Web *(released October 14)*

New Policy: The Birth Query function will now be available using the Navigation Menu in the CARES Worker Web (CWW). This allows workers to enter the name and birth date of an individual, provided that an identifying number is entered to ensure the query is only requested if an individual has applied for a program of assistance.

[Ops Memo 10-73](#) Job Access Loan (JAL) Funding *(released October 6)*

New Policy: The policy provides guidance regarding when to use Supportive Service funding vs. a JAL (JALs should not be used in place of W-2 services), describes a new Web1 report that tracks JAL expenditures (showing each agency's spending target, percent spent, and remaining funds available), and encourages W-2 agency staff to maximize collaboration with other service providers to meet local needs

Coalition Roundup!

Local HealthWatch Coalitions have been busy! Below is a brief look at some events, announcements, and news from around the state. Coalition contacts are listed in the sidebar if you have questions on a story or would like to follow up with the coalition directly.



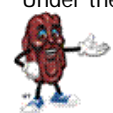
The **Dane County HealthWatch Coalition** held its last meeting at the Harambee Center on October 4, where Carrie Gray of DHS came and talked about all of the new rules and programs related to pharmacy products and policies. Marysa LaRowe of Access to Independence also joined and shared what Access to Independence does and how they can help people with disabilities. Dane County HealthWatch's next meeting will be held at a **NEW LOCATION: the Waisman Community Outreach Center at 122 East Olin Ave, Suite 100** in Madison, and we will be hosting Claire Smith from DHS. For more information or if you have questions (or need directions) contact [Adam VanSpankeren](#).

The **Eau Claire HealthWatch Coalition** will be meeting in their usual spot on Thursday, November 4, and they will be joined by Rick Sommerfeld, the Developmental Disabilities Supervisor at the Community Health Partnership. He has over thirty years of experience working with people with developmental disabilities. Remember, HealthWatch meetings are open to the public, so anyone in that area is encouraged to attend that day! Please contact [Pat Perkins](#) for more information.

The **Tri-County HealthWatch Coalition** has been busy as well! Their next meeting will be October 26, where Melody Bockenfeld of Outagamie County will be speaking on Community Health Improvement plans and how HealthWatch members can contribute. For more information, please contact [Susan Garcia Franz](#).

CASE TIP:

Grapevine: What are "Essential Benefits?"



Under the Affordable Care Act, insurance companies will no longer be allowed to set "annual and lifetime limits," or limits on the dollar amount of "essential" health benefits that they will cover in a year or over the course of a person's lifetime. The elimination of annual limits will happen gradually, until they are completely prohibited in 2014 (for example, the annual limit on essential benefits coverage will rise to \$1.25 million in 2011 and \$2 million in 2012). However, the rule does not clearly define what "essential benefits" includes. People anticipate that the package of benefits will include doctor visits, emergency and maternity care, hospitalization, prescription drugs, etc. Remember, benefits eventually defined as "non-essential" benefits will still be applicable to annual and lifetime limits. It is unclear if existing Wisconsin mandates will be included as essential benefits. Weigh in! If you would like to let Wisconsin's Commissioner of Insurance know what benefits they should direct the Department of Health and Human Services to include in the "essential benefits" definition, [send us an email!](#) Wisconsin's Commissioner is seeking your input!

Provider Updates for October

ForwardHealth Updates are regularly made available to Wisconsin Providers. We have selected a few key updates and summarized them below. For more information or to view additional updates, please visit the [ForwardHealth Provider Portal](#).

[Reimbursement Rate Increase for Pharmacy Providers for Therapeutic Interchange and Influenza Vaccine](#)

relating to car loans, car repairs, and housing costs (i.e. Wheels for Work, www.wifrontdoor.org).

Ops Memo 10-72 Trial Jobs Return to Former Policies and Procedures (released October 6)

New Policy: Effective immediately, W-2 agencies must return to using all W-2 Trial Job policies found in the W-2 Manual, Section 7.3.0. Several forms and agreements have been updated to reflect the policies and subsidy calculations described in the W-2 Manual.

Provider Updates

For extended summaries of *Provider Updates* from October, please see the column at right.

