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The HealthWatch Wisconsin Update Newsletter

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

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HealthWatch Wisconsin A Project of ABC for Health, Inc.

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

In This Issue:

[Introducing Wisconsin's New
Leadership](#)

[Agenda Posted: Register Today
for the Annual Conference!](#)

[Van Hollen Seeks to Join Health
Reform Repeal Lawsuit](#)

[Lawmakers Call for Medicaid
Audit](#)

[Save BadgerCare Coalition
Connects with HealthCare
Consumers](#)

[Digging Into Health Reform:
Accountable Care Organizations](#)

[HealthWatch Membership News](#)

[HealthWatch Recognizes Tom
Horst](#)

[Join HealthWatch as a
Subscriber](#)

[Coalition Roundup!](#)

Introducing Wisconsin's New Leadership

January 3rd marked the changing of the guard in Wisconsin. A Republican-led state legislature is at the helm, directing, among other issues, the future of health care and coverage in Wisconsin. One of the first items of business in the January Special Session has centered on Health Savings Accounts ([Senate Bill 2](#)), with [legislation moving](#) out of the Senate Health Committee on its way to the Joint Finance Committee before moving to the Senate floor. This legislation has caused a [stir](#) along party lines.

In the weeks since Wisconsin's new Governor Scott Walker took office, he has made cabinet appointments. Here's a look at some of the new faces in 2011:

[Commissioner of Insurance Ted Nickel](#) - Appointed Wisconsin's 33rd Commissioner, Nickel brings his experience from the property/casualty insurance business to office. After working in Gov. Thompson's Administration, he became Director of Governmental and Regulatory Affairs for Church Mutual, served as Chair of the Board of Directors in the Wisconsin Insurance Alliance, and as member of the Board of the Wisconsin Insurance Security Fund.

[Deputy Commissioner Dan Schwartz](#) - Schwartz has been in the WI insurance industry for the last 25 years as a licensed intermediary, maintaining licenses in property, casualty, life, accident, and health. His own government relations firm has represented the WI Employee Benefit Advisors Association and WI PPO Association.

[DHS Secretary Dennis Smith](#) - A former Director of the US Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in Washington, under Secretary Thompson and Leavitt. Smith is currently a [Senior Fellow](#) in Health Reform in The Heritage Foundation's Center for Health Policy Studies.

[Case Tip: Start Date for Core Plan Wait List Bypass](#)

[CKSN Corner](#)

[NEWS: Health Care in WI](#)

[NEWS: Health Care Reform](#)

[NEWS: Opinion](#)

[NEWS: Health Care Costs](#)

NEW! The Update Newsletter is using a new E-Marketing Service:

The Update Newsletter is now being delivered through **iContact**. Please bear with us as we transition format and functionality of the Update, HealthWatch WatchDog, Action Alerts and HW Reporter. Please [contact the Update staff](#) if you experience any difficulties with this newsletter!

To Print:

Want to print this newsletter and read it later? Access an easy-to-print version [HERE](#)

Donate Today:

We need your help!



Each year, HealthWatch Wisconsin helps connect health care professionals to timely information and valuable resources. Thanks to the support of its members, HealthWatch Wisconsin has been able to provide educational trainings, both live and on-demand to help improve the landscape of health care in our state. Thank you for considering a donation to HealthWatch Wisconsin and remember, your support is vital to

Medicaid Director Brett Davis - As a member of the US Department of Health and Human Services, he served as special assistant to Secretary Thompson. He once ran for Lieutenant Governor of WI and has been a member of the WI State Assembly for 6 years.

- [Gov. Walker's Full Cabinet Appointments](#)
- [Assembly Health Committee Members](#)
- [Senate Health Committee Members](#)
- [Assembly Full Committee List](#)
- [Senate Full Committee List](#)

Agenda Now Posted: Annual HealthWatch Wisconsin Conference

Join the members of HealthWatch Wisconsin for the Fourth Annual Conference, "Health Reform: New Directions?" March 7 & 8, 2011 at Madison's Inn on the Park.



View the New Agenda

Discounts are available! Visit the [HealthWatch Wisconsin Website](#) to learn more and to: nominate individuals for the Annual HealthWatch Awards, nominate professionals for the HealthWatch Council, and more!

