

Authority members gather health reform ideas

By Tom Betz
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A small group representing businesses and the health-care system met with representatives from the Kansas Health Policy Authority on Friday to talk about what the state can do to contain costs and promote healthy living.

The meeting, at Northwest Kansas Technical College, was one of three the state people held Friday as they gather ideas from across the state to create a set of recommendations to be presented to the governor and legislators in November.

Other sessions were in Norton and Hays.

Marcia J. Nielsen, executive director of the authority, opened the meeting by saying there are three things the board wants to focus on: Providing and protecting health insurance; paying for prevention and primary care; and promoting personal responsibility for health.

She said there are a lot of ways to define those, but the board's directive is to seek the ideas of people around the state and then form a plan.

She introduced Joe Tilghman of Overland Park, authority vice chair and head of the steering committee on health care reform.

Tilghman said the board was reaching out to people to find out what ideas there might be and what concerns there are about the state of health care in Kansas.

He said the big questions are can the system be reformed? Can we get more people insured? Can we get control of costs? Then he opened the meeting to questions and comments.

Fred Hall, an AFLAC insurance agent, said he felt one of the big users of health care are the elderly. He said he appreciates the specialists



Joe Tilghman (right) of the state Health Policy Authority asked Andi Nelson (left), Goodland Chamber director; Brian Linin, Chamber president; and Fred Hall, an AFLAC Insurance representative, for ideas about how to reform health care and control costs at a meet-

ing Friday morning at the Northwest Kansas Technical College. Across from Tilghman were Pam Kinsinger, director of the Goodland Family Health Center, and Jim Precht (not in photo), hospital financial director. Photo by Tom Betz/The Goodland Star-News

who come to Goodland.

"The prices seem high at times," Hall said, "but I pay it and will continue as long as they come here. I think access to these doctors are worth it."

Jim Precht, chief financial officer of Goodland Regional Medical Center, said that the hospital has been running an "airline service" for more than 25 years, and brings 30 specialists to Goodland to see patients.

Tilghman asked where the people from the area go for specialized care.

Precht said most go to Denver because it's close and that the Front Range area offers more choices closer to home than going east. He said the Hays hospital has stepped up its offerings in recent years, so there are some people going there.

He said mental health was one area where there is a shortage of people to deliver services.

Brian Linin, Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce president and finance manager of Frontier Ag, asked Tilghman what he thought were the options to control costs.

"We think there is a tool kit of things to help control costs," Tilghman replied. "Most are patchwork. Cost are driven by lifestyle, and we think people need to pay attention to the root causes."

"Smoking is an example, because we have a high level of uncompensated costs."

"We can't squeeze the hospitals and doctors. That does not control costs."

Linin said it sounded like an education process, adding that he thinks there should be different health insurance rates for smokers.

"I think it is like the seat-belt laws," Linin said. "It has taken about 20 years, but now more people think about using them."

"And now it is the law," Tilghman added.

"People can shop for their hospital care," Linin said. "We went for a new hospital in Denver for the birth of our children."

Andi Nelson, Chamber director, said she would like to see lower-cost health care. She said she is paying about \$330 a month for insurance and knows a lot of people can't afford it.

Contract awarded for Kanorado addition

By Tom Betz
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County commissioners got two bids Tuesday for an addition on the Kanorado fire station to house the ambulance, choosing the low bid of \$38,950 from Malsom Enterprises of Goodland.

Malsom has 3 1/2 months to put up the 20-by-30 addition to shelter the Kanorado ambulance. The other bid was \$52,100 from Rhoads Construction.

Darwin McClung from Rhoads and Dennis Malsom came for the bid opening.

Commissioner Kevin Rasure excused himself from the discussion, saying he had a potential conflict of interest.

Commissioners Chuck Thomas and Mitch Tiede opened the bids

and compared them to be sure everything was included that had been discussed at a meeting July 10 with the contractors.

"The completion dates are in, and it looks like everything is in that we discussed," Tiede said after comparing the bids.

Tiede made a motion to accept the low bid and Thomas seconded. The vote was 2-0 with Rasure abstaining.

Tiede asked Malsom when he could get started. The contractor said he would get going on the concrete within a week if a power pole and tree could be moved.

Tiede said he had called Midwest Energy about the pole and would call someone about moving the tree.

Thomas asked about the garage door. Malsom said there would be

three remotes as requested.

The addition is to be completed by Nov. 15 under the contract and Malsom said he feels that should not be a problem.

Thomas thanked McClung for bidding on the project, and he thanked the commissioners for seeking local bids.

Malsom thanked the commissioners for their help on the carnival building at the fairgrounds. Rasure said he felt the project had come out very well.

Tiede said getting the trees out helped, and that this fall maybe the county can do something about the north entrance to the parking lot and remove an old wood building nearby.