Calls for Submissions and Volunteers

ABC for Health is seeking legal interns for Fall 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 \(ACCESS\)](#)
- [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

Effective for dates of service (DOS) on and after October 1, 2010, the BadgerCare Plus Standard Plan, the BadgerCare Plus Core Plan, Medicaid, and SeniorCare will increase the reimbursement rate of the Pharmaceutical Care (PC) code for therapeutic interchange. Effective for DOS on and after August 15, 2010, BadgerCare Plus and Medicaid will increase the reimbursement rate for pharmacy providers for the influenza vaccine. The changes described in this ForwardHealth Update for the influenza vaccine administration affect BadgerCare Plus and Medicaid members.

Prior Authorization Is Required for Avandia, Avandamet, and Avandaryl

Effective for dates of service on and after September 27, 2010, as a result of Food and Drug Administration safety concerns, Avandia, Avandamet, and Avandaryl are now non-preferred drugs that require clinical prior authorization for BadgerCare Plus Standard Plan, Medicaid, and SeniorCare members.

Hospice Reimbursement Rate Changes

Wisconsin Medicaid and BadgerCare Plus hospice reimbursement rates are based on hourly and per diem rates established by the federal government for all covered hospice services. Effective for dates of service (DOS) on and after October 1, 2010, Wisconsin Medicaid and BadgerCare Plus hospice service reimbursement rates will change.

The Attachment of this *ForwardHealth Update* includes the new hospice rates that are effective for DOS on and after October 1, 2010. Nursing home room and board rates are not impacted by these hospice reimbursement rate changes.

2010 Rate Changes for Services Receiving Only Federal Funds

Effective for claims processed and paid on and after October 1, 2010, the federal share will decrease from 60.21% to 60.16% for the following services:

- Community Support Program (CSP) services
- Comprehensive Community Services
- Crisis Intervention services
- Outpatient Mental Health and Substance Abuse
- Services in the Home or Community for Adults.

Wisconsin Medicaid will pay up to the federal share of the contracted rates for these services. If the provider's usual and customary charge for the service is less than the contracted rate, Wisconsin Medicaid will pay the federal share of the usual and customary charge.

Reimbursement Reduction for Most Paper Claims Submitted to ForwardHealth

As a result of the Medicaid Rate Reform project, ForwardHealth will reduce reimbursement on most claims submitted to ForwardHealth on paper. Effective for claims received after December 10, 2010, most paper claims will be subject up to a \$1.10 reimbursement reduction per claim. Providers are encouraged to submit claims electronically to avoid this reimbursement reduction.

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

(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](#)

Previous Issues of the Update:

[View our Update Newsletter Library Online!](#)

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.



Mark Your Calendars Now Check Out These Excellent Events in 2010!

- **New Family Voices Training on Transition - October 18, 20, and November 1.** 5:00-8:00pm. October 18 - Gateway Tech College, Racine; October 20 - Badger High School, Lake Geneva; November 1 - Gateway Tech College, Elkhorn. Hosted by Family Voices of Wisconsin, the event is free and dinner will be provided. To register, call 608-220-9598 or email Lynn at lynn@fvofwi.org.
- **Assistive Technology Expo - October 21.** 10:00am-3:00pm. Engineering Centers, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1550 Engineering Drive, Madison, WI 53706. FREE! For more information, please [click here](#).
- **Expanding Opportunities and Relationships for Youth in Transition - October 21.** Holiday Inn, Stevens Point, WI. Registration available [here](#), event is co-sponsored by the Wisconsin Community on Transition, the Autism Society of Wisconsin, and the Community of Practice on Autism Spectrum Disorders and other Developmental Disabilities
- **"Did You Know? Now You Know!" - October 25.** 5:30-8:30pm. Thompson Community Center, Appleton, WI. **November 4.** 5:30-8:30pm. Marshfield Public Library, Marshfield, WI. **November 13 & 20.** 5:30-8:30pm. Milwaukee - will be help in Spanish. Family Voice training on health care and community services. For more details go to www.fvofwi.org/training.
- **Brown County Transition Resource Fair - October 26.** 4:00-7:30pm. NWTC Student Center, Green Bay, WI. Visit various agencies and organizations with tables of resources for transition into adulthood with the focus on accessibility, education, funding and employment for students. Free, no registration required.
- **Children Come First Conference - See My World: New Perspectives on Children's Mental Health - November 7-9.** Kalahari Resort and Convention Center, Wisconsin Dells. For more information contact Wisconsin Family Ties, 608-267-6800 or 800-422-7145 or visit www.familyties.org.
- **Self-Advocacy Leadership Summit - November 8, 2010.** 10:00am-3:00pm. Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells. This statewide leadership Summit is designed to have several of the self-advocacy organizations and leaders in the self-advocacy movement get together and talk about the future of self-advocacy in Wisconsin. Free, registration required: call John Shaw at 608-266-7707 or e-mail john1.shaw@wisconsin.gov by October 23.
- **21st Annual Children Come First Conference. November 8 & 9.** Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells. Child and adolescent behavioral health conference. For more information and registration, go to www.wifamilyties.org.
- **Third Annual Statewide Self-Determination Conference - November 8-10.** Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells. Focus will be the need to strengthen self-determination so that people are in control of their supports and lives. For more information go to www.wi-bpdd.org and click on "SD Conference."
- **2010 Mental Health Consumer Conference - "Mental Health Reform: Advocating for Our Future" - November 22 and 23.** Kalahari Resort and Convention Center, Wisconsin Dells, WI.
- **Circles of Life 2011 - April 28 & 29.** Hyatt Regency, Milwaukee. State's largest conference for families of children with disabilities and special health care needs. For more information visit www.colwisconsin.org.

