



WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF
HEALTH UNDERWRITERS

Wisconsin's Benefit Specialists

Table of Contents

[WAHU's Important "Day on the Hill" in Madison](#)

[Introduction to WAHU's New Legislative Committee Chair, John Ulness](#)

[Wisconsin HSA Tax Deductibility Legislation Passes Both Houses](#)

[U.S. House of Representatives Votes to Repeal Health Care Law](#)

[Say "Thanks" to Wisconsin Congressman Petri!](#)

[Update on Wisconsin's Approach to Health Insurance Exchanges](#)

[Wisconsin Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen Joins the Legal Challenge to ObamaCare](#)

[A Comprehensive Independent Audit of Wisconsin's \\$6 Billion Medicaid Program is Authorized](#)

[Improving Health Care Outcomes in Wisconsin by Better Peer Review and Quality Improvement Initiatives by Providers](#)

[Background Information about the New Republican Chair of the Insurance Committee in Each House of the Wisconsin Legislature](#)

[Where are they now? Former Wisconsin Medicaid Director Jason Helgeson and also Former Governor Jim Doyle](#)

[Feedback Opportunity](#)

WAHU's Important "Day on the Hill" in Madison

Reminder: WAHU's important "Day on the Hill" in Madison is set for Wednesday March 2nd. This is a **critical** opportunity for you to get briefed on key issues and then to share your views and expertise with your State Representative and State Senator.

There are 38 freshmen legislators who need to be educated on health insurance issues and the essential role of agents. Put it on your calendar now! Look for more details and online registration soon on the WAHU website www.ewahu.org.

Want even more health-insurance related e-updates from WAHU? Just send an e-mail to amanda@ewahu.org and we will add you to our almost **daily** WAHU health

insurance policy update group. The information will keep you on top of issues, to benefit your business and the clients you serve!

John Ulness
WAHU Legislative Chair
UlnessHealth Insurance & Wellness
john@ulnesshealth.com
office 920-735-2852
fax 920-735-9771
214 North Superior Street
Appleton, WI 54911

Tony Driessen
WAHU Lead Lobbyist
DeWitt Ross & Stevens S.C.
ahd@dewittross.com
office 608-252-9387
cell 414-881-6129
2 E. Mifflin St. Suite 600
Madison, WI 53703

[Back to Top](#)

Introduction to WAHU's New Legislative Committee Chair, John Ulness

When WAHU President Bill Enright asked me to be the State Legislative Committee Chair, he stated his first goal was to involve all members. Consider yourself engaged!

All WAHU members and many new members are needed to effectively reform health care. Just as elections matter, your voice is even more important as we work to impact future health reform legislation.

In 2011, there will be many opportunities that require your participation to bring solutions to health care, health insurance and budget deficits.

In this edition of WAHU health policy updates you have 3 opportunities to be heard.

- 1) Send a "Thank You" to Cong. Tom Petri for his words of clarity. If all 465 WAHU members send Tom a note, he will remember us and know that we offer our resources and support as important bills move through Congress.
http://petri.house.gov/apps/list/press/wi06_petri/HCrepeal_1_2011.shtml

<http://www.postcrescent.com/article/20110119/APC0101/101190640/Health-care-battle-heats-up>

- 2) Take this information to the people you come in contact with to help clarify last week's headlines that health care repeal based would cost \$230 Billion.

\$410 Billion in new taxes and fees + \$500 Billion in Medicare cuts = \$910 Billion

minus

PPACA spends \$780 Billion

PPACA Repeal Costs: \$230 Billion

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704739504576068064133862774.html?KEYWORDS=Betsy+McCaughey>

- 3) Call your Chapter President to tell them your interest in being involved. There are many opportunities, including being part of the Legislative Committee.

Board Member & FV President

Paulette Ruminski
(920) 946-4307
pauletteruminski@wi.rr.com

Board Member & NC President

Chris Dvorack
715-834-2786
cdvoracek@areafs.com

Board Member & SC President

Rich Birrenkott
608-288-1800x1701
rbirrenkott@tricolorinsurance.com

Board Member & SE President

Todd Catlin
(262) 785-1221
todd@hsawi.com

John Ulness
WAHU Legislative Chair
UlnessHealth Insurance & Wellness
john@ulnesshealth.com
office 920.735.2852
fax 920.735.9771
214 North Superior Street
Appleton, WI 54911

[Back to Top](#)

Wisconsin HSA Tax Deductibility Legislation Passes Both Houses

We are very pleased to report that both houses of the Wisconsin legislature have now passed legislation that provides an income tax deduction (the same as the federal deduction) for Health Savings Accounts. The bill now goes to Governor Walker's desk. He is certain to sign it, as he called the Wisconsin legislature into Special Session to pass the bill. (Our previous Governor vetoed it more than once.)

As passed, the Wisconsin HAS law will allow Wisconsin taxpayers to keep **\$49.2 million** of their own money over the next two years. The law will be effective retroactive to **January 1, 2011**.

[Back to Top](#)

U.S. House of Representatives Votes to Repeal Health Care Law

On a highly partisan vote, the Republican-controlled U.S. House of Representatives voted 245-189 to repeal the recently-enacted federal health care reform law. The Democratic-controlled U.S. Senate is not expected to take up the proposal. The real battle to follow will be on providing the money to carry out the new law. The approval of both houses is needed to provide the funds to implement the new law.

