

# TAKING THE *PULSE*

How Quality Healthcare  
Builds a Better Bottom Line



Wisconsin  
Technology  
Council

*A Wisconsin Technology Council report on the competitive advantage of quality healthcare*

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# KEY FINDINGS

The logjam in Washington, D.C., over federal health-care policy might lead some people to fear the “Obamacare” stalemate threatens to stifle health-care innovation from top to bottom.

Not so. At least, not in Wisconsin.

Efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare, are emblematic of deep political divisions over how best to provide health-care coverage to millions of Americans. That debate is not standing in the way of Wisconsin hospitals, medical professionals, insurers, entrepreneurs, researchers and others from embracing better, more efficient – even novel – ways to care for patients.

Examples abound of how quality health-care is not only a marketable Wisconsin brand – it’s a tangible asset in the race to attract and retain companies and workers.

Just as talent, labor costs, infrastructure, taxes, land and other natural resources are among the assets states such as Wisconsin can promote in the national and global competition for economic growth, so is quality health care.

In this report by the Wisconsin Technology Council, we offer examples of how health-care systems, employers and workers are working together to improve quality care while controlling and even reducing costs for all concerned.

We also offer recommendations for how Wisconsin can use and promote this asset as an economic development tool.

Here are some key findings, many of which are contained in charts and graphs compiled through Tech Council research or in narrative “case studies” highlighting examples of innovation across Wisconsin.

- Wisconsin is consistently one of the top states for quality health care, as measured by 200 metrics compiled by the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. It ranked No. 1 in the nation in 2017. In the seven-state region surrounding or within a day’s drive of Wisconsin, only two other states (Iowa and Minnesota) ranked in the top quartile. Wisconsin has ranked no lower than 7th nationally since 2006.
- Wisconsin ranked just \$3 above the national median (\$4,666 versus \$4,663) in the average employer share of single premium health insurance in 2015. That placed the state in the second-lowest cost quartile among the 50 states. Wisconsin was \$800 above the national median (\$13,187 versus \$12,387) in the average employer share of family premium health insurance for the same year, still well outside the most expensive quartile.
- Wisconsin health insurance premiums are growing slower than other states in the seven-state region and the nation, especially since 2010. For single coverage, the cost increase has averaged 2.2 percent per year versus 3.8 percent nationally. Wisconsin ranked second best in the nation in this category. For family coverage, the cost increase has averaged 4 percent versus 4.5 percent nationally. Wisconsin is tied for 10th nationally in controlling the growth in family coverage premiums since 2010.
- The slowing rate of growth in health insurance premiums correlates with a related study by the Greater Milwaukee Business Foundation on Health, which reported in December 2016 that actual hospital bills in southeast Wisconsin paid by commercial insurers increased at one-half the national rate between 2003 and 2015. The study was conducted by the consulting firm Milliman as part of the foundation’s ongoing tracking of southeast Wisconsin health-care costs, efficiency and quality. <http://www.gmbfh.org/documents/161214HospitalpaymentLevelsGMBFHFHFINAL.pdf>.
- In the seven-state regional comparison of mortality amenable to health care, Wisconsin showed the second-best rate of deaths per 100,000 population and was well below the U.S. median. This metric measures certain causes of death before age 75 – such as asthma and diabetes – that are potentially preventable with timely and effective health care.
- In the seven-state region comparison of Medicare 30-day hospital readmissions, Wisconsin ranked second over two years for which data is available and well below the U.S. median.



*Today, more than 70 percent of Organic Valley employees participate in the wellness program, and the company has an on-site gym, an employee garden, a walking path and bikes to rent for lunchtime rides. (See page 12)*

## KEY FINDINGS (CONT.)

- In the seven-state region comparison of hospital length of stay, Wisconsin ranked second best over a four-year span. Longer stays usually equate to higher costs. Readmissions are costly and sometimes reflective of poor care.
- In the seven-state region comparison of mean inpatient charges, Wisconsin ranked third-best over a four-year span.
- Wisconsin is tied for 17th among the 50 states in the percentage of the total population covered by health insurance. Total coverage stands at 93 percent; the U.S. median is 92 percent.
- Wisconsin is one of two states in which the three largest insurers control less than 60 percent of the market. Wisconsin's three largest insurers account for 46 percent of the market. Other states in the region show "top three" market shares ranging from 67 percent to 97 percent. The U.S. median is 90 percent.
- Wisconsin ranks among the best states for the use of electronic health records, according to the Office of the Coordinator of Health Information Technology. The office reports 92 percent of office-based doctors in Wisconsin have adopted EHR technology versus 60 percent nationwide. The use of electronic health records has been tied to health quality and cost management by researchers.
- Wisconsin's Worker Compensation costs rank above the U.S. average. The average cost of WC insurance per \$100 of payroll in Wisconsin was \$1.77 in 2012, according to the National Academy of Social Insurance. The state ranked 12th highest among the 50 states over a four-year span. Learn more here: [https://www.nasi.org/sites/default/files/research/NASI\\_Work\\_Comp\\_Year\\_2014.pdf](https://www.nasi.org/sites/default/files/research/NASI_Work_Comp_Year_2014.pdf). A separate ranking by the Insurance Journal noted Wisconsin's WC premium rate had dropped to 23rd among the 50 states by 2014. Learn more here: <http://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2014/10/09/343201.htm>.

As the case studies suggest, individual companies, groups of companies or institutions have found ways to work with health systems. This is often accomplished through on-site clinics, incentive programs and prevention strategies that engage employees. Results include lower absenteeism and presenteeism rates; avoiding procedure costs through preventive care; and lower costs of care due to better physical fitness and health habits.

Examples cited in this report include Mayo Clinic and partners that include the UW-Eau Claire; Colony Brands and Monroe Clinic; Ashley Furniture and Gundersen Health System; Hoffmaster and Thedacare; Organic Valley and Vernon Memorial Healthcare; Northeast Wisconsin Technical College and Bellin Health; and a collection of companies working with Columbus Community Hospital.

In a state that ranks among the leaders in health-care research and clinical studies, the opportunity to connect leading-edge technology with patients cannot be overlooked.

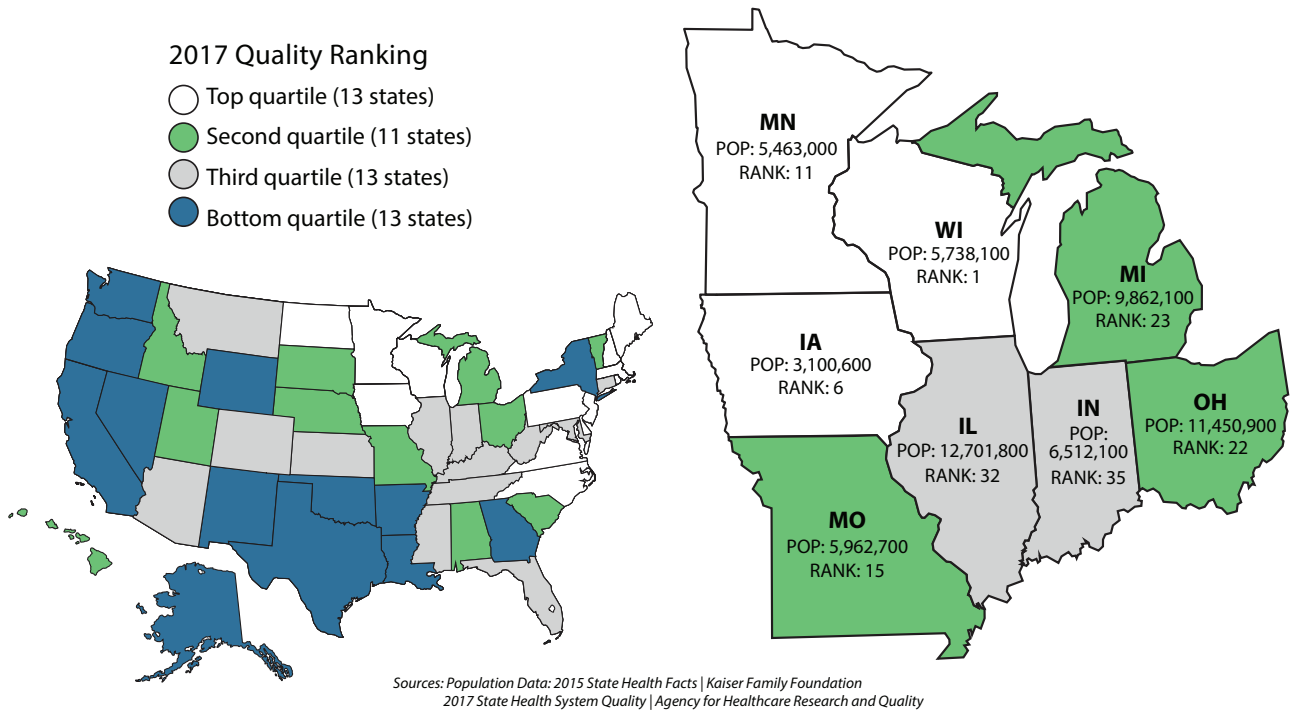
One example involves WEA Trust, a health insurance carrier for many public employees, and Kiio, a young company with a novel patient engagement platform.