Register Online -or- Print a Registration Form

NEW: The **deadline has been extended** to nominate friends and colleagues for an annual HealthWatch Wisconsin Award! Make your nomination by 11:59 p.m. on **February 11, 2011**. The awards will be presented during a special luncheon at the annual HealthWatch Conference. Please [click here](#) for more information.

Wisconsin Attorney General Van Hollen Seeks to Join Reform Repeal Lawsuit

Wisconsin may soon be joining the lawsuit to repeal health care reform, challenging the constitutionality of the "individual mandate." In March 2010, then Governor Doyle denied Attorney General JB Van Hollen's request for Wisconsin to join a federal lawsuit. On January 3, newly elected [Gov. Walker gave authorization](#) to Van Hollen to file a plaintiff request to the US District Judge Roger Vinson in Florida. If the case is approved in the weeks to come, Wisconsin could be joining 20 other states in the battle of health reform. [Click](#) to read more.

In the meantime, the extra money already coming into Wisconsin under Health Reform will be able to cover more low income residents and families, on top of those on BadgerCare Plus who are covered at higher income levels than is federally

keeping our state informed!

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: March 8, 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: Feb 7, 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 [Wendy MacDougall](#) or (715) 233-7309 with questions.

Eau Claire: April 7, 2011, 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: Feb 9, 9:30am-11:30am. Aurora Family Services, 3200 W. Highland Blvd., Milwaukee. Contact [Nora Foshager](#) or call (414) 416-1816 with any questions.

Milwaukee CHASE (Children's Health Access for the Special and Equal): TBD, 11:30am-1:30pm. ARC of Milwaukee, 7203 W. Center

mandated. In fact, Doyle's administration estimated last year that "between January 2014 and June 2016 the state could save \$364.6 million under the health care law." For news coverage of this topic, visit:

- [State working join federal health lawsuit, Van Hollen says](#)
- [Atty General Van Hollen Considers Suing Federal Government Over Health Care](#)
- [Van Hollen seeks to add WI to lawsuit opposing health care reform legislation](#)

State Senator Jon Erpenbach raised a cogent [point in opposition](#) to the law suit: that it is a waste of tax funds.

Wisconsin Lawmakers Call for BadgerCare Plus Audit

On Wednesday, January 12, Wisconsin lawmakers approved a sweeping audit of Wisconsin's health care programs. The last program integrity audit report was [December of 2008](#). For more information on the announcement of the audit [Click Here](#).

The Legislative Audit Bureau has been known for its non-partisan reports. Avid readers of HealthWatch Wisconsin publications and watchers of the HealthWatch WatchDog may recall that the Legislative Audit Bureau produced a report on the Blue Cross Blue Shield Conversion Funds, a hot topic in 2010. For more information on this issue, please see the [Update library](#) and the [WatchDog archive](#). To view more past reports from the Legislative Audit Bureau, please [click here](#).

Save BadgerCare Coalition Connects with Health Care Consumers



Help Preserve and Protect BadgerCare Programs and Eligibility in Wisconsin! As the leadership and priorities change in the coming months, advocates and policymakers are working together to preserve state health benefits for Wisconsin individuals and families. It's not too late to join. Are you a health care consumer? It's now easier to participate in the Coalition: [Click Here](#).

Next Meeting of the Coalition: Tuesday, Jan. 18 1:30-3 pm. In-person location: WCCF Offices - 555 W. Washington Ave Suite 200. Call-in information: 1-866-274-6951 Passcode: 7742688#.

New Petition Being Circulated: You can make a difference by signing a petition to help save BadgerCare! Activist Dan Peterson started the petition on Change.org titled, "[Fight is on to Save Medicaid Program in Wisconsin.](#)" The petition will be

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.

Pierce County: Contact [Lisa Raethke](#) or (715) 273-6854

Tri-County: Winnebago, Calumet and Outagamie Counties. Jan 25 at 9:00am at Goodwill Community Center, 1814 N Appleton Road, Menasha Room. Contact [Susan Garcia Franz](#) or [Connie Raether](#) for more information.

Join HealthWatch Wisconsin!

The 2010-2011 membership year has begun, but it's not too late to join! Complete and return our [MEMBERSHIP FORM](#). Individual memberships are \$30; organizational memberships are \$120. Questions? Call HealthWatch Wisconsin staff for more information: (608) 261-6939 ext. 204.

