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TISHA COX/Colby Free Press

Thomas County Undersheriff Jason Moses (middle) and Sheriff Mike Baughn(right) attended a workshop in Norton Thursday.

## Jail care health topic of meeting

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

NORTON — Thomas County officials are looking for a way to better provide health care to inmates at the county jail. Sheriff Mike Baughn and Undersheriff Jason Moses were interested in ideas presented at a prescription drug workshop at the “Sharing Approaches that Work” forum in Norton on Thursday.

Everything from information on prescription drugs program for inmates to contracted health care were discussed.

Baughn said they wanted to see if the county commissioners would be interested in a prescription drug card for county employees and were also there to find out more about the contracted services.

He said sometimes when they receive a bill for the medical transport of an inmate, there are charges they aren’t sure about but with some of the options presented at the forum, they would be able to get services to help them find out information they need.

They’re also interested in ideas to increase health care for inmates but don’t want to be hasty in making any decisions.

Kathleen Harnish-Doucet, of Team Tech, Inc., which is working with Gov. Kathleen Sebelius to come up with ways state and county

“It’s quick and it’s easy. It’s not a difficult process.”

Viola Riggan,  
Kansas University Physician’s Inc.

agencies can save money and not duplicate services.

She said the ideas presented at the forum were to give counties options on what’s available to them, options which can save them money.

Harnish-Doucet said they weren’t giving a hard-sell on anything, but merely giving out information for them to consider.

Viola Riggan, senior contract management consultant with Kansas University Physician’s Inc. and the Kansas Department of Corrections Division in Topeka, gave the first presentation.

She explained how the state gets pharmaceuticals for inmates in its detention facilities.

In Dec., 2004, the state contracted with Correct Care Solutions to receive the necessary dental, pharmacy, medical and mental health services for inmates.

The state has more than 9,000 inmates and spends more than \$4,000,000 a year on prescription drugs alone.

“It has a huge health care budget,” Riggan said.

They were looking for a way to save money and still deliver the best services for their dollars. An in-house pharmacy was one option looked at but the best proposal was to contract out for medical and pharmacy services.

Now, the state would like to pass along their savings to counties and communities across the state by offering them the chance to save on prescription drugs for inmates in their jails and detention centers.

Counties and communities would only have to pay the acquisition fees for the drugs, which is about 51 percent of the normal wholesale cost.

Riggan said it’s “very cheap.”

The doctor prescribing drugs for inmates would fax the prescription to Diamond Pharmaceuticals in Indiana, Penn., who then sends out the medicine through Federal Express. Riggan said most would get the prescription overnight — a blister pack

with the drugs and instructions on how to take them.

“It’s quick and it’s easy,” Riggan said.

“It’s not a difficult process.”

She said it offers continuity between counties, saves money and is a safe way to deliver medication.

Medical supplies for county hospitals and emergency medical services can also be purchased through the same service.

Twenty-five counties are already involved and Riggan said Atchison, Saline and Wyandotte counties are just a few that have had success with the program.

She also talked about a bulk purchase plan that would require the services of a local pharmacist to house and dispense the drugs.

An example would be the county hospital would buy the drugs in bulk for the county detention center. When needed, the hospital pharmacist would then send over the necessary medicine.

If the hospital doesn’t have an in-house pharmacist, the drugs would be taken to a local pharmacy where they would be housed and dispensed.

The pharmacist would receive an administrative fee for their services.

Riggan said it works well for municipalities that need to buy drugs in bulk and again, offers some savings.

## Microbiology, genetics teacher resigns position

By Patty Decker

Free Press Editor

A special meeting of the Colby College board of trustees was held Thursday for the purpose of accepting long-time instructor Vernon Wranosky’s resignation.

Since the trustees convene only once a month and their next meeting would not be held until mid-May, the decision was to meet this week so administrative officials could begin the search for a replacement.

Wranosky’s resignation will be effective at the end of the school year, Dr. Mikel Ary, college president said. During his tenure at the college, Wranosky taught biology, microbiology and genetics. He was also chairman of the National and Applied Sciences Division, Ary said.

Prior to his teaching career at Colby College, which began in



V. Wranosky

August of 1971, Wranosky taught one year at North Platte Community College, North Platte, Neb.