WEA Trust has invested \$1 million in Madison-based Kiio to further develop its platform for involving patients in their own care through mobile technology and evidence-based treatment that can prevent more expensive care while yielding better results.

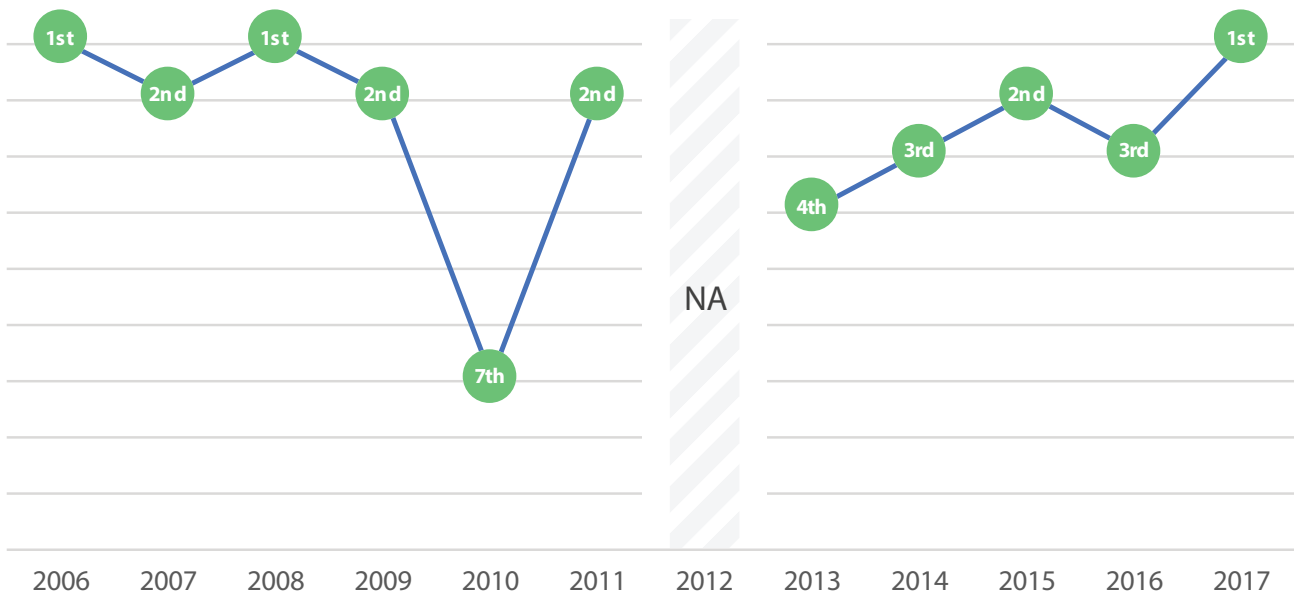
The insurance company will be more than a passive investor; it will become a customer for Kiio as it expands its platform from conditions such as lower back pain, joint replacement and physical rehabilitation to other protocols.

These examples and many more speak to an undeniable fact: Health care is moving from a bricks-and-mortar model that assumes all care takes place within a clinic or hospital to a future in which patients can get care where they work, at home or anywhere technology allows them to take an on-demand role in their own health.

## State Health System Quality



## Wisconsin Health System Quality Historic Rankings



Source: State Health System Quality | Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality



# PARTNERING TO SAVE COSTS, IMPROVE HEALTH

## COLONY BRANDS AND MONROE CLINIC

ONE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN COLONY BRANDS and Monroe Clinic is helping keep health care costs under control at a time when companies and employees are paying more each year to get medical services and treatment.

Colony Brands' Health and Wellness Centers are run in partnership with Monroe Clinic, with one location in Monroe and one in Clinton, Iowa. At these clinics, employees can get on-site health risk assessments for things like body fat, nicotine use, cholesterol, blood sugar and other metrics.

**“Neither of us had experience with onsite care before, but we’ve been able to get good results....”** *—Tim Wolff*

All employees on the company's health plan can get checked out by Monroe Clinic doctors, and so can their spouses and children over two years old.

There's also a corporate fitness program, a weight loss program and a tobacco cessation program in which employees can get paid to follow program guidelines. A Biggest Loser-type program in the spring rewards participants for losing 5 percent of their starting weight, and a “Road Map to Wellness” incentivizes physical activity by counting steps.

These incentives could take the form of cash, premium reductions or gift certificates for certain Colony Brands products. This model just wrapped up its sixth year, and Tim Wolff, vice president of human resources at Colony Brands, says the results have been remarkable.

“We’re definitely seeing cost reductions,” he said. “Looking at the population which has access to Health and Wellness Centers, we’re keeping increases low, less than standard -- it’s working.”

He says the key is to have the health programs and Health and Wellness Centers integrated together, so that people accessing the centers are being pushed toward these healthy activities.

Colony Brands has targeted and maintained a below-3.75 percent trend in escalating health care costs in most of the six years the program has been running, Wolff said, adding that this is “below what is standard in the market.”

“The goal was to look at our trend, take the average trend for the past 10 years, and trying to cut that in half,” he said. “We’ve been successful at doing that.”

Wolff says the Health and Wellness Centers are the company's top-rated employee benefit. Visitors to the clinics fill out patient satisfaction surveys every time they go, and results have hovered between 99 and 100 percent since they opened.

He says it's viewed as a “tremendous benefit” based on comments left in those surveys, and that they indicate they are “very satisfied” with the care provided.