ABC for Health in the National News:

Thanks to the growing contention over health care reform implementation, many advocacy organizations, including ABC for Health, have been spotlighted in national news stories. ABC for Health was included on the [PBS Newshour piece](#)

sent to Gov. Walker, urging the administration to save the critically important program to help Wisconsin families.

Save BadgerCare Coalition in the News:

- [Blog--Fight is on to Save Medicaid Program in Wisconsin \(Dan Peterson, Jan. 12, 2011\)](#)
- [Wisconsin gets \\$23.1 million bonus for BadgerCare Plus enrollment \(Milwaukee Journal Sentinel—Dec. 27, 2010\)](#)
- [In Wisconsin, Political Battle Brewing Over Shaping Health Reform Law \(PBS NewsHour—Dec. 27, 2010\)](#)
- [Editorial: Take extra care with BadgerCare cuts \(Racine Journal Times—Dec. 26, 2010\)](#)
- [Editorial—Rosemary Gall: Focus on health care delivery, transportation \(Wisconsin State Journal—Dec. 19, 2010\)](#)

Digging Into Health Reform: The Latest on Accountable Care Organizations

The new health law calls for the creation of Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs)—networks of doctors, hospitals, and insurers—to coordinate care for Medicaid patients. But these parties don't always see eye to eye on how to best achieve the overall goal of *improving* quality of care without driving up costs. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) will award bonuses to healthcare providers for keeping costs down and meeting specific quality control measures—especially when their patients are kept healthy and out of the hospital. But how is the quality of care judged or payments and bonuses determined, especially if a patient seeks care outside his ACO network? Health insurers believe that ACOs should be held financially accountable to all care provided - in or out of network, desiring stricter rules on savings incentives in order to prevent healthcare providers having control over the market. CMS, the regulator of this project is creating a broad spectrum of rules in designing the program; if too much leniency is given to one side or the other, we may lose focus on the real purpose of these programs. [Click Here](#) for more information.

HealthWatch Membership News:

HealthWatch Recognizes Tom Horst for Service on the Executive Committee!

After two years on the HealthWatch Wisconsin Council and Executive Committee, Tom Horst is retiring! HealthWatch Wisconsin thanks Tom for his support, insight, and leadership in HealthWatch activities over the years and wishes him well in his future endeavors. HealthWatch Wisconsin will be presenting Tom with a plaque commemorating his service. If you would like to include a personal message to Tom with this presentation, please [e-mail your comments](#) to the Update staff.

from December 27 and in an article for *The Wall Street Journal* titled "[Jobless Rate Masks Depth of Labor Woes](#)," which explores the plight of unemployed people who lose valuable health insurance.

Updates from DHS

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

[BadgerCare Plus Handbook](#) version 10-05; Listed [changes](#) (Effective December 16)

[Access Handbook](#) version 10-05; Listed [changes](#) (Effective November 8)

[Medicaid Eligibility Handbook](#), version 10-04; Listed [changes](#) (Effective December 7)

Operations Memos

[Ops Memo 10-87](#)
Administering Shares Authorizations During License Revocation or Suspension Actions (Released December 23)

[Ops Memo 10-85](#) No Child Care Eligibility for Transitional Jobs (Released December 23)

[Ops Memo 10-88](#) CARES Modifications and W-2 Policy Notification for the Transitional Jobs Demonstration Project (Released December 21)

[Ops Memo 11-02](#) Postponing the FoodShare Interview for Expedited Benefits (Released January 14)

[Ops Memo 11-01](#) Notice of Missed Interview Requirements for FoodShare Households (released January 14)

With Tom stepping down, there is an **OPEN SEAT** on the HealthWatch Wisconsin Council. HealthWatch Wisconsin will be accepting nominations until the Annual Conference in March. Please e-mail [Brynne](#) at ABC for Health if you would like to nominate someone to the HealthWatch Wisconsin Council.

NEW: Join HealthWatch in a new Category of HealthWatch-Subscriber Level

Interested in HealthWatch Wisconsin but unable to officially join as an individual or organizational member? As of January 15, individuals or agencies can now receive the benefits of HealthWatch Wisconsin: free publications, timely trainings and other useful resources for a yearly **subscription fee** without signing on as a "member." If you are interested in learning more, contact the [HealthWatch Wisconsin Staff](#) or call: (608)261-6939 ext. 204.