His undergraduate and graduate degrees are from the University of Nebraska at Kearney, said Debbie Schwanke, public information officer. He also attended the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and Fairbury Community College.

Wranosky has a master’s degree in biology.

He and his wife, Linda, have two grown children: Vernon Wranosky III, who is a mechanical engineer for the Bayer Corporation and a daughter, Shannon, who is a high school biology teacher.

Schwanke said that both of their children were graduates of Colby Community College.

In addition to Wranosky’s resignation, other employees, who have recently resigned, include Fred Miller in the print department; Dr. Harlan Thyfault in beef production; Gracemary Melvin, dean of instruction; Tommy Dean, custodian; and Wanda Davis, secretary in the Physical Therapist Assistant department.

## County resolves ownership issue

By Tisha Cox

Colby Free Press

The issue of who really owns the Brewster Fire Building was resolved at this morning’s Thomas County Commissioners’ end of month meeting.

Brewster Mayor Mike Baughn, Maybelle Moore, register of deeds, Mary Cech, county appraiser, and Rex Jamison, Brewster city official were at the meeting to try to determine who owns the building.

After some digging, they found out the land was owned by the city of Brewster and commission chair Ron Evans suggested the county deed the building to Brewster so they will own it also.

Jamison told the group that Rural Fire District 5, the city and the county have been splitting the insurance premium on the building, and they all have their own insurance on equipment stored there. He just wanted to know who owned what.

Baughn said he will come up with

an interlocal agreement for the use of the building to make clear everything that is in the building and who is responsible for what, including utilities and insurance.

Also on the agenda was a discussion on the county’s emergency preparedness director’s post. The commissioners decided after some research that it should be made a full-time position to also encompass E911 and risk management.

They will advertise the position and hope to have interviews by the middle of May and the position filled and someone ready to work by June 1.

John Lygeros held the position until resigning this month, and worked part-time as the emergency preparedness director.

In other business, the commissioners approved:

• Minutes from the Monday, April 18 meeting.

The commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. Monday at the courthouse.

## Bush offers new Social Security plan with some benefit cuts

WASHINGTON (AP) — After nearly 60 days on the road pitching Social Security changes, President Bush is offering a new plan to fix its finances by cutting benefits of more prosperous future retirees. Democrats still aren’t buying it.

In a prime-time news conference, Bush refused to back off his desire to carve private retirement accounts out of Social Security.

Democrats say those personal accounts are a deal-breaker that would keep most of them from supporting Bush’s revisions.

But for the first time he proposed changes under which Social Security checks for low-income workers retiring in the future would grow faster than those for people who are better off.

“By providing more generous benefits for low-income retirees, we’ll make this commitment: If you work hard and pay into Social Security your entire life, you will not retire in poverty,” Bush said.

The White House said Bush’s proposal could be accomplished with a “sliding-scale benefit formula.” That would mean lower Social Security payments for future middle- and upper-income retirees than they are currently guaranteed — a fact Bush himself did not mention in his 60-minute session with reporters.

“By providing more generous benefits for low-income retirees . . . you will not retire in poverty.”

President George Bush

Bush’s plan immediately drew renewed ire from Democrats. Bush would “gut benefits for middle-class families,” House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi and Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid said in a joint statement.

They reiterated their opposition to Bush’s desire to let younger workers divert some of their Social Security taxes into personal retirement accounts. “All the president did was con-

firm that he will pay for his risky privatization scheme by cutting the benefits of middle-class seniors,” Pelosi and Reid said.

Bush held his first prime-time televised news conference in more than a year as he scrambles to generate momentum for his stalled Social Security plans and to calm anger over \$2-a-gallon gasoline prices.

Those two issues have dragged down his approval ratings down.

He discussed major foreign policy challenges, the troubled nomination of John Bolton to be U.N. ambassador and his quest to get Senate votes on some of his controversial nominees for the federal bench.

## Recognizing dedication



DEB SCHWANKE/Colby Free Press

Dave Jennings, owner of The His Shop, chatted with Colby Community College President Mikel Ary Wednesday during a reception in his honor. Jennings is the recipient of this year’s honorary associate degree at the college’s graduation next month. More than 150 people attended the special event to congratulate Jennings on the accomplishment.