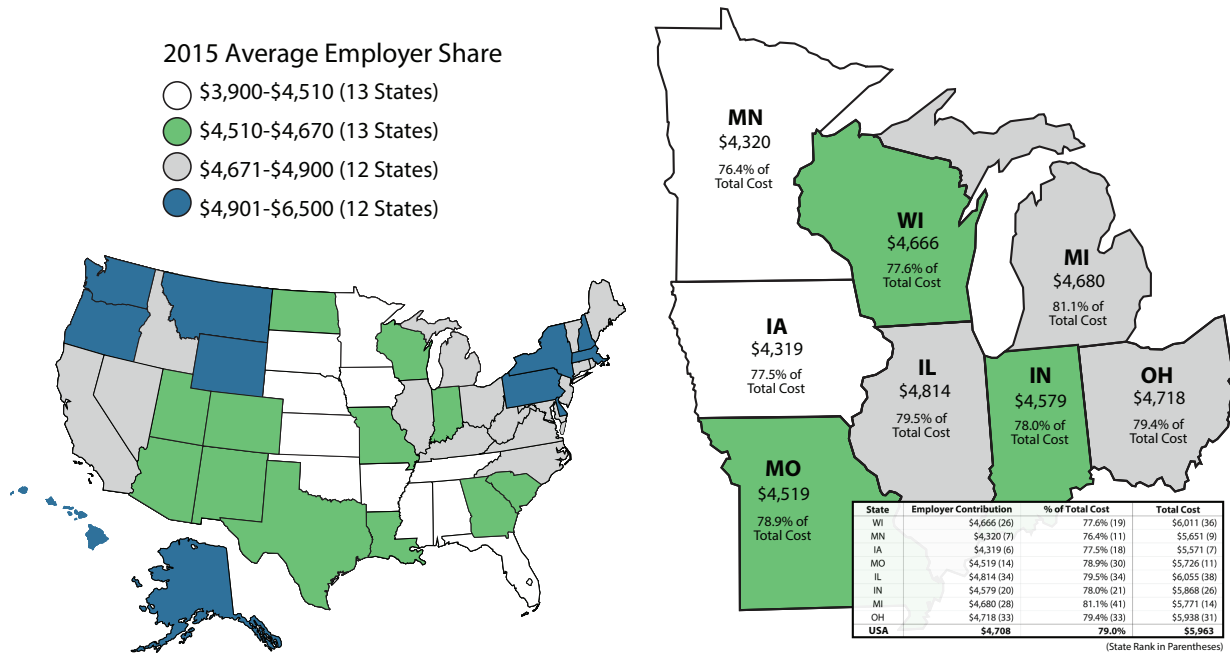
“Monroe has been a good partner,” Wolff said. “Neither of us had experience with onsite care before, but we’ve been able to get good results and focus results on wellness.”

He says the two organizations have mutual goals, not only to reduce costs, but really making a marked improvement in people's health.

“We want to see that the population is improving; we’ve been seeing that as well,” he added. “We know as people's health improves, we see cost reductions.”

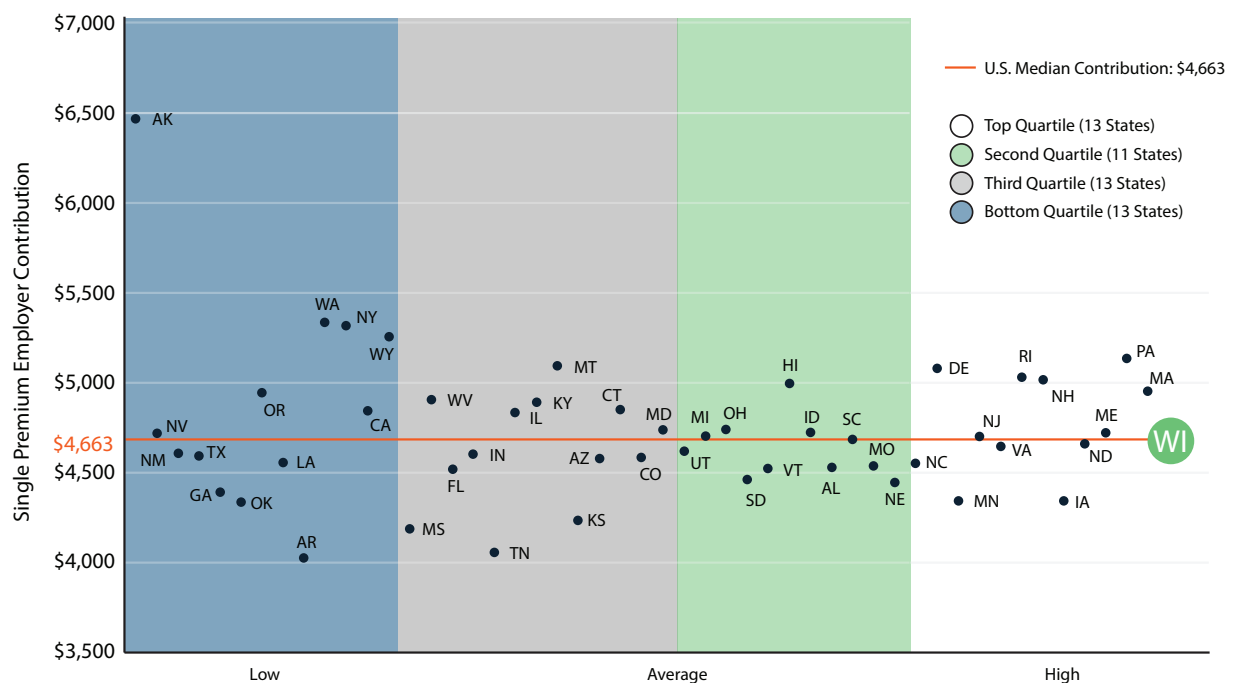


# Average Employer Share Of Single Premium Health Insurance



Source: 2015 Average Single Premium per Enrolled Employee for Employer-based Health Insurance | Kaiser Family Foundation

## Comparing States On Quality And Average Employer Share Of Single Premium Health Insurance



Sources: 2017 State Health System Quality | Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality  
2015 Average Single Premium per Enrolled Employee for Employer-based Health Insurance | Kaiser Family Foundation

# ON-SITE CLINIC USED OFTEN BY EMPLOYEES

## ASHLEY FURNITURE AND GUNDERSEN HEALTH SYSTEM

AN ON-SITE CLINIC AT ASHLEY FURNITURE'S headquarters in Arcadia is taking a unique approach to minimizing health care costs.

Gundersen Health System, an integrated health care organization serving counties in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa, has been running the Ashley Wellness Center for about nine years.

"The clinic has been very successful," said Chuck Johnson, on the regional operations team for Gundersen Health System.

He says many Ashley employees and their families go to the on-site center for most of their care, which can cover things like simple illness, injuries, treatment for hypertension, diabetes and high cholesterol, as well as work-related care. It has a full lab with X-ray capabilities, and massages are being added soon.

The clinic is open about 60 hours a week, and is run by a staff of 20. All full- or part-time Ashley employees can access its services, and so can family members on the Ashley insurance plan. Some services are free, but most require a \$10 co-pay.

"We see people coming in for care they wouldn't otherwise get," he said. "It works to the patients' advantage, but also to the company's advantage."

To set fees, Gundersen estimates the cost to provide services based on utilization estimates for operational expenses. This is used to establish a fixed service fee for running the clinic.

That means the busier the clinic is, the more the company saves on the care delivered.

"There's no question it reduces the cost of care for the patients we serve," Johnson said. "It's really about getting as many people as possible using it. As use goes up, the cost per unit of visit goes down... There are certainly financial benefits to having a worksite clinic, but they have to be utilized."

And utilized they were, Johnson said, as employees were quick to get onboard with the idea. That high early adoption rate led to several stages of expansion in the last few years, he added.

The clinic was recently relocated to a new facility which is larger than its previous space. It has more health care providers than when it started, more nurses, more physical therapists -- all with a goal of expanding services for Ashley employees.

"In pretty much every category, we have more staff," Johnson said.

Dr. Craig Bennett, a primary care physician, was brought on about three years ago. He performs prenatal and pediatric care at the clinic, which Johnson says brings "a whole new element to the service -- and it adds excitement for employees and clinic staff to see newborns coming in."

Brian Gilberts, media relations specialist for Gundersen, says the organization aims to expand on the clinic's offerings even more in the future, as doing so "lines up nicely" with Gundersen's strategic goals: providing a higher level of service and striving for lower cost of care, all while serving the community.

