

A New Home

By Mary Ellen O'Brien Wright, Working Healthy Program Director

During the 2005 legislative session, the Kansas Legislature opted to move a number of health care programs, including the Kansas Medicaid program, under a new health care authority. The Kansas Medicaid program is scheduled to move from the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) to the Department of Administration (DOA) on July 1, 2005. While at the DOA, Medicaid, and other health care programs such as state employee health insurance, will be called the Division of Health Policy and Finance (DHPF). Eventually the DHPF will become its own entity.

Legislators decided to move *Working Healthy* and the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant that supports the program, previously under the SRS Division of Health Care Policy, to the new DHPF. While program administration and policy will be under the DHPF, the Benefits Specialists and program eligibility will remain with SRS. Enrollees services will not be affected by this move.

Working Healthy's Medicare Part D Outreach Efforts

By Nancy Scott, Working Healthy Benefits Specialist Team Leader

Medicare Part D is coming. Beginning January 1, 2006, coverage of prescription drugs will change from Medicaid to the new Medicare Part D for those who are dually eligible. This means that for people with Medicare and Medicaid coverage Medicare Part D will now cover prescription drugs, not Medicaid. Working Healthy staff will be traveling to various SRS Offices throughout the state in the next few weeks and months to provide information about Medicare Part D to community agencies and to beneficiaries. Staff will present information, answer questions and facilitate discussion regarding Medicare Part D. Staff want participants to know that we do not have all the answers about this new program, as it is still in development, but feel that it's not too early to share the information we do have and provide some tips on how to prepare for this change.



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**For more information go to:
<http://www.workinghealthy.org> or call toll free
1-800-449-1439**

... "Medicare Part D" continued from page 1...

Some of the information to be shared will include:

- If a person is Medicaid and Medicare eligible he or she will qualify for "help" with premiums.
- People who have both Medicaid and Medicare will need to enroll in a Medicare drug plan and the options will be available in October 2005; persons who do not select a plan will be automatically enrolled in one.
- In the coming months beneficiaries will receive letters from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) explaining the upcoming changes.
- Contact information for future questions or concerns.

Presentation dates for agency staff have been confirmed and are available online at:

<http://www.workinghealthy.org/PartDOutreach.html>. Presentations for beneficiaries will be scheduled soon. We will be sending invitation letters and presentation dates to all Working Healthy enrollees. Presentation times will include some evenings to accommodate work schedules. The website listed above will also be kept up-to-date and include all dates for agency and beneficiary presentations. We hope that you will take advantage of these presentations and that they will help you to gain a better understanding of Medicare Part D. We are asking that if you wish to attend one of these presentations you RSVP to one of the Working Healthy Benefits Specialists or to Nancy Scott at nas@srskansas.org or call at (785) 291-3461. Please let us know if you need any accommodations or accessible materials.

Benefits Specialists' Corner

This issue features Working Healthy Benefits Specialist Dan Hallacy from the Pittsburg Area SRS Office. Dan can be contacted by phone at (620) 231-5300 ext. 330 or by E-mail at CDLH@srskansas.org.

I enjoy watching sporting events at the local level where participants are still doing it for the pure enjoyment of the sport. I have always tried to be involved in helping to plan, organize or assist in anyway I can to help area youth enjoy their time involved in their sport.

I am somewhat of an electronics junkie when it comes to high tech gizmos as all my fellow Benefit specialist can attest to, from wireless computing to carrying around a wi-fi locator.

I enjoy grilling out when at home and am always on the lookout for a good barbecue restaurant.

I enjoy a different path and new scenery and I think that's why I enjoy being a Benefit Specialist, because the information and resources change so rapidly.

Right now all of us are gearing up for the start of Medicare Part D and trying to help all we can to understand and feel comfortable with this new program. We know there is some anxiety out there concerning these changes in medical care but we want all of the individuals we work with to feel they have access to the correct information and someone they can contact to obtain it. Hopefully we will be able to relieve their worries about these changes.