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 included if you have questions on a story or would like to follow up with the Coalition directly.

Eau Claire County HealthWatch met on Jan. 6, and Carey Olsen from Marshfield Clinic's Patient Assistance came to give an update on the Community Care financial assistance program, as well as the other support that Marshfield Clinic provides with BadgerCare Plus and SSI applications. In order to qualify for Community Care, all other resources must have been exhausted, but Marshfield Clinic will make additional referrals. For more information on Eau Claire's Coalition, please contact [Pat Perkins](#).

Dane County HealthWatch met Monday, Jan. 10 for the first time in 2011. Sara Finger, executive director of the Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health, came to discuss the new "Save BadgerCare Coalition," for which she serves as chair-person. The [sign-up form](#) for Save BadgerCare can be shared broadly. Allison Espeseth and Nancy Kuehn also presented on their Madison Metro School District project and solicited feedback on outreach through the schools. For more information on the meeting or on Dane County's Coalition, please contact [Adam VanSpankeren](#).

Chippewa County HealthWatch met Tuesday, Jan. 11 at the Chippewa County Courthouse. Krista Adler and Melissa Christopherson of Children with Differing Abilities (CWDA) presented a resources guide developed for the Chippewa County area. They also discussed the Western Regional Center's intake process for children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN) and collaborative efforts with the CWDA. If you have any questions or would like more information on Chippewa County's Coalition, please contact

FOODSHARE HELPLINE:

SecondHarvest runs a helpline for FoodShare: **877-FOOD-635 (877-366-3635)**. The helpline's services, provided via trained volunteers, include: pre-screening for FoodShare benefits using the "Am I Eligible?" section of the ACCESS tool, referral to sites and/or schedule appointments for clients to receive personalized FoodShare application assistance Second Harvest's outreach specialists and answers to general FoodShare program questions, such as locations where FoodShare benefits can be used and which foods are eligible for benefits. [Click here](#) for newly released FoodShare Facts.

Work or Volunteer at ABC for Health!

We're Hiring: ABC for Health, Inc. is seeking an interested and dedicated individual to fulfill the duties of a part time (approx 0.60 FTE) **Parent Advocate**. For more details, please [click here](#) for the Full Position Announcement.

Internships: [ABC for Health](#) is seeking legal interns for Spring 2011! 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 for the BadgerCare Plus Core Plan:

Rose Marsh.

Milwaukee County HealthWatch met Wednesday, Jan. 12. Connor Sperry and Masiel Gómez (Wisconsin DHS) were on hand to give updates on Medical Assistance programs and MiES. In addition, David Riemer, director of the Community Advocates Public Policy Institute, joined the group to present information on the "Save BadgerCare Coalition" and answer questions. For more information on the Milwaukee's Coalition, please contact [Nora Foshager](#).

Case Tip: Start Date for Core Plan Wait List Bypass

The recent changes to the BadgerCare Plus Core Plan Wait List, which allow individuals with cancer diagnoses and other listed medical conditions to enroll in the BadgerCare Plus Basic Plan, bypass the wait list, and transition to Core Plan, poses new questions. How quickly is the turnaround from Basic to Core? The general rule for someone applying for Basic with the intention of submitting a bypass form to become eligible for the Core Plan is this: **That individual must wait until her Basic coverage begins before she can apply for Core.**

Consider this Example: John is on the Core Plan Waitlist and submitted his \$130 premium to enroll in the Basic Plan on November 17th. His enrollment in the Basic Plan will begin January 1st. On December 14th, his physician submits the Core Plan Medical Bypass form to the Enrollment Service Center. Since John's Basic Plan enrollment will not begin until January 1st, he is not allowed to apply for the Core Plan until January 1st. John applies for the Core Plan on January 5th and is determined eligible; his Core Plan enrollment date will be January 15th.

If someone is already on BadgerCare Plus Basic, however, then he can apply for the Core Plan as soon as he gets his bypass form turned in. The Core Plan coverage will then begin on the next "1st" or "15th" of the month.

■ CKSN Corner ■ Covering Kids with Special Needs



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

[Core Plan Publications Page](#)

[ForwardHealth Enrollment and Benefits Booklet](#)

[BadgerCare Plus Policy Handbook \(Core Plan is Ch. 43\)](#)

BadgerCare Plus Core Plan 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.)