[Back to Top](#)

Say "Thanks" to Wisconsin Congressman Petri!

In the midst of the debate about repealing the federal health care law, Wisconsin **Congressman Tom Petri** (Repub – Oshkosh) hit the nail on the head when he spoke about why it was critical for House Republicans to vote on repealing the law, even though the Senate may not act and that President Obama would veto any repeal bill that reached his desk.

Congressman Petri said:

“It is important for the House majority to state its position in the clearest possible terms to encourage a general re-evaluation of the new law. We can better ensure access to coverage through reforms which reward high-quality, low-cost medical services instead of simply giving government more control over our health care.”

Please contact Congressman Petri’s office in Wisconsin (920-231-6333) or in Washington D.C. (202-225-2476) and express your thanks to him for speaking up on the federal health insurance debate! Also let us know about others who offer a clear vision that we can rally behind!

[Back to Top](#)

Update on Wisconsin's Approach to Health Insurance Exchanges

Our new Governor, Scott Walker, and his key health policy advisors, are now in the process of taking a fresh look at Wisconsin’s approach to health insurance exchanges. Recall that if a state does not have its exchange(s) up and running by 2014, the federal government will step in and impose their approach.

The role for and appropriate compensation of health agents in Wisconsin’s exchange(s) has yet to be determined. You may be assured this is among the **highest priority** of issues for WAHU! We have already been assured that we will have a “seat at the table” as alternative exchange approaches are considered.

[Back to Top](#)

Wisconsin Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen Joins the Legal Challenge to ObamaCare

Twenty-six states, now including Wisconsin, have joined the federal lawsuit in Florida that challenges the constitutionality of the recently-enacted federal health care law, PPACA. The approval of Wisconsin’s Governor was necessary in order for the Attorney

General to ask to be added to the lawsuit. Our previous Governor had denied the Attorney General the approval to be involved.

The constitutional challenge has two parts to it:

1. The "individual mandate". It requires by 2014 that U.S. residents must purchase government-approved insurance or pay a penalty.
2. The new law converts the state-based Medicaid program into a federally-imposed healthcare regime.

Wisconsin and other states are asking the court to declare the federal law unconstitutional and to prevent enforcement of the law.

There are other legal challenges pending. The Florida case is considered the leading case.

Many observers believe the issues will ultimately be presented to the U.S. Supreme Court.

[Back to Top](#)

A Comprehensive Independent Audit of Wisconsin's \$6 Billion Medicaid Program is Authorized

The Audit Committee of the Wisconsin legislature has authorized a comprehensive and independent audit of Wisconsin's \$6 billion Medicaid program. The program faces a \$1 billion deficit and is regarded by many as not sustainable in its current form.

The new head of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Dennis Smith, has a background with the fiscally-conservative Heritage Foundation. He definitely did not come to Wisconsin to maintain the status quo in Wisconsin's Medicaid program. He also is an invited speaker to the WAHU March 2nd "Day on the Hill" in Madison. Plan now to attend it!

[Back to Top](#)

Improving Health Care Outcomes in Wisconsin by Better Peer Review and Quality improvement Initiatives by Providers

Under current Wisconsin law, a health care provider or hospital is discouraged from reviewing adverse medical outcomes. Plaintiff trial lawyers can gain access to peer-review records and use those records against the health care provider in a medical malpractice lawsuit.

Governor Walker and Republican legislative leaders are now advancing important legislation to address this problem and to improve the quality of health care delivered in Wisconsin. The legislation is on a "fast-track" and should pass both houses within the next several days.

[Back to Top](#)

Background Information about the New Republican Chair of the Insurance Committee in Each House of the Wisconsin Legislature

In the Wisconsin State Assembly, the new Chair of the Insurance Committee is **Rep. Kevin Petersen** (Republican – Waupaca). Rep. Petersen is a small business owner who specializes in the installation and repair of electronic equipment in businesses and homes. He has a degree in mechanical engineering and is a military veteran.

In the State Senate, the new Chair of the Senate Insurance Committee is **Sen. Frank Lasee** (Republican – De Pere). Sen. Lasee previously served in the State Assembly from 1994 through 2008. He has been active in local government and has held a variety of positions in the private sector, including working for a Green Bay based insurance company. Senator Lasee is a strong advocate of lower taxes, less government spending and helping businesses create jobs.

[Back to Top](#)

Where are they now? Former Wisconsin Medicaid Director Jason Helgerson and also Former Governor Jim Doyle

Jason Helgerson, the architect of former Governor Doyle's government-based approach to insurance exchanges and health care coverage, has become the Director of the Medicaid Program in New York. If you have health insurance agent friends in New York State, you might share with them your views about his preferred approach to health insurance reforms.

Former Wisconsin Governor **Jim Doyle** has joined the law firm of Foley & Lardner. Among his intended area of focus is health care reform.

[Back to Top](#)

Feedback Opportunity

WAHU welcomes feedback about upcoming public policy issues and what you think our priorities should be (both affirmative and defensive). Please provide us your constructive feedback about how we can best serve you. Direct your ideas to WAHU Legislative Chair John Ulness at john@ulnesshealth.com, 920-735-2852 or 214 North Superior Street, Appleton, WI 54911.

[Back to Top](#)