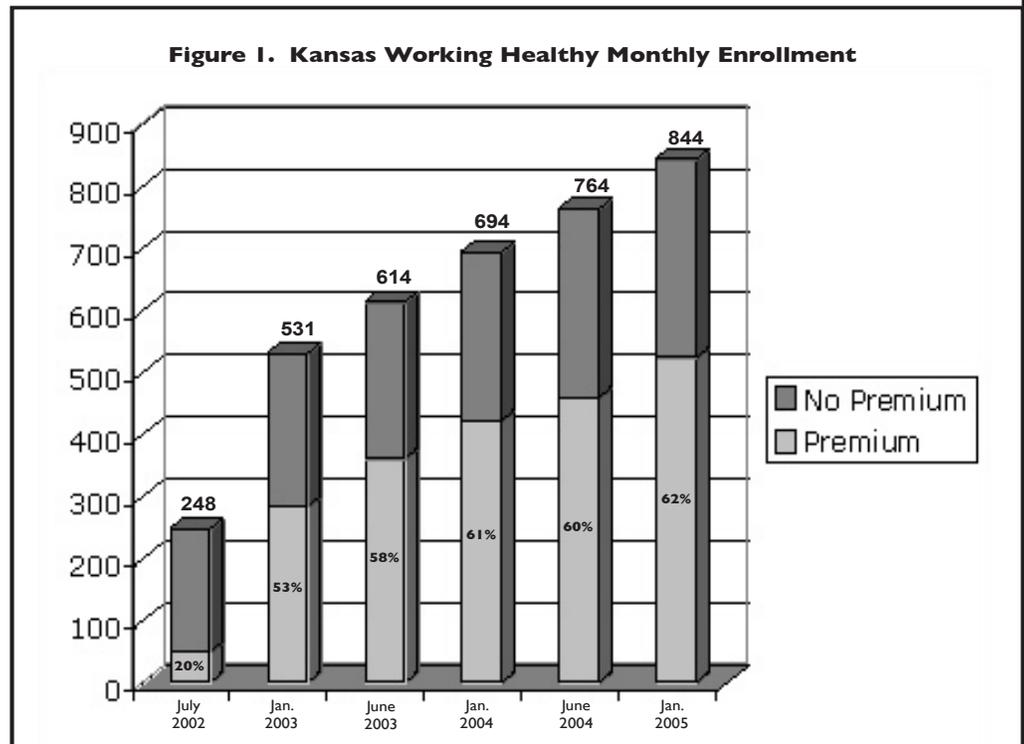
We intend for this "Medicaid Buy-in" program and "benefit assistance" program to be one of the best in the nation and to remain as one of the best in the nation. When we have lost great staff from our program we have been fortunate in getting great new people to replace them. We have also been blessed in keeping a staff with a variety of experiences and educational backgrounds that helps to complement our program by melding into a unique knowledge base.

-Dan Hallacy Working Healthy Benefits Specialist

Working Healthy Enrollment Continues to Rise

By Noelle K. Kurth, KU Evaluation Team

The number of individuals enrolled in *Working Healthy* has continued to rise at a steady rate since the program began in July 2002 (see Figure 1). Enrollment in *Working Healthy* over the past two years has increased approximately 10% every six months. While enrollment continues to grow, each month some individuals also dis-enroll from the program for various reasons. Loss of employment, worsening health conditions, relocation out of state, and difficulties paying premiums are the most frequent reasons individuals cite for disenrollment. Disenrollment from the program has also remained quite constant. Since January 2004, an average of 12 individuals dis-enroll from *Working Healthy* each month. It is important to note that some of these people do re-enroll. For example, in 2004 thirty individuals who had dis-enrolled from *Working Healthy* re-enrolled in the program sometime during the same year.

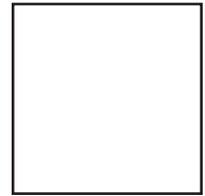


As enrollment in *Working Healthy* has grown, the percentage of enrollees who pay premiums has also consistently risen (see Figure 1). Not only has the number of individuals paying premiums each month increased, the average monthly premium paid by *Working Healthy* enrollees increased from \$62.10 in 2003 to \$70.77 in 2004, indicating increased earnings by participants. As numbers of enrollees, premium payers and average monthly premiums increase, the amount billed for *Working Healthy* coverage likewise continues to increase. In the last quarter of 2004 (October-December), premiums totaled \$104,003 and in the first quarter of 2005 (January-March) premiums totaled \$110,913. While the greatest number of individuals fall into the lowest premium bracket of \$55.00 per month (n=242, 43%), as of May 2005, 26 individuals (5% of total premium payers) are paying from \$130-\$186 monthly for their *Working Healthy* coverage.

For additional information regarding the data and statistics of Kansas' *Working Healthy* program, annual data reports to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for 2003 and 2004 are available at our web site: <http://www.workinghealthy.org>.

WORKING HEALTHY

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Return service requested

**This newsletter and other information regarding Working Healthy can be found
on-line at: <http://www.workinghealthy.org>**

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Additional copies and copies in alternate formats are available upon request by writing the University of Kansas, CRL - Division of Adult Studies, Attn: Noelle, JR Pearson Hall, Room 521, 1122 West Campus Rd., Lawrence, KS 66045-3101, by phone (785) 864-7085, or by E-mail: pixie@ku.edu

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