Rent the ABC for Health Studio

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

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!**

We're on Facebook and Twitter!

Look for ABC for Health and Health Watch Wisconsin on [Facebook](#), and become a follower of ABC for Health on [Twitter](#)!

Contact Us

Have ideas, events, or success stories to share? [Email your suggestions](#)! All submissions should be limited to 150 words.

HealthWatch Wisconsin Update Staff

[Bobby Peterson](#)

[Brynne McBride](#)

[Adam VanSpankeren](#)

CYSHCN Grants Awarded

The Department of Health Services, Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Program has announced that the agencies listed below have been awarded grants in response to the Request for Proposals for CYSHCN Statewide Initiatives. Congratulations to the following agencies and offices:

1. Family Voices of Wisconsin, Family Health Leadership Initiative
2. Children's Hospital of Wisconsin Fox Valley, Medical Home Initiative
3. ABC for Health, Inc, Access/Health Benefits Initiative

Sharon Fleischfresser, MD, MPH, Medical Director, Wisconsin CYSHCN Program Division of Public Health, commented when announcing the accepted proposals, "We look forward to working together to serve Wisconsin's children and youth with special health care needs and their families." Contracts for the initiatives will begin January 1, 2011.

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](#)

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

Wisconsin's Department of Health Services has released a new Maternal Child Health/Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs [UPDATE](#)

NEWS: Health Care in Wisconsin

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

- [Press Release: New VA regulations provide easier paths for veterans to receive medical and compensation benefits - for the Department of Veterans Affairs, October 13](#)
- [Press Release: Medicare Annual Election Period \(AEP\) Fall Enrollment for 2010 - for the Board on Aging and Long Term Care, October 13](#)
- [Dane Co. improving mental health services - by Bob Hague for the Wisconsin Radio Network, October 13](#)
- [Medicaid among Wisconsin's fastest-rising costs - by Jason Stein and Patrick Marley for the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*](#)
- [State starts work on health insurance exchange - by Gannet Wisconsin Media for the *Wausau Daily Herald*, October 10](#)
- [Press Release - Wisconsin Awarded \\$4.7 Million for Teen Healthy Behavior Programs - by Beth Kaplan for the Department of Health Services, October 7](#)
- [On the issues: Hospital tax - by Patrick Marley for the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, October 5](#)
- [Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation receives \\$3.8 million to expand residency programs - by Molly Newman for the *Marshfield News-Herald*, October 5](#)
- [Press Release: Social Security Covers Every Season of Life - by Ken Hess for the Social Security Administration, October 4](#)
- [Press Release: DHS Report on Management of Milwaukee County Income Maintenance Programs - for the Department of Health Services, October 4](#)
- [Press Release: Kind, Western Wisconsin Providers Participate in National Summit to Improve Value of Health Care - by Meghan Roh for Congressman](#)

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.



