

Insurance change may not affect you



Sandy Praeger

• Kansas Ins. Commissioner

In five months, the world of health insurance in Kansas will change. On Oct. 1 the federal health exchange marketplace will begin enrolling Kansans (up to age 64) online for health insurance, either through private insurance companies or Medicaid public assistance.

For some of you, that will be maddening. You have witnessed many types of protest concerning "Obamacare," a name given to the federal Affordable Care Act. You might not agree with the basic premise of providing health care for those who don't have it, or the spending that goes with it, or the requirement that citizens purchase health insurance.

For other Kansans, it will be welcome relief. They have suffered through the worries of being uninsured during the past recession years, and they will now have a method of providing insured health care for themselves and their families.

And for others, they probably won't be affected. The majority of working Kansans get their health insurance through employer coverage at their workplace. They are likely to see little or no change.

According to some opinion polls, the law is still unpopular with a segment of the U.S. population. Meanwhile, there are nonprofit organizations whose work involves helping others, and companies who see it benefiting their business, that are working to implement the upcoming changes. How do you deal with such across-the-board opinions?

One of our everyday duties

at the department is to educate consumers. Community outreach through informational meetings is one way we can tell people about the new health law. The department did very similar meetings throughout the state when the federal Medicare Part D prescription drug program began a few years ago.

We don't profess to know all the answers, especially when the guidelines are still coming from the federal government. But we have been following this law closely since it was signed in March 2010, and we believe we can provide accurate information to help Kansans make informed choices.

We're hoping that the information we give can pave the way for the work that those in the newly-formed Navigator programs will be doing. Those Navigator organizations selected by the federal Department of Health and Human Services will promote grassroots assistance for businesses and individuals who can sign up for health insurance online, beginning Oct. 1.

Our meetings will be for informational purposes only; we don't have time for debate. We will leave that for others to do. Our work involves providing answers to those who want them.

Watch for news of statewide meetings in the near future.



Kindergarten class ends on a high note

Tatyanna Finley (above left) and Jaxson Carney were the windshield wipers for a favorite story book, "The Wheels on the Bus," just part of the reader's theater presented at the Sacred Heart Kindergarten Tea Friday. Carson Cook and Rylie Schippers held the bus, while Miah Ortner, Aden Reiley and Tanner Vyzourek waited on the risers. After songs, stories and presentation of certificates, Skye posed with her parents Kelly and Alejandro Quintero, while her grandmother took their picture.

MARIAN BALLARD/Colby Free Press



Atwood grad gets degree

Sydney Amanda Carlson of Atwood was among more than 2,750 students who received degrees from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln at commencement exercises May 3 and 4.

Carlson received a bachelor of

science in education and human sciences degree from the College of Education and Human Sciences.

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