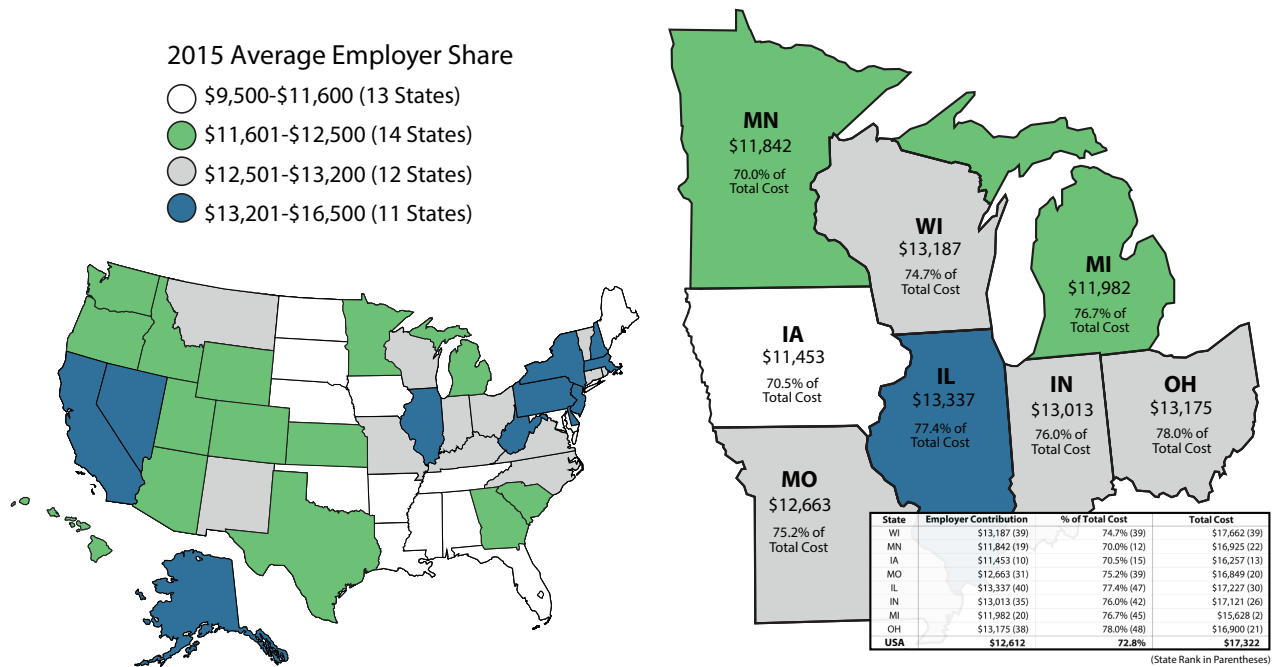
This program's success can at least partially be chalked up to locality, Johnson added, as much of Ashley's substantial workforce lives only a short drive from the clinic.

"We believe if the local system is committed to doing it well, and has the patients' best interests in mind, there's no way to do it better," he said.



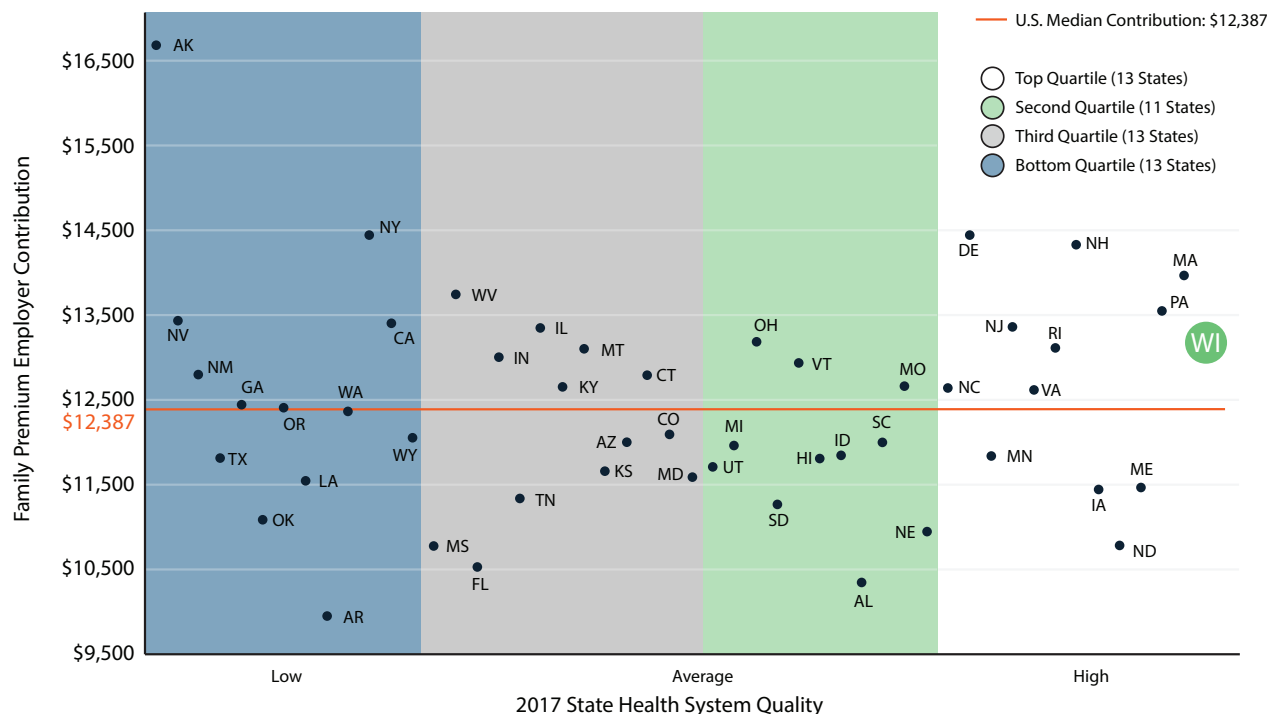


# Average Employer Share Of Family Premium Health Insurance



Source: 2015 Average Family Premium per Enrolled Employee for Employer-based Health Insurance | Kaiser Family Foundation

## Comparing States On Quality And Average Employer Share Of Family Premium Health Insurance



Sources: 2017 State Health System Quality | Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality  
2015 Average Family Premium per Enrolled Employee for Employer-based Health Insurance | Kaiser Family Foundation

# PARTNERSHIP CUTS WORKERS' COMP AND OSHA CLAIMS

## HOFFMASTER AND THEDACARE

TO FIND A GOOD EXAMPLE OF PROACTIVE wellness activities leading to lower organizational health care costs, look no further than ThedaCare At Work.

This occupational wellness program has been administered by ThedaCare to Hoffmaster Group Inc. -- an Oshkosh-based manufacturer of party goods like cups, plates, napkins and more -- since 2011.

The company's 1,000-or-so employees who work at its Clintonville and Oshkosh plants have access to personal health assessments, flu shots, on-site injury care, smoking cessation assistance and more. Workers can also take advantage of the employee assistance plan to get support on any number of issues, including stress in the workplace or at home.

**“The nurses have become trusted confidants for employees, a safe place to discuss a wide range of physical and mental or emotional wellness concerns.”** – Dave Vierthaler

“We do and have experienced great benefits from having occupational health on site, including a physical therapist who conducts ergonomics studies for workstations or employees with special concerns,” said Dave Vierthaler, vice president of human resources, quality, and environmental health and safety at Hoffmaster.

Patty DeGoey, head of corporate human resources for Hoffmaster, says she saw health care costs go down after both plants cut out smoking on-site in March 2015 and ThedaCare At Work supported employees' efforts to quit.

“And if a person gets sick or hurt on the job with something like a muscle pull or minor cut, our nurse can take care of him or her before considering the need to send someone to the hospital or clinic. We safely resolve a lot of concerns with professional care right here, in-plant,” DeGoey said.

And this has resulted in a “significant” decrease in workers' compensation claims and OSHA reportables.

Mary Beth Mazzocchi is a registered nurse who runs the program alongside Amber Hermesen and Denise Kermitz. She pegs Hoffmaster's return on investment at between \$2 and \$3 for every \$1 invested in ThedaCare At Work services.

This calculation includes hospital and clinic diversions, up to 50 percent savings on flu shot vaccines, fewer workers' compensation claims, and lower health insurance costs after smoking cessation and weight loss programs.

“When we first came to Hoffmaster, the company didn't fully understand what an occupational health nurse could do,” Mazzocchi said. “Now I feel like they fully embrace who we are and how we engage with employees. They see the benefits in their bottom line and their workplace culture. It's a healthier place to work.”