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

[Ron Kind, October 4](#)

- [Democrat Feingold runs ad touting health care vote - by Scott Bauer for the *Wisconsin State Journal*, October 4](#)
- [AG Van Hollen: I would sue over federal health care law - by Paul Sloth for the *Wisconsin State Journal*, October 1](#)

NEWS: Health Care Reform

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

- [Empowering the public with health-care facts - by Darryl Fears for The *Washington Post*, October 15](#)
- [Federal judge lets 20 states' health-care lawsuit move forward - by N.C. Aizenman for *The Washington Post*, October 15](#)
- [Boehner signs conservative pledge to repeal healthcare reform law - by Mike Lillis for *The Hill*, October 14](#)
- [Hollywood Takes on Health Care - by Amie Parnes for *Politico*, October 12](#)
- [States thumb nose at health reform - by Sarah Kliff for *Politico*, October 12](#)
- [Boehner on healthcare reform funding: 'They're not going to get a dime from us' - By Mike Lillis for *The Hill*, October 11](#)
- [Health Care Interests Push To Make ACOs Pay Off For Them - by Phil Galewitz and Jenny Gold for *Kaiser Health News*, October 10](#)
- [US judge upholds key part of Obama healthcare law - by Jeremy Pelofsky for *Reuters*, October 7](#)
- [Department of Health and Human Services errs on Medicare Advantage - by Jennifer Haberkorn for *Politico*, October 7](#)
- [Poor healthcare may shorten American lives: study - by Maggie Fox for *Reuters*, October 7](#)
- [How Republicans could block healthcare reform - by Maggie Fox for *Reuters*, October 7](#)
- [Health-care law's guidelines on premiums' use take shape - by N.C. Aizenman for *The Washington Post*, October 7](#)
- [Health Reform Facing Early Legal Tests - by Rick Schmitt for *Kaiser Health News*, October 6](#)
- [Labor chief: Democrats 'too timid' on health care, economic efforts - by Philip Rucker for *The Washington Post*, October 5](#)
- [Health overhaul centerpiece endures growing pains - by Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar for the *Wisconsin State Journal*, October 3](#)

NEWS: Opinion

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

- [Column: Changes Wrought By Health Reform? Well, Maybe Not - by Jonathan Cohn for *Kaiser Health News*, October 13](#)
- [Editorial: First-Round Victory on Health Reform - for *The New York Times*, October 12](#)
- [Editorial: The health-insurance mandate is found to be legally sound - for *The Washington Post*, October 11](#)
- [Editorial: Whose Advantage? - for *The New York Times*, October 10](#)
- [Editorial: Are 'Mini-Med' Plan Waivers A Good Idea? - by Andrew Villegas for *Kaiser Health News*, October 8](#)
- [Editorial: ObamaCare and the Election - for *The Wall Street Journal*, October 7](#)
- [Blog: Health vote haunts anti-abortion Democrats - by Sarah Kliff for *Politico*, October 6](#)
- [Blog: The Crucial Role of Insurance Mandates - by David Leonhardt for *The New York Times*, October 5](#)
- [Column: Health Care's Uneven Road to a New Era - by David Leonhardt for](#)

[The New York Times, October 5](#)

- [Column: Feingold, others step up to defend health care - by E.J. Dionne Jr. for the Wisconsin State Journal, October 4](#)

NEWS: Health Care Costs and Access

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

- [Fewer People Choose Cobra Subsidy Option - by Reed Abelson for The New York Times, October 14](#)
- [Insurers Denied Coverage to 1 in 7 - by Janet Adamy for The Wall Street Journal, October 13](#)
- [U.S. to Let Insurers Raise Fees for Sick Children - by Robert Pear for The New York Times, October 13](#)
- [Studies Highlight High Medicare Costs for People in Nursing Homes - by Aimee Miles for Kaiser Health News, October 12](#)
- [More Balk at Cost of Prescriptions - by Jonathan D. Rockoff for The Wall Street Journal, October 12](#)
- [What's Happening To Your Health Plan? - by Avery Johnson for The Wall Street Journal, October 9](#)
- [Health Overhaul Overlooks Retirees - by Ellen E. Schultz and Jessica Silver-Greenberg for The Wall Street Journal, October 9](#)
- [Government Helps to Insure Children, Even Above the Poverty Line - by Lesley Alderman for The New York Times, October 8](#)
- [Some insured kids miss proper health care due to costs - by Jenifer Goodwin for USA Today, October 7](#)
- [Waivers Aim at Talk of Dropping Health Coverage - by Reed Abelson for The New York Times, October 6](#)
- [Assessing health-care costs - by Joe Davidson for The Washington Post, October 5](#)
- [Election could affect state birth control services - by David Wahlberg for the Wisconsin State Journal, October 4](#)
- [Dean Health dropping one Medicare prescription drug plan - by Karen Rivedal for Madison.com, October 1](#)

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