Government agency warns about possibly bad green beans

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has issued a warning for people not to eat certain brands of French-cut green beans in 14.5 ounce cans produced by Lakeside Foods Inc. of Manitowoc, Wis.

Goodland's Wal-Mart does not handle any of the brands that have been recalled, said Susan McIntyre, assistant manager.

The agency says that the green beans may not have been heated enough to eliminate the potential for botulism poisoning. As Wednesday, however, there had been no reports of illnesses from eating the beans.

Botulism is a life-threatening illness

caused by a bacterium, said the agency. Symptoms can begin from six hours to two weeks after eating food containing botulism toxin. Symptoms could include double or blurred vision, droop eyelids, slurred speech, difficulty swallowing, dry mouth and muscle weakness progressively down the body from the shoulders. Botulism can also cause paralysis of the breathing muscles, which can cause death.

The Lakeside cut green bean are sold under the brands Albertson's, Happy Harvest, Best Choice, Food Club, Bogopa, Valu Time, Hill Country Fare, HEB, Laura Lynn, Kroger, No Name, North Pride,

Shop N Save, Shoppers Valu, Schnucks, Cub Foods, Dierbergs, Flavorite, IGA, Best Choice and Thrifty Main. Specific codes (top line of can code) involved are EAA5247, EAA5257, EAA5267, EAA 5277, EAB5247, EAB5257, ECA5207, ECA5217, ECA5227, ECA5297, ECB5207, ECB 5217, ECB5227 and ECB5307.

People should dispose of any canned goods with the codes. The company has voluntarily recalled all products that could be contaminated. For questions, call Lakeside Foods at (800)466-3834 ext. 4090.

matters of record

District Traffic

The following fines were paid in the Sherman County District Court:
Nov. 22, 2006 — Jesse W. Bequette, \$366 for first conviction while suspended and \$60 for speeding.

May 28 — Mohammed MF Almulaihi, \$126 for improper parking.

June 12 — Elizabeth T. Beiler, \$132 for speeding.

June 14 — Pablo Contreras, \$216 for motor carrier safety rules and regulations.

June 18 — Rafael Delacruz, \$120 for speeding.

June 23 — Taron Echols, \$139 for overweight load.

June 24 — Luke C. Cox, \$126 for driving without license and \$117 for speeding.

July 1 — Mervin J. Csaky, \$186 for overweight load.

July 3 — Tamara S. Ait-Mbarek, \$138 for speeding.

July 4 — Christie A. Bjarnson, \$144 for speeding.

July 6 — Billy L. Baysinger Jr., \$132 for speeding.

July 7 — Jay D. Blair Jr., \$126 for failure to yield and \$10 for no seat belt.

corrections

The Goodland Star-News will correct any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story. Please call our office at (785) 899-2338 to report errors. We believe that news should be fair and factual. We want to keep an accurate record and appreciate you calling to our attention to live up to this standard.

Hospital board rearranges committee appointments

By Sharon Corcoran
The Goodland Star-News

The Goodland Regional Medical Center board elected officers at its July meeting, rearranged committee appointments and learned the clinic has had more patients in the first six months this year than in any of the past three years.

With a vote of 5 to 1 to 1, the board elected officers — Steve Riebel, chair; Darin Neufeld, vice-chair; and Joyce Moore, secretary/treasurer, at its meeting Monday, July 23. Riebel voted "no," and Neufeld abstained. Lynn Hoelting and Jacque Drennan were not present.

Riebel replaces Hoelting, who has held the chair the past five years, and Neufeld and Moore traded offices.

The finance committee comprises Neufeld, chair; Drennan; Randy Coleman, a new member who replaced Chuck Frankenfeld; and Hoelting.

The professional committee is Doug Irvin, chair, Patty Eckhardt, Mary Volk and Moore.

Tina Goodwin, director of the Carnegie Arts Center the past five years, has been hired as director of marketing and development at the hospital.

"She has great ideas," said Administrator Jay Jolly.

The Goodland Family Health Center has seen more patients from January to June this year than in any of the past three, said Pam Kinsinger, clinic manager.

In 2004, about 6,010 patients visited the clinic in the first six months, about 6,200 did in 2005 and 6,120 in 2006. About 6,330 patients visited during the first six months this year, she said.

"We're concerned about what we'll do in winter when we get really busy," she added. The clinic normally sees more patients in the second half of the year, Kinsinger said, with flu and cold season in October, November and December.

The clinic is working on calling patients to tell them when it's time to schedule their mammograms, she said, along with other regular tests.

Medicare covers bone-density scans every two years, said Chief Financial Officer Jim Precht, and the clinic should call patients and tell them when it's time to do it. It's like cultivating your business.

Patients seem to appreciate the reminder, Kinsinger added.

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