

New study shows health care impact

A good local health care system may itself be part of the prescription for maintaining a healthy rural economy.

That was the bottom line from a study of the economic contribution of Cheyenne County's health care system produced by researchers at K-State Research and Extension.

The study is part of a state-wide initiative called the Kansas Rural Health Works program sponsored by the Kansas Rural Health Options Project. As part of the program, a county-level analysis of the economic impacts and potential of the local health care sector on the economies of each of the state's 97 most rural counties has been generated.

According to the report, the health care sector accounted for an estimated 8.2 percent of Cheyenne County's total employment, or about 163 jobs, in 2010. Further, the study's authors calculated economic multipliers for eight health care sectors and estimated that health care directly and indirectly accounted for 192 jobs throughout the county economy. They go on to estimate that these same sectors accounted for more than \$6,643,000 in total county income and about \$1,655,000 in county retail sales.

Les Lacy, administrator of Cheyenne County Hospital, who released copies of the report, said he was somewhat surprised by the overall scale of the existing activity in the county.

"I think we occasionally take our local health services for granted, just a little," he said. "Not everyone understands just how important health care is to the county's economic well being."

That is exactly the point the reports are trying to get across, said Dr. John Leatherman, agricultural economist at K-State's Office of Local Government and lead author of the report. He points out that access to affordable quality local health care services is essential to attracting and retaining local businesses and retirees.

Further, health care has been among the fastest growing economic sectors for the past 30 years. Given demographic trends, prospects for continued growth are good, and rural communities will want to be in a position to capture some of that growth, he said.

"Research has shown time and again that local health care and education are two enormously important factors for economic development," Mr. Leatherman said, "and both can be positively or negatively influenced by local action or inaction."

He said the local health care system has sometimes been the "tie-breaker" in industry location

decisions and that retirees view quality local health care as a "must have" local service.

Given the rapidly changing economics of health care systems, rural communities need to become more proactive in building a sustainable mix and level of services or risk losing local access, according to Sara Roberts, director of the Rural Health Section for the Bureau of Local and Rural Health at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, and one of the co-sponsors of the project.

"The Rural Health Works program is intended to highlight the need for local organization and initiative to maintain rural health care systems," she said. She likened the need for broad community involvement focused on local health care to trying to maintain the local school district or Main Street businesses. "Inattention and inactivity can place a rural community at risk. Maintaining local access to quality health care services in rural places requires organization, planning and community support," Roberts said.

"We hope this can serve as a wake-up call," said Chad Austin, vice president of government relations for the Kansas Hospital Association and another partner in the project. He said rural health care systems have been evolving for a number of years in response to changing technology and economics. The challenges to maintaining access to quality local services is especially great for rural communities.

Mr. Austin cited smaller markets, thinner profit margins, older demographics and lower incomes in rural areas, the cyclic nature of the agricultural economy, and differences between urban and rural Medicare payment rates as among the challenges rural communities face. "Increasing awareness of the link between the vitality of the local health care system and the local economy is the first step," he said.

The Kansas Rural Health Works program also provides selected communities local strategic planning assistance, market analysis, and feasibility studies.

Copies of the full report have been distributed and are available free of charge at the Kansas Rural Health Works Web site at: www.krhw.net. Printed copies are available at cost plus shipping. Additional information about the program is available by contacting the Office of Local Government at K-State Research and Extension, 785-532-2643 or e-mailing jleather@ksu.edu.



AFTER THREE WEEKS, the Pizza Hut had a new furnace installed on the roof of the building. Ed Marin and Kurt Bucholtz, Lampe Hardware, were on the roof as the county crane lifted the huge furnace to the top.

Herald staff photo by Karen Krien

Moments With Mila



By **Mila Bandel**
County Health Nurse

Why do pre-teens and adolescents need immunization

The vaccines recommended for pre-teens prevent serious, sometimes life-threatening infections.

For diseases like pertussis, your pre-teen may have already been vaccinated at a younger age, but the protection wears off, so kids need to get another dose. For diseases like meningitis and human papilloma virus (HPV), as kids get older, they are more at risk catching the disease, so they need the protection the vaccines provide.

Vaccines that prevent pre-teens through adolescents: Vaccines are an important part of preventive care throughout life. Help protect your child's health by being sure to get the pre-teen vaccines on time. If your child did not get these vaccines at age 11 or 12, schedule an appointment to get them now.

• Tdap, which is a booster against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis. The American Immunization

Program just recently voted to recommend use of Tdap regardless of interval since the last tetanus or diphtheria containing vaccine, use of Tdap in certain adults ages 65 and older, and use of Tdap in under-vaccinated children ages 7 through 10 years.

• Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4), which protects against meningococcal disease. The American Immunization Program recommends: Children: Meningococcal conjugate vaccine is recommended for certain high-risk children from ages 2 through 10.

Pre-teens/Adolescents: Meningococcal conjugate vaccine is routinely recommended for all 11 through 18 year olds. If your child did not get this vaccine at the 11- or 12-year-old check-up, make an appointment for him or her to get it now. Adults: Either meningococcal polysaccharide vaccine or meningococcal conjugate vaccine is recommended for adults if you are a college freshman living in a dormitory

or college/university requiring the vaccination; are a military recruit; have a damaged spleen or your spleen has been removed; are traveling to or residing in countries in which the disease is common

Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, which protects girls against the types of Human papillomavirus that cause 70 percent of cervical cancer.

Two vaccines (Cervarix and Gardasil) are available to protect females against the types of human papilloma virus that cause most cervical cancers. One of these vaccines (Gardasil) also protects against most genital warts. Both vaccines are recommended for 11 and 12 year-old girls, and for females 13 through 26 years old, who did not get any or all of the three recommended doses when they were younger. These vaccines can also be given to girls beginning at age 9. It is recommended that females get the same vaccine brand for all three doses, whenever possible.

One available vaccine (Gardasil) protects males against most genital warts. This vaccine is available for boys and men, 9 through 26 years of age.

The best way a person can be sure to get the most benefit from human papilloma virus vaccination is to complete all three doses before beginning sexual activity.

• Influenza (flu) vaccine (annually for all children 6 months

of age and older), which protects against three strains of seasonal influenza.

Centers for Disease Control recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses.

The 2010-2011 flu vaccine protects against an influenza A H3N2 virus, an influenza B virus and the 2009 H1N1 virus that caused so much illness last season.

People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease and people 65 years and older.

Vaccination of high risk persons is especially important to decrease their risk of severe flu illness.

Vaccination also is important for health care workers, and other people who live with or care for high risk people to keep from spreading flu to high risk people.

Children younger than 6 months are at high risk of serious flu illness, but are too young to be vaccinated. People who care for them should be vaccinated instead.

If you have questions regarding pre-teen and/or adolescent vaccinations, please call the Cheyenne County Health Department at 785-332-2381 for more information.

Student News

Northwest Kansas Technical College

Tabetha Ketzner of Bird City has been named to the Northwest Kansas Technical College fall 2010 student honor roll.

Dr. Ed Mills, president of the college, said those named are outstanding, hardworking individuals.

To be on the honor roll, the students must obtain a 3.5 grade-point average or greater.

Ketzner is involved in the

respiratory therapy one program.

Palmer College of Chiropractic

Colton Roesener, McDonald, a current 10th trimester student in the Doctor of Chiropractic program at Palmer College of Chiropractic, Davenport, Iowa, has been named to the dean's list for the ninth trimester.

To be eligible for the dean's list, a student must achieve a minimum grade point average of 3.50 in all studies for the respective term.

15th Annual Cattlemen's Choice Bull Sale February 23rd, 2011 - 1:00 p.m. CST Oakley Livestock Commission - Oakley, KS

60 Balancer and Gelbvieh Bulls Sell: Black and Red Polled Bulls. Sired by A.I. leading sires like Predestined, In Focus, Mission Statement, Krugerrand, Governor, Knockout, Good Stuff, and Jake. 10 Angus Bulls Sell: Calving Ease and Performance bulls sired by Final Answer, Bismarck, and New Standard.

25 Red Angus Bulls and 5 Red Angus Heifers: Top Genetics for calving ease and performance. Sired by: Mission Statement, Rib-eye, Get Western, and Advance.

25 Balancer/Commercial Heifers sell: Sired by great maternal and performance genetics.



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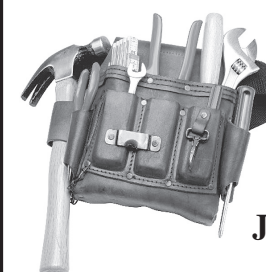
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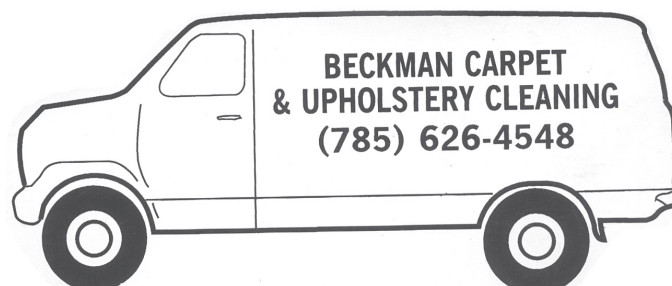
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