



Older & Bolder

Jan. - Feb., 2024
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Pantaleo is new SWKAAA director

On January 15, 2024, the South West Kansas Area Agency on Aging (SWKAAA) and the Ford County Housing Authority (FCHA) Board of Directors hired Michelle Pantaleo as the next Executive Director, replacing Brendan Wenzl who resigned in December 2023.

Michelle is a gerontologist having earned a Master's Degree in Human Development and Gerontology from the University of Saint Joseph in West Hartford, Connecticut in 2002. She brings a broad

spectrum of over 27 years of experience working with older adults to SWKAAA:

- hands-on long-term care and home care as a Certified Nursing Assistant and Certified Home