

## Universal healthcare could be an option

Healthcare reform seems to be well on its way with the passage of a bill by the senate finance committee on Tuesday. The finalized version has not been introduced yet, but the healthcare bill is expected to provide coverage to 29 million people and leave an estimated 25 million uninsured.

As lawmakers continue to finalize the bill, Massachusetts is being looked at as an example of universal healthcare. They passed their bill in 2006 when leaders decided it would be more economical to provide preventative care than to pick up the tab for emergency room visits made by uninsured, low-income people. Their bill requires everyone to purchase care or be fined. Individuals can be fined up to \$900 and employers can be fined for every person they employ who is uninsured. The fines go to Commonwealth Care, the state-run subsidy program for low-income individuals.

An estimated 400,000 people were uninsured before the Massachusetts bill was passed. Now the state has an average uninsured rate of 2.6 percent compared with the 15 percent average.

Universal care is still in the experimental phases. When the economy worsened last year unemployment rose, and the number of people needing Commonwealth Care rose. Gov. Patrick is currently trying to figure out how to keep pumping money into the program without eliminating care.

The upside to healthcare in Massachusetts is being guaranteed health insurance regardless of a pre-existing condition or income level. Premiums and co-pay do depend on income levels.

The house and senate need to take a look at Massachusetts and weigh what works there with what needs to be included in the bill they vote on.

Two big issues need to be resolved when looking at the next healthcare bill: cost and coverage for the uninsured.

Costs are estimated at \$829 billion over the next 10 years. Washington not only needs to figure out how to pay the bill but also how to provide coverage for everyone.

- Erica Bradley



To....the Norton and Northern Valley FFA Dairy Judging Teams and Dairy Foods teams at the contest on Wednesday in Hays, and the Norton FFA Food Science Team for placing second. Great job kids, Mr. Beydler and Mr. Zillinger! (emailed)

To....Ginni Concannon for sharing her flowers. (called in)

(To render a salute, please email - nortontelegram@nwkansas.com, call 877-3361, fax 877-3732 or mail to 215 S. Kansas Ave. 67654. or drop by the office.)



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## Unanswered prayers and open doors

Is there a God or is there not a God? My answer to this would have to be yes there is a God, a loving God that never gives me more then he and I can't handle together. Some of his gifts to me have been unanswered prayers as well as open doors.

There have been many times in my life that I have not known which way to go. It is at those times that he closes one door and opens another giving me the answer to my question.

A perfect example of this is best described in the story of how I became the general manager of this newspaper.

I had run a daycare for almost six years and found myself with not enough clients to stay open. I walked into The Norton Telegram to get a paper so I could start looking for a job. Tom Dreiling met me at the counter and asked what he could do for me. I said I was looking for a job and needed a paper. At that point he asked if I had ever thought about reporting or ad sales. I said no. He asked if I would be interested. I said, "Yes sir I'd love to be a reporter." He told me to return the

### Open Doors Dana Paxton



following Tuesday for an interview at 10 a.m.

The following Tuesday at 3 p.m. I remembered my interview. I felt sick and I knew I had blown it. Humbly, I called and asked to speak with Mr. Dreiling. I told him how sorry I was and that it had slipped my mind. His answer to me was no problem and to return Thursday at 11 a.m. I did just that. The interview was great and I knew everyone would have to start calling me Lois Lane. The following week he called and said I want to offer you a job, not the reporter's but ad sales. Reluctantly I accepted.

Having no clue what I was doing I went to work. Fourteen months later I

wasn't making enough to survive on. I was asked to apply and interview for a job at a company I have always wanted to work at. They offered me the job so I turned in my notice, at about the same time Mr. Dreiling let us know when he was leaving. I wanted to stay so much, but I needed much better pay.

A week later the owner of the paper came and offered me a deal much better then the other place offered me, so I had to take it. It all worked out so well; better pay, freedom to be there for my children and the opportunity to work with people I already knew and loved, and to get back into a management position.

The unanswered prayer was not getting the reporting job. There is no way I could have done everything on the computer that I would have needed to be able to do. The open door was to not one but two great opportunities to work at The Norton Telegram. I have big hopes and dreams for this paper. I have a wonderful staff and a job I love. My God gave me what I needed.

## Stilettos and smoking

### Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



If your young daughter talks about stilettos more than likely an image of shoes with incredibly high heels come to mind; an image of proms, dances and beautiful dresses. However if the stiletto is manufactured by tobacco companies, that image could likely be of yellowed fingers, smoker's breath and aging skin at the least and death at the most. One of the newer methods of attracting youth comes packaged in pink foil with a "shiny black box and hot pink borders." This is the latest promotional for Camel No. 9. This is just one of many ways of luring young people into the smoking death trap.

Many parents say they don't smoke so they don't worry about their child, but surprisingly the youth most susceptible are those who aren't risk takers and whose parents don't smoke. Why is this? In part because youth are exposed to more movies and TV shows today which portray smoking as both cool and mature. When I was young smoking was almost a given onscreen, but fortunately we became

aware of the dangers and curbed many of these scenes. Now however the tide has changed and compared to 20 years ago young people see twice as many TV or movie scenes with smoking.

Parents frequently are unaware of the marketing which targets youth and the benign statements which accompany some of these ads. One of the new items is the e-cig. An electronic cigarette complete with a lithium battery which provides a light simulating the red tip of a cigarette. The frightening aspect of this device is the lure of techie stuff to young people and the marketing of a 'safe' smoke. An e-cig contains a nicotine solu-

tion as well as carcinogens so it is hardly safe even when touting flavorings such as cherry, vanilla and chocolate. Last winter a Wichita mall was the site of a booth selling this product and promoting it as 'better for you' because of the lack of tobacco products.

We long ago realized that 'truth in advertising' was hardly tobacco companies' mantra. With the quality and the very lives of our young people at stake we must gather forces to combat this enemy. There are so many aspects of this problem it is difficult to know where to target our attention.

One thing is for sure, burying our heads in the sand and pretending tobacco companies' marketing strategies aren't working will not do. Nor will pretending TV and movies don't impress our young people. It takes the combined effort of everyone; child and health advocates, educators, family and community to help children realize that not everything they see can be believed.

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