Previous Newsletter Volumes:

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

HealthWatch WatchDog Archive:

Miss a WatchDog Episode?
[View our Online Video Library](#)

On-Demand Training!

Visit HealthWatch Wisconsin's [On Demand Training Portal!](#)

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

Mark Your Calendars Now

Check Out These Excellent Events in 2011!

- **February 3:** "In Our Own Words: Highlighting Self-Advocacy." 8:00am-2:00pm. Pyle Center, Madison. Video Conference Sites at the following locations: Pyle Center-Madison, CESA #1-Pewaukee, CESA #7-Green Bay, CESA #10-Chippewa Falls, Phillips Price County Human Services-Phillips, Marathon County UW Extension-Wausau. Free, [registration required](#) or call Tim at 608-261-6879.
- **February 4:** "Perspectives of African American Foster Parents." 9:00-11:00am. Biotechnology Center, UW Madison. Sponsored by the RRSCC and the School of Social Work. CEUs available. Refreshments provided.
- **February 15:** Reforming Our Health Care System: "We're Not Done Yet, Ethically." 6:30 p.m. Stayer Center Auditorium, Fond Du Lac. [Click for more information.](#)
- **February 16-18:** Eighth Annual Wisconsin Transition Conference. Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells. The conference is for all people working with and supporting youth with disabilities as they transition from high school to adult life. Early bird registration (through Dec. 23) is \$250 for the general conference (Feb. 17-18) or \$75 for the preconference on Feb. 16; after Dec. 23, registration is \$300 for the general conference and \$100 for the preconference. For more information, [click here.](#)
- **April 28-29:** Circles of Life 2011. Hyatt Regency, Milwaukee. State's largest conference for families of children with disabilities and special health care needs. For more information, [click here.](#)

We're Hiring: ABC for Health, Inc. is seeking an interested and dedicated individual to fulfill the duties of a part time (approx 0.60 FTE) Parent Advocate. For more details, please [click here](#) for the Full Position Announcement.

NEWS: Health Care in Wisconsin

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

- [Wisconsin Assembly Speaker Jeff Fitzgerald says the IRS has to add 15,000 employees to administer the new health care law - for PolitiFact Wisconsin, January 14](#)
- [State should ration health care, doctor association purposes - by David Wahlberg for the Wisconsin State Journal, January 9](#)
- [Vital Signs: Republican states echo Wisconsin health director's support for ditching Medicaid - by Shawn Doherty for The Cap Times, January 8](#)

For the rest of Health Care in Wisconsin News, please [click](#)

more, watch the new video filmed by ABC for Health on Lifeline and Link-Up services. Please [click here](#) to view the video.

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](#)

[Katie Foran-McHale](#)

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



(608) 261-6939
info@safetyweb.org

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

[here!](#)

NEWS: Health Care Reform

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

- [Will Arizona Shooting Impact Healthcare Repeal in House? - by Raven Clabough for The New American, January 12](#)
- [Repeal Of Healthcare Reform Could Prove Dire For Small Businesses - for Resources for Entrepreneurs, January 12](#)
- [Health Care Reform Contains Major Expansion Of Access To Mental Health Services - by Amanda Terkel for The Huffington Post, January 12](#)

For the rest of Health Care Reform News, please [click here!](#)

NEWS: Opinion

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

- [Editorial: Rationing Care a Sensible Idea - by the Racine Journal Times, January 17](#)
- [Opinion: A five-step plan to fix finances - by David Riemer of Community Advocates for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, January 15](#)
- [Op-Ed: Everyone in Wisconsin needs to work together to fix Medicaid - by Dr. Thomas Luetzow of the Wisconsin Medical Society, January 14](#)

For more Op-Ed articles, please [click here!](#)

NEWS: Health Care Costs and Access

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

- [Some States Have Options To Help Consumers Find Individual Health Coverage - by Michelle Andrews for Kaiser Health News, January 11](#)
- [Will government health insurance erase disparities? - by Lynne Peeples for Reuters, January 7](#)
- [Blue Shield of California seeks rate hikes of as much as 59% for individuals - by Duke Helfand for the Los Angeles Times, January 5](#)

For more Health Care Costs and Access News, please [click here!](#)

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