



Top Stories

Tax Credits Proposed for Emergency Volunteer Personnel

A bill under consideration at the state capitol would give tax credits to volunteer fire fighters, emergency medical responders, and emergency medical services practitioners. One credit would compensate volunteers for time spent on duty, in training exercises, and completing coursework. Another credit would compensate volunteers for expenses. The tax credits are nonrefundable, which means they can only be applied if an individual owes money in taxes. Read the text of **SB 135/AB 142**. Another **proposal** that was circulated earlier this month proposed *refundable* tax credits based on years of volunteer firefighter, EMS or EMR service, but has not been introduced.



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To Invalidate, or Strengthen, the Affordable Care Act?

In the latest in an ongoing case over the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act, the Justice Department informed the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals on Monday that it believes the **entire ACA should be invalidated**. In response, House Democratic leaders have **introduced legislation** they say will *strengthen* the Affordable Care Act.



Michael Havens on flickr

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States, Including Wisconsin, Push for Caregiver Tax Credit

The price of paying for caregivers isn't cheap: a **2016 study by AARP** found that the average caregiver spends \$6,954 a year on out-of-pocket costs caring for a family member. State policymakers across the nation are pushing for caregiver tax credits, **reports Kaiser Health News**. That's including in Wisconsin, where a **bill** would create a nonrefundable individual income tax credit for

caregiving expenses.



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More News

- Health officials say **the flu season could hang around** through the end of April.
- This week saw a flurry of action over lawsuits from last December's lame-duck extraordinary legislative session, with implications for a variety of state health programs and policies. More movement is sure to come, but **read the latest**.
- A new study finds that adults who are eligible to be on cholesterol-lowering medications are often **not on the drugs** because their physicians did not offer it as an option.
- Safety researchers are calling for medical device makers to be more transparent about **reporting malfunctions and injuries** from medical devices.
- Purdue Pharma has **agreed to pay a \$270 million settlement to Oklahoma** for its role in the opioid epidemic. It and other pharmaceutical companies still face a consolidated bundle of lawsuits in front of an Ohio judge.
- The Trump administration's 2020 budget would **cut federal spending** on Medicare and Medicaid.
- A federal judge has **blocked Medicaid work requirements** in Kentucky and Arkansas.

Funding & Opportunities

- An **award from the Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative** recognizes hospital employees who have gone above the call of duty. (Deadline: April 1st)
- Funding for projects that work to improve **livability in a community**. (Deadline: April 17th)
- Funding to support the planning and implementation of **new graduate medical education programs in rural hospitals**. (Deadline: April 18th)
- A grant to **expand clinical training opportunities** for Physician Assistants and Advanced Practice Nurse Practitioners in rural Wisconsin. (Deadline: April 26th)
- Training grants to **expand education and training programs** for high-need, high-

demand occupations, targeting small communities and occupations with shortages. (Deadline: April 26th)

- Grants to institutions of higher education and health professional training programs to **train behavioral health professionals** on prevention, treatment, and recovery services for substance use disorders. (Deadline: May 7th)
- Grants to Native American tribal organizations and governments for initiatives that **expand good health and wellness in Indian Country**. (Deadline: May 15th)
- Grants for health networks in a pilot program to develop sustainable approaches to **coordinating maternal and obstetrics care within a rural region**. (Deadline: May 24th)

Events

- March 28th: An **Ambulance Open Door Forum** from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.
- March 29th: A **webinar** explores payment methodologies for retail and physician-administered drugs (2pm).
- April 2-3: The **Wisconsin Health Literacy Summit** will be held in Madison.
- April 3: A **webinar** explores complex care among Medicaid beneficiaries with substance use disorders.
- April 10th: Wisconsin EMS Day at the Capitol. **Register here!**
- Various: Budget season means legislators are holding public listening sessions, and **there may be one in your area**.



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Wisconsin Office of Rural Health