Vierthaler points to an extra benefit which has occurred over the years in which ThedaCare and Hoffmaster have been working together.

“The nurses have become trusted confidants for employees, a safe place to discuss a wide range of physical and mental or emotional wellness concerns,” he said. “It's a benefit that serves the best interests of both us as the employer and the employees. Our nurses are a trusted, confidential third party, and that's hard to quantify, but it makes a big, positive difference for all of us.”

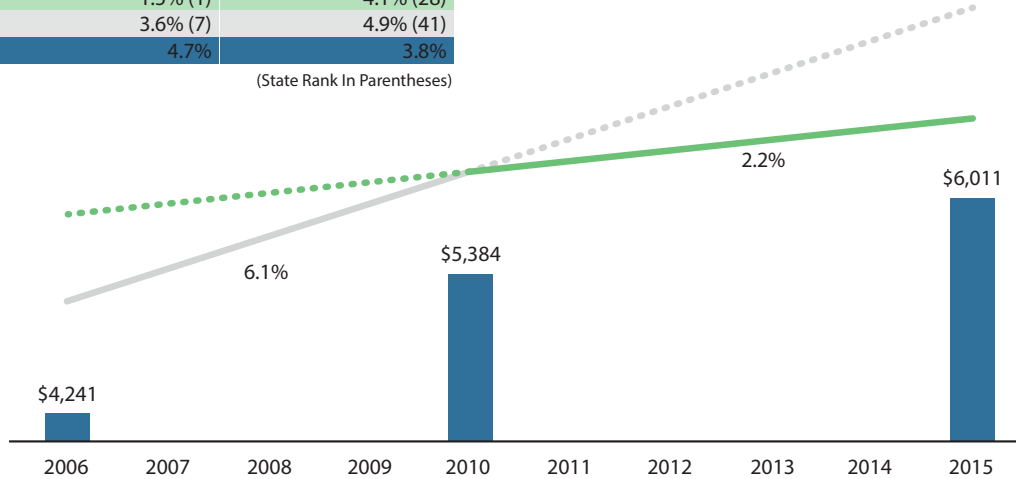
In its northeast Wisconsin service area, ThedaCare serves over 200,000 patients each year, employing 6,700 healthcare professionals. The health care system has seven hospitals located in Appleton, Neenah, Berlin, Waupaca, Shawano, New London and Wild Rose, as well as 32 clinics spread across nine counties.



## Wisconsin Health Insurance Single Premium Growth

Average Annual Growth (\$)		
State	2006-2010	2010-2015
WI	6.1% (43)	2.2% (2)
MN	5.7% (38)	2.6% (8)
IA	3.2% (4)	4.6% (37)
MO	3.8% (11)	4.5% (36)
IL	4.5% (19)	3.6% (19)
IN	5.9% (40)	3.2% (15)
MI	1.5% (1)	4.1% (28)
OH	3.6% (7)	4.9% (41)
USA	4.7%	3.8%

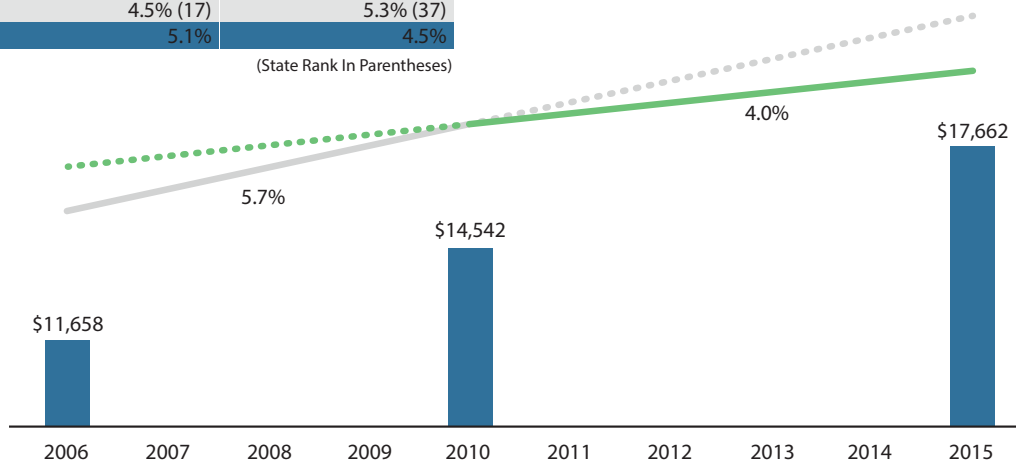
(State Rank in Parentheses)



## Wisconsin Health Insurance Family Premium Growth

Average Annual Growth (\$)		
State	2006-2010	2010-2015
WI	5.7% (37)	4.0% (10)
MN	5.1% (27)	4.0% (10)
IA	5.8% (42)	4.2% (14)
MO	3.4% (3)	5.7% (43)
IL	5.7% (37)	3.2% (3)
IN	4.9% (24)	4.3% (18)
MI	3.5% (4)	3.5% (6)
OH	4.5% (17)	5.3% (37)
USA	5.1%	4.5%

(State Rank in Parentheses)



# WELLNESS PAYS DIVIDENDS

## ORGANIC VALLEY AND VERNON MEMORIAL HEALTHCARE

IN ONE OF THE STATE'S SMALLER COMMUNITIES, Vernon Memorial Healthcare and Organic Valley have been working together to affect positive change in the health of workers.

Vernon Memorial is located in Viroqua, a southwest Wisconsin town with a population of about 4,400. It's about a 20-minute drive from La Farge, a village of about 800 people which also features Organic Valley's national headquarters.

A health-focused partnership between Vernon Memorial and Organic Valley has only grown in the past 11 years. Starting in 2006, Vernon Memorial began with on-site services at the Organic Valley headquarters, providing services such as blood pressure readings; cholesterol screening; health and fitness activities; and support for smokers who want to quit.

"Based upon the positive response we received from that, in 2010 we implemented the Value My Health program at Organic Valley," said Kyle Bakkum, chief executive officer for Vernon Memorial. "That program is really a program where it gives incentives to the staff to lead and live healthy lifestyles and participate in the programs we have in place."

Today, more than 70 percent of Organic Valley employees participate in the wellness program, and the company has an on-site gym, an employee garden, a walking path and bikes to rent for lunchtime rides.

**“We can improve these communities, to not only make these communities healthier, but also for our own benefit.”** —Amber Wendorf

Amber Wendorf is the wellness program manager at Organic Valley, which employs around 600 people in the Coulee Valley. She calls Vernon Memorial Healthcare “an invaluable resource for us, in terms of their expertise.”

“For us as an employer, it means improved productivity,” she said. “People aren’t having to leave for hours on end -- especially in our small communities, a lot of peoples’ doctors are an hour away.”

And, she added, with health services available on-site rather than hours away, employees are much more likely to take advantage of them.

“And that’s been proven,” she said. “Not just with our clinic but with other clinics we’ve researched.”

Wendorf says she’s been seeing improvements in “a lot of different areas” of worker health in her four years working at Organic Valley.

“For example, we saw an increase in smoking cessation attendance and a decrease in the number of smokers, which obviously correlates,” she said. “And we’re seeing a decrease in the number of employees who have diabetes.”

