

# State health system ready

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services have informed Kansas they believe the state has demonstrated it is prepared for a Tuesday, Jan. 1, start date for KanCare, the state's new system of integrated care for Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program beneficiaries.

"I want to thank the thousands of Kansans from across the state who worked with Lt. Gov. Jeff Colyer, M.D., Secretary Bob Moser, Secretary Shawn Sullivan and their staffs to craft a health care plan that is truly what Kansans want and need," Gov. Sam Brownback said. "Thanks to their efforts, we will have a Medicaid program that will work for Kansans."

Federal and state officials have been in intensive discussions about the state's Section 1115 demonstration application. As it has submitted documents to the federal agency, the state has been posting reports, draft waiver amendments and provider network summaries on its KanCare website, [www.kancare.ks.gov/rediness\\_activities.htm](http://www.kancare.ks.gov/rediness_activities.htm).

"We thank CMS leadership and staff for the time and effort they have dedicated to this process and look forward to continuing these important meetings around our KanCare system," said the lieutenant governor, who is a physician. "Our work together will allow us to ensure a smooth transition for Kansans on Medicaid."

The state and the federal agency will continue work to finalize spe-

cial terms and conditions. The departments of Health and Environment and Aging and Disability Services are ready to launch KanCare following a nearly two-year public discussion on improving care for the 380,000-plus Kansans served by Medicaid.

KanCare includes provisions to ensure members continue to have access to their current doctors during the transition.

A summary of those provisions is available on the KanCare website: [www.kancare.ks.gov/benefits\\_services.htm](http://www.kancare.ks.gov/benefits_services.htm). Other protections include the creation of a KanCare consumer ombudsman, telephone hotlines and state oversight of the plans for members in home and community based services waiver programs.

The state worked with three health plans to achieve measurable goals, and to focus on wellness and care coordination. Savings are not achieved by reducing eligibility or payments to doctors, clinics and hospitals.

KanCare continues current benefits and adds services such as heart and lung transplants and bariatric surgery. Services such as adult preventive dental services, will be offered by the three plans at no cost to the state.

Each Medicaid client has been pre-enrolled in either Amerigroup of Kansas, Sunflower State Health Plan or UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, but members may switch to a different plan between now and April 4.



# Tips to avoid holiday overeating

A Kansas State University nutrition specialist suggests that understanding food science can help people enjoy holiday meals and parties without adding extra pounds.

Traditional holiday foods often are high in calories, with more sugar and fat than most people normally eat, said Tanda Kidd, Kansas State Research and Extension nutrition and physical activity specialist.

The fat content typically provides the mouth a smooth, pleasing feel, but that's not the only reason to reach for more.

Sugar, a simple carbohydrate, triggers neurotransmitters that release hormones (including serotonin) that stimulate a sense of calm and well-being, Kidd said.

The body processes simple carbohydrates quickly, so the sense of well-being is short lived, and that also can prompt a reach for more high-calorie, fattening foods.

To manage holiday events without overindulging, Kidd recommends eating regular meals and perhaps also a snack before a late afternoon or evening event, rather than skipping breakfast and lunch to be able to eat more at a party or festive meal.

She advised eating a variety of foods, including high-fiber foods like fruits and vegetables that are

filling, and fiber-rich whole grain breads, crackers or cereals. These foods have complex carbohydrates that break down slowly to provide lasting energy and contribute to a full, satisfied feeling.

When not overly hungry, guests are more able to pick and choose holiday foods, rather than overindulge in foods that will likely be higher in calories and fat, Kidd said.

Some people have dietary restrictions and are advised to not eat - or to limit - certain foods or food groups, and that can be a burden.

"Saying 'I can't' when invited to enjoy holiday foods can increase stress, which can stimulate the appetite and food cravings," she said.

To enjoy the holiday foods without offending a host or hostess, Kidd suggested two responses:

- If full, politely say "No, thank you. I'm full."
- Choose a small portion - or a taste.

A one-inch slice of pie tastes the same as a three-inch slice of pie, but has one-third the calories, she noted.

The same advice, choosing a small portion and taking the time to enjoy every bite, also applies to family favorite holiday foods, she said.

These traditions may cause use to reflect on memories of past

holidays, but that shouldn't be considered reason for a second - or third - helping, said Kidd, who suggested reserving one or two holiday favorites for specific gatherings to stretch the enjoyment, yet trim a menu - and temptation.

Kidd also suggested adapting a recipe to reduce calories and fat. Examples could include making a pumpkin pie without a crust, substituting egg whites for whole eggs or evaporated skim milk rather than whole milk or cream, or choosing a similar recipe formulated to be lower in calories and fat.

If planning a family or potluck party, the nutrition specialist suggested making a special-occasion family favorite, enjoying a small serving and leaving the leftovers for others.

Kidd had some tips for managing the holidays successfully:

- Choose a small plate to sample, rather, than overindulge.
- Eat slowly. On average, it takes about 20 minutes (after food is ingested) for the body to process food and to signal the brain that hunger is satisfied.
- Consider liquid calories. A full 12-ounce serving of beer has about 150 calories, a five-ounce serving of wine averages 100 calories and an eight-ounce serving of eggnog has 200 to 300 calories.

Alcohol is known to impair sens-

es, and while we frequently are warned about drinking and driving, Kidd said alcohol also impairs judgment at the dinner or buffet table by causing people to lose their sense of how much they are eating.

- Schedule time for 30 or more minutes of physical activity five or more days a week to relieve stress and maintain body functions, including more restful sleep.
- Weigh yourself regularly, such as once a week, mid-week or weekly at the same time of day and with similar clothing.

Water weight can vary two to six pounds; if an increase is consistent, Kidd advises cutting back, rather than continuing to eat more calories than needed with a plan to diet in the new year.

Why do New Year's diets fail? According to Kidd, the eating season typically begins at the end of October with Halloween candy and extends until after Super Bowl Sunday parties and Valentine's Day chocolates.

After three to four months, a change in eating habits can be difficult to overcome, she said.

Information on food, nutrition and health is available at Kansas State Research and Extension offices in each of Kansas' 105 counties and online at [www.ksre.ksu.edu](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu) or [www.ksre.ksu.edu/humannutrition/](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/humannutrition/).

# Board members get recognition

Bill Biermann, Superintendent of Schools along with board members Teresa Sieck, Jessica Cole and Diane Stiles of the Goodland School Board have been honored by the Kansas Association of School Boards for participation in training programs.

Biermann, Sieck, Cole and Stiles received certificates for acquitting at least 25 Leadership Academy points.

The Kansas Leadership Academy encourages school board members and superintendents to seek continuing education to help them

become better district leaders. The association sponsors workshops and seminars throughout the year at which school boards members and superintendents receive points based on the length and content of each seminar. The points are totaled at the end of the program year. Certificates and pins are presented to board members and superintendents who receive at least 75 points. Certificates only are presented to those who receive at least 25 points. Boards with all seven members receiving 25 or more points also receive recognition.

## corrections

The Goodland Star-News will correct any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story.

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We believe that news should be fair and factual. We want to keep an accurate record.

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# Holiday Hours

Our office will be open Saturday,  
December 29 from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. MT  
and closed Monday and Tuesday,  
December 31 and January 1.

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