pinion



Another **V**iewpoint

Immunization shots below national average

Efforts to get more Kansas toddlers the immunizations they need are working.

A recent report shows children age 19 months to 35 months in Kansas being vaccinated at a greater rate. But with the rate reported in 2007 still below the national average, there's room for improvement.

The recommended vaccinations for toddlers include four doses of diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine; three doses of hepatitis B vaccine; three doses of Haemophilus influenzae type B vaccine; three doses of polio vaccine; one dose of measles-mumpsrubella vaccine; and one dose of varicella vaccine. ...

Kansas' vaccination rate was 76 percent — slightly below the national average, but still a marked improvement of some 6 percentage points over 2006.

Maryland had the highest vaccination rate (91.3 percent), with the lowest rate in Nevada at 63.1 percent.

The good news is in the report showing the nation at least inching toward a reasonable goal set by health officials. ... One key strategy in achieving a better record of preventive

care through vaccines is education. Too often, a fear of immunizations doesn't come from chil-

dren, but from their parents. Misinformation has sparked unwarranted concerns about ingredients in the recommended vaccines.

And the irrefutable success of vaccinations that led to sharp declines in polio and other serious illnesses has had a downside in creating complacency.

Parents who'd question the need for immunizations should know deadly diseases still exist, and remain a threat to those who

are unprotected. No child should face a devastating illness that could be prevented by a vaccine.

The ongoing challenge is in making sure parents understand the importance of the primary series of immunizations — a proven way to protect not only their own child's health, but also that of many other youngsters in the community.

The Garden City Telegram

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Smooth sailing

Thomas County taxpayers don't need to lose sleep when it comes to who is watching over the public health department.

I am so impressed with how Connie Walden, a registered nurse from Hoxie, has handled herself over the past several months. Connie is a professional.

Since June, Commissioners Ken Christiansen, Paul Steele and Byron Sowers had struggled with how to make the health department work.

Sorting through problems she found, Walden has showed the commissioners how she thinks the department needs to be run.

Walden, with the department 10 years last month, stepped up to the plate and suggested it be run with two people instead of one. She suggested the commissioners hire her to oversee the medical side of the department, and they did. Walden told me she prayed that God send the right people to her as applicants, and she now has in place the folks she's calling a "perfect fit."

Walden suggested the commissioners hire someone with business savvy to oversee the billing, purchases and scheduling. They did. Kasiah Rothchild, a Sharon Springs native who has returned to the area, has brought to the commission table ideas about spending, purchases, security and what appears to be an overall good will for the county.

Rothchild contacted grant provide



Jan Katz Ackerman

 From Where I stand

is getting some of grants lost last year reinstated. The young lady seems afraid of nothing when it comes to moving the department Rothchild captured my attention by pro-

viding the commissioners paperwork about changes she and Walden see necessary for the benefit of those getting medical care at their office at 225 S. Range Ave.. The department under the direction of

Walden and Rothchild seems to have taken a 180-degree turn from where it was four months ago. At one point, the commissioners talked

about contracting out the services to one of the clinics or even the hospital.

Now, under the direction of Walden and Rothchild, it seems that flu vaccinations will move forward without a hitch.

Walden reported Monday that premature babies from Thomas County can have stateof-the art, hospital-quality breast pumps that will help them survive. Mothers of those little

babies can seek specialized education at the breast-feeding boutique at the department office. Oh, how I wish I'd had such direction and guidance some 33 years ago as a young mother.

The department is being upgraded daily. Walden, Rothchild and their staff are making sure all of the medical records are as secure and tamper-resistant as possible.

They are making sure federal compliance issues are addressed, such as putting immunization records online. That affords Thomas County residents the

luxury of having their records available to a clinic anywhere in the world should they be needed. Rothchild and Walden are buying new locks

to keep medical records and working with Emergency Management Director Susan Mc-Mahan on plans to handle a flu pandemic, a tornado or other natural disaster, or worse, a terrorist attack right here in the Heartland. The commissioners, when once did not

lic health, have found what seems to be two top-notch ladies to run a tight ship and run it on a shoestring. Hats off to Walden, Rothchild and their

know which way to turn when it came to pub-

staff. Here's wishing you much success.

Jan Katz Ackerman is a reporter for the Colby Free Press.

Lessons in wellness

tending the dedication of the new Rooks County Health Center in Plainville.

It was a wonderful occasion for the people of Rooks County; a community vision they worked hard to make a reality.

The original hospital was built in 1955 and for its era, was a state-of-the-art facility. It was meant to serve a growing community, who valued life in a rural setting and were finding new prosperity in the surrounding oil fields and fertile farm land.

In its half century of serving the people of Rooks County, 3,300 new Kansans were born under its roof; each year more than 30,000 people benefited from its health ser-

But fifty years is a long time, and as the

kept and cared for them over the years, the need for a new facility became a priority for the citizens of Rooks.

Two years ago, the voters of the county overwhelming approved bonds for a new hospital; and to date, more than \$1.5 million in private contributions have been donated to the capital campaign.

Breaking ground in December of 2006, the new facility looks like Rooks County; modeled after the surrounding farms and rural towns.

The health facility has lots of light and soothing colors and natural materials - a style that tells patients this is be a place for wellness instead of illness.

This sort of local dedication and commu- preceding article.

Last weekend, I had the privilege of at- community outgrew the building that had nity involvement is the foundation on which this state and nation will fix our health care system. Just as the citizens of Rooks County have, we need our national leaders to view hospitals and clinics as places not just to treat disease, but to maintain wellness and promote healthy living.

We need them to realize that the latest and greatest technologies not only provide the best cures, but in doing so can rid the system of red tape, redundancies and errors that drive up costs. Perhaps our national leaders should take

a look at the solutions found right here in Rooks County, Kansas.

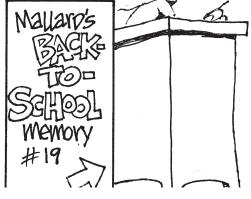
Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius wrote the

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Mallard **Fillmore**

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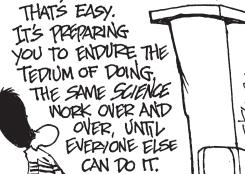


I SEE YOU'VE WRITTEN YOUR NUMBERS, ONE to one Hundred, in ORDER ... NOW TO IT

OVER AND OVER UNTIL EVERYONE IN THE CLASS CAN DO IT







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