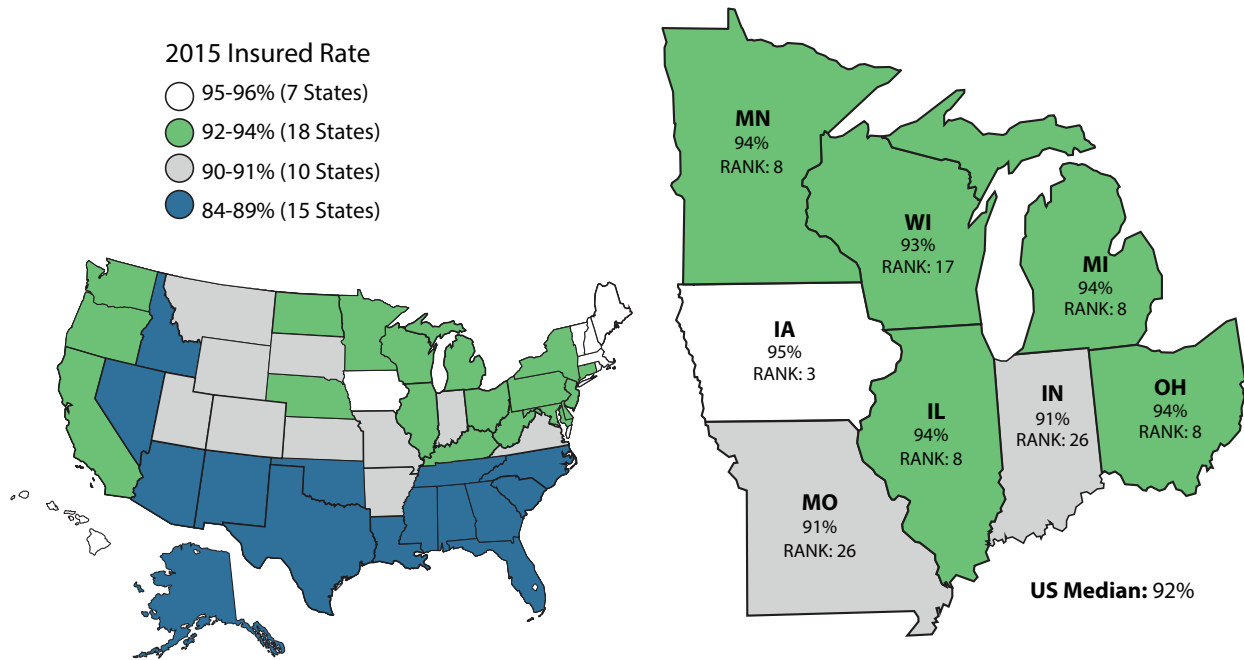
Importantly, the program can be tailored each year to fit the changing needs of a dynamic employee population, she added.

The surrounding community offers a wealth of opportunities for staying active, either on biking or hiking trails or out on the water, and Wendorf says many Organic Valley employees take advantage of those outdoor adventures. In fact, the company was named in the Top 100 Places to Work by Outside Magazines in 2015.

“Together, we can improve these communities, to not only make these communities healthier, but also for our own benefit, help with our retention and recruitment,” Wendorf added. “Because if we’re hiring employees who follow our mission -- in other words, they care about the health not only of the environment, but their food and themselves -- we need to provide them with those opportunities when they come to work here.”

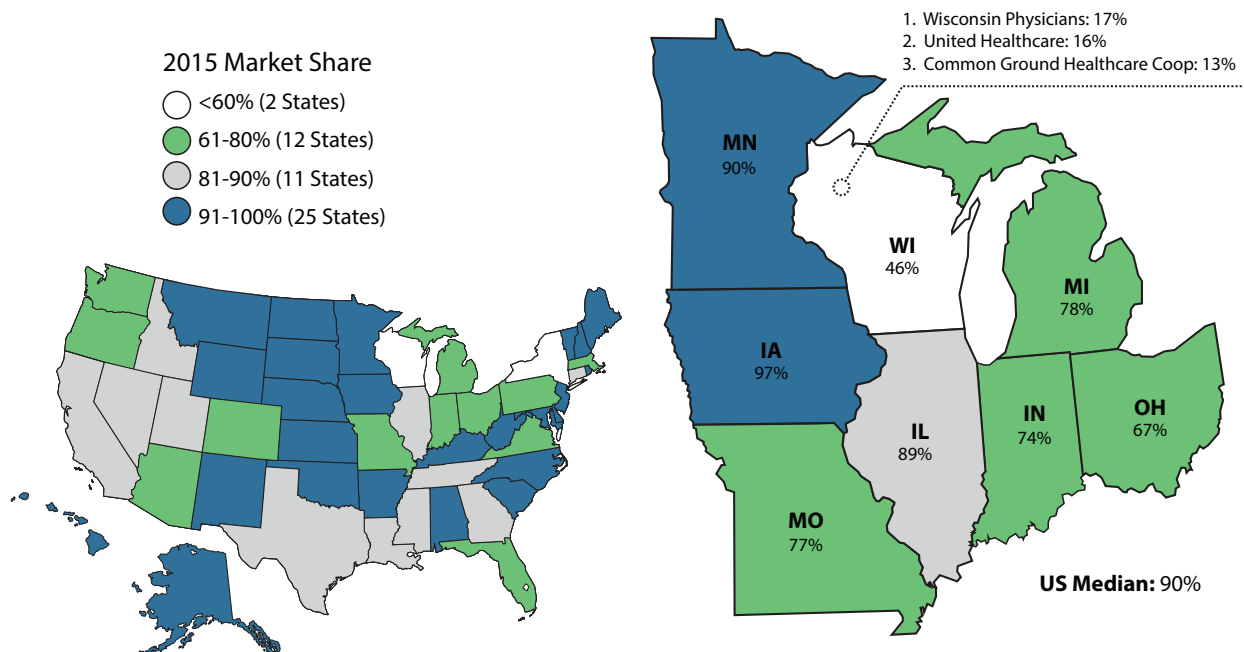


## Health Insurance Coverage Of The Total Population



Source: 2015 Health Insurance Coverage of the Total Population | Kaiser Family Foundation

## Total Market Share Of Largest Three Insurers



Source: 2015 Market Share and Enrollment of Largest Three Insurers- Individual Market | The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation



# PREVENTION EQUALS SAVINGS

## NWTC AND BELLIN HEALTH

CAMPUS CARE, A COLLABORATION BETWEEN Northeast Wisconsin Technical College and Bellin Health, is bringing down health care spending for NWTC while giving employees and students easy-access options for care.

Through an onsite health and wellness center, NWTC employees can choose from many preventive and acute care options including treatment for chronic diseases like hypertension, high cholesterol and diabetes. They can also get immunizations, allergy treatments, complete physicals and blood drawn for certain tests.

Free services include treatment for infections, migraines, allergies, minor injury treatment and simple lab tests for things like mono, strep and pregnancy. Fitness and personal training, physical therapy, nutrition services as well as health coaching are all offered at the clinic.

And for mental health, the Employee Assistance Program is there to help with issues that might not be as easy to define.

Valarie Wunderlich, director of benefits and compensation in NWTC's Human Resources Department, says these free services help create a "culture of health and wellness," with a long-term focus on better health through preventive action.

For example, she points to the physical therapy option as a must for early intervention.

"If an employee has an ache and pain in the knee or back when running, they can go see a therapist at no costs," she said. "They work with you on form, or maybe they need to do some therapy, but that could be preventing a bigger issue."

She said 96 percent of their early preventive care is resolved in physical therapy, so there's usually no need for orthopedic surgeries or expensive MRIs.

"We are saving costs by taking care of things early on," she said.

Since the collaboration between NWTC and Bellin began in 2011, the clinic has been building out its offerings to cover areas of special concern.

At one point, NWTC made the decision to ramp up its physical therapy by bringing on a personal trainer, getting employees more active in hopes of preventing injuries. This was done because at the time, the number one category for medical claims was musculoskeletal.

Between 2015 and 2016, NWTC's spend on musculoskeletal claims dropped from \$1.5 million to \$1 million -- a big reduction which Wunderlich says is at least partly due to efforts with personal training and therapy.

As well as keeping premium increases below average, the program has led to significant cost savings through direct preventive action, Wunderlich says.

Partnering with Bellin means NWTC can examine employee data constantly to take strategic action. In 2013, NWTC was looking at its data and seeing a lot of people with heart issues. Bellin then offered a free heart calcium screening test, which normally costs about \$50, for free to 52 individuals. Of that number, 18 needed further attention for issues like aortic aneurysms and others.

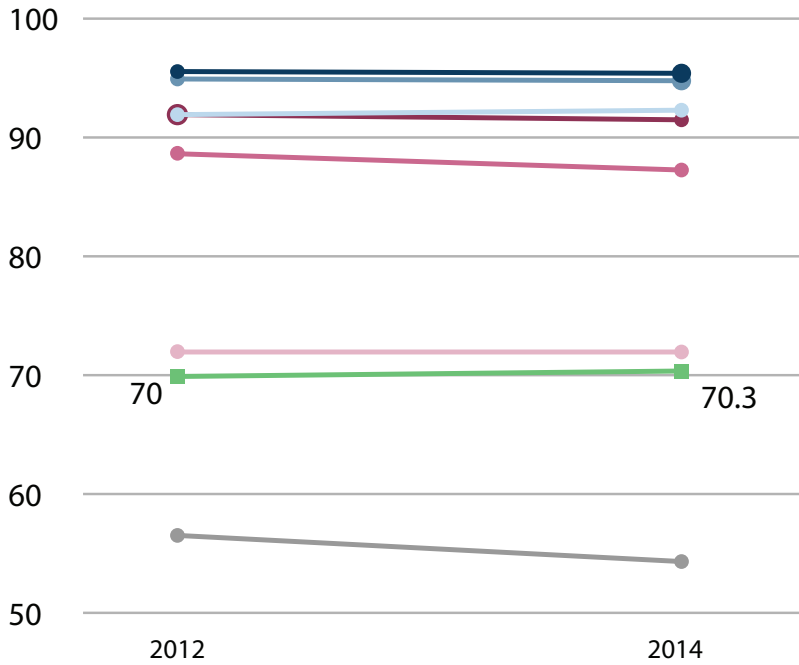
"Had it not been caught early, that would have been very expensive on the health plan and very expensive on the person," she said.

The partnership also incentivizes employees to take their health into their own hands by offering a program in which premium costs are discounted for making health improvements through specific programs and activities. Wunderlich says this structure has led to a much higher rate of participation than other organizations in the area have been able to achieve with comparable programs.

"We want people to participate --- if they're focused on health, they will work on things they need to change," she said.



## Mortality Amenable to Health Care\*



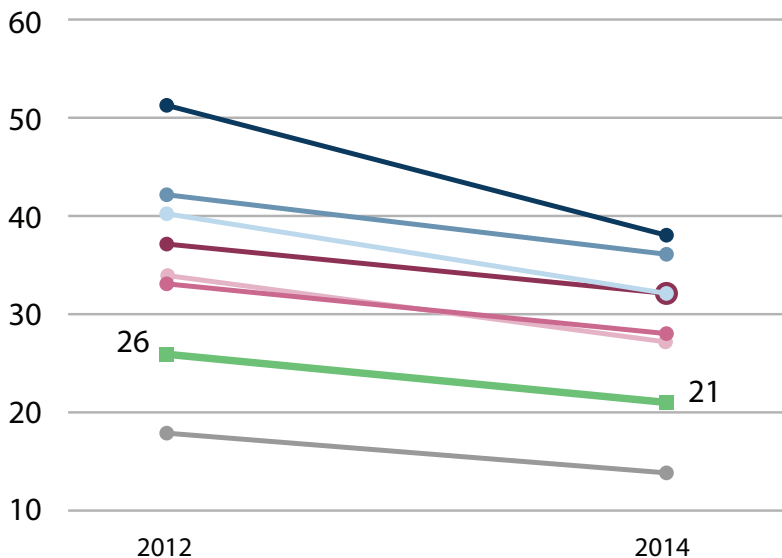
Deaths per 100,000 Population

State	2011-12	2013-14
MO	95.5	95.4
OH	95.1	94.8
MI	91.9	92.2
IN	92.0	91.5
IL	88.7	87.2
IA	72.0	72.0
WI	70.0	70.3
MN	56.5	54.3
<b>US Median:</b>	<b>78.2</b>	<b>78.8</b>

\*Deaths from certain causes before age 75 that are potentially preventable with timely and effective healthcare

Source: Mortality amenable to health care, deaths per 100,000 population | Commonwealth Fund Health System Datacenter

## Medicare 30-day Hospital Readmissions



Readmissions per 1,000 Beneficiaries

State	2011-12	2013-14
IL	51	38
MI	42	36
IN	40	32
MO	37	32
IA	33	28
OH	34	27
WI	26	21
MN	18	14
<b>US Median:</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>28</b>

Source: Medicare 30-day Hospital Readmissions, per 1,000 beneficiaries | Commonwealth Fund Health System Datacenter

# CONTROLLING COSTS AND WAISTLINES

## OPERATION OVERHAUL AND COLUMBUS COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

COLUMBUS COMMUNITY HOSPITAL'S OPERATION Overhaul 2.0 program is making a real difference in the health of local companies' workers.

CCH is a 25-bed acute care hospital located in Columbus. It employs over 300 workers, and a network of about 100 volunteers helps in a variety of areas. The hospital puts on this program in partnership with nearby businesses, providing options for physical activities and learning experiences all in hopes of nudging their workers toward healthier lifestyles.

The program, administered by on-site CCH staff, takes a preventative approach to keep more expensive health issues from cropping up down the road. In the long run, programs like these can help to reduce the strain on businesses' health care budgets, according to Ann Roundy, vice president of employee services at CCH.

While the program aims to push back on Columbia County's elevated rate of obesity -- nearly 35 percent in 2015, compared to the statewide rate of around 30 percent -- its ultimate goal is to enact long-term health and wellness changes, Roundy says.

But making these decisions to upend decades-old habits doesn't just happen overnight. That's why the program is spread out into four month-long 'intensive periods' in which CCH aims to get at some of the core pillars of wellness: physical activity, overall body weight, nutrition and good lifestyle habits.

These healthy habits can range from better management of stress and anxiety to getting enough sleep, as well as exercising regularly and even being smart about finances.

When participants begin the program, they take an online wellness survey and a nutrition knowledge quiz to gauge their starting knowledge. Initial measurements are also taken for things like blood pressure, height, weight, BMI, waist size, sit-ups and push-ups, flexibility and stability. All these tests are done again at the end, to see how fitness and understanding are improved by taking part in the various program activities -- walk/run events, educational sessions, cooking demonstrations and more.

This iteration of Operation Overhaul 2.0 runs from October 2017 through July 2018. Points are awarded throughout for participating in these activities, and can be redeemed for prizes like exercise equipment, cooking items, digital scales or even a one-year pass to the Wisconsin State Park System. Points are also displayed online so participating companies can engage in some friendly competition.



Schuman Printers and American Packaging, two manufacturers based in Columbia County, will take part this year. Last year, the two participating companies were E.K. Machine Co. and Robbins Manufacturing.

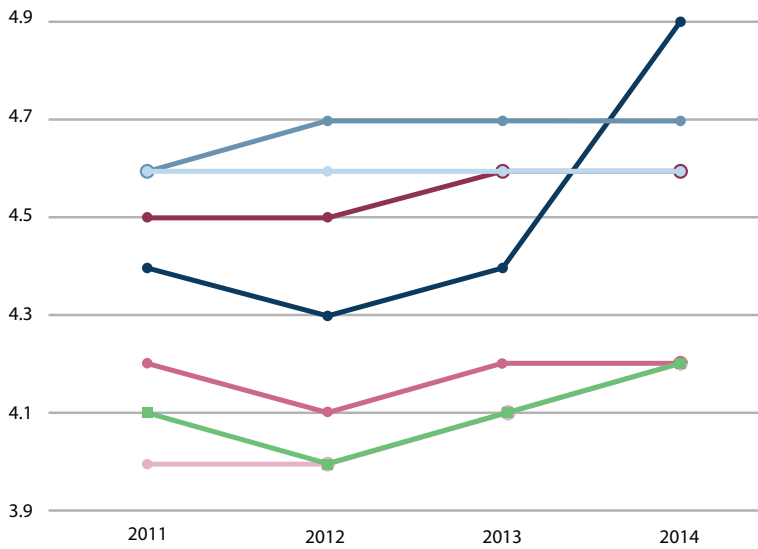
Before that, in the first iteration of the program, Columbus Chemical, Didion Milling and Schuman Printers all took part.

Altogether, participants lost 151 inches from their waistlines and 343 pounds, increased sit-ups by over 294 and pushups by 329, improved average heart rate, decreased blood pressure, and improved flexibility and stability.

Other success stories include a knee surgery patient finishing a 5K walk, a parent learning to cook healthier options for the whole family, an individual dropping weight and no longer needing blood pressure medicine and many more.

"Employees' perception of the workplace has been improved," Roundy said. "Employers allowing them to do many of these things on work time -- it lets them feel more valuable, and part of the team as well."

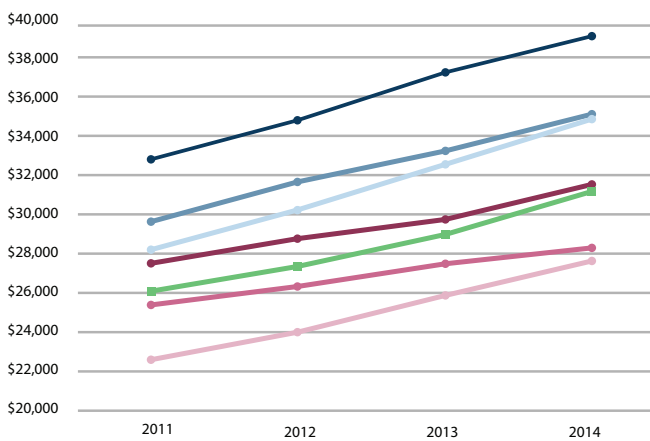
## Length of Stay



State	2011	2012	2013	2014
IL	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.9
MO	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.7
MI	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6
IN	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.6
IA	4.2	4.1	4.2	4.2
WI	4.1	4.0	4.1	4.2
MN	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.2

Source: Hospital Inpatient State Statistics | Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality: HCUPnet

## Mean Inpatient Charges



State	2011	2012	2013	2014
IL	\$32,790	\$34,809	\$37,239	\$39,070
MO	\$29,621	\$31,620	\$33,230	\$35,061
IN	\$28,120	\$30,192	\$32,559	\$34,837
MN	\$27,476	\$28,712	\$29,715	\$31,483
WI	\$26,052	\$27,308	\$28,970	\$31,196
MI	\$25,347	\$26,269	\$27,441	\$28,269
IA	\$22,541	\$23,959	\$25,844	\$27,609

Source: Hospital Inpatient State Statistics | Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality: HCUPnet

# CREATING A TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE

## UW-EAU CLAIRE/CHIPPEWA VALLEY COMMUNITY AND MAYO CLINIC

BACK INJURIES AND INJURIES TIED TO OVER-exertion are among the most common workplace maladies. They're also a leading source of Workers Compensation claims, which costs employers and workers alike in terms of pain, money and productivity.

A partnership between the Mayo Clinic, the UW-Eau Claire and the Eau Claire Police Department could lead to reduced back injuries for officers, research opportunities for the university and its students, and reduced Workers Compensation costs for the clinic and the police department.

At a recent meeting of the WiSys Technology Foundation board in Eau Claire, the partnership – which has already broadened into other areas, such as research into kidney disease – was described by Chancellor Jim Schmidt, Mayo regional executive Jason Craig and a mix of faculty, students and community leaders.

It is one of only two Universal Research Agreements fostered by Mayo in the United States – Arizona State University is the other – and it's designed to create a “triple bottom line” for the clinic, the university and the larger Eau Claire and northwest Wisconsin communities.

“Partnerships start with relationships,” Schmidt said, and UW-Eau Claire’s relationship with Mayo has reached into many aspects of the university, from its faculty researchers to the undergraduate students who carry it out and into campus projects tied to student and community health.

Craig, who is vice chair of operations for Mayo in northwest Wisconsin, said he expects the partnership to enhance the clinic’s ability to marry research, education and practice. The clinic has five hospitals and 4,000 employees in northwest Wisconsin alone.

“Our product is research,” Craig said, and improving that product helps improve clinical practice.

The police department project involves designing and testing a duty vest to replace duty belts, which carry a variety of equipment used by front-line officers. The weight and positioning of those belts can cause injuries over time. In fact, 16 percent of total WC claims nationally are related to lower back pain.

The vest being tested in Eau Claire seeks to redistribute weight without sacrificing the variety and accessibility of equipment used by officers. UW-Eau Claire’s Department of Kinesiology is leading that effort.

Another project involves identifying biomarkers for Human Polycystic Kidney Disease, a genetic disorder that can affect people at all stages of life and for which there is no current federally approved cure. Mayo Clinic has been a leader in trying to uncover treatments, and will work with researchers and students in UW-Eau Claire’s biology department.

Mayo is also heavily involved in campus plans for the \$50-million Sonnentag Center, which will be part sports arena and part student recreation center, as well as a home for the local YMCA. Mayo’s Craig said he expects to see on-site research projects that speed the transfer of research to clinical practice, a timeline that traditionally is measured in decades. “We hope this can help shorten the time between discovery to transfer,” Craig said.

For Schmidt, another benefit of the Mayo agreement is slashing red tape. Because the legal implications of the agreement have already been worked out, there will be fewer barriers to clear for UW-Eau Claire researchers and students in working with Mayo.

There’s also a tangible benefit for students. Schmidt said UW-Eau Claire wants each student to have at least two “high-impact experiences” outside the classroom before graduating. That may include research, study abroad, internships or community service. The Mayo pact offers possibilities for those kinds of experiences, he said.

Molly Svoboda, a student in UW-Eau Claire’s biology department, said her work on Human Polycystic Kidney Disease is already broadening her student experience.

“I’m learning how to network within a scientific community of researchers and clinicians. Where else can I do that?” she said.







*Through a partnership with the Monroe Clinic, Colony Brands offers health-risk assessments, fitness programs and more to help employees and save costs.*



## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Policymakers and economic development professionals should routinely tout Wisconsin's status as a high-quality, affordable state for health care. Quality health care is a tangible part of the state's brand and should be promoted as such. This should be a collaborative effort between public and private entities.
2. Employer and health-care organizations such as the Wisconsin Hospital Association, Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce, the Wisconsin Technology Council and others should encourage more business-health care partnerships such as those highlighted in this report. Employers are health-care consumers and merit a seat at the table with professional caregivers as they explore cost-effective ways to care for their employees/patients.
3. Wisconsin is a state with major research and development assets in health care, as well as some of the nation's leading health-care delivery companies. That technological edge, not present in many states, contributes to the overall quality of care. It is also a source of innovation that should be supported by health-care systems in Wisconsin through clinical trials and other pilot programs.
4. A debate continues over the cost of Workers Compensation insurance and claims in Wisconsin. It has led some to push for a health-care price-control system. Policymakers should consider other factors, such as what percentage of total WC costs are medical costs versus indemnity benefits, insurer profits and costs and claims expenses. Before enacting price controls, policymakers should consider that employers save money through shorter lengths of stay, lower readmission rates, less litigation and quicker return of injured workers to their jobs.
5. Health insurance in the United States is largely regulated by the states. The Office of the Commissioner of Insurance should be encouraged to report on ways to improve Wisconsin's health insurance coverage rate as the Obamacare debate moves to a new stage. That report could examine what effect, if any, the state's diffused health insurance "market share" has on that coverage rate. It could develop a strategy to use federal waivers and other mechanisms to enhance and leverage existing state and federal dollars to reduce the number of uninsured.
6. Wisconsin faces a growing shortage of workers. That makes every healthy day on the job for existing workers that much more important. State health-care policies should preserve and strengthen high-quality care to keep existing workers healthy and to attract new workers and companies. Areas of emphasis should include building a stronger health-care workforce; using technology, science and regulatory changes to improve health-care efficiency; and using health-care data and analytics to improve population health and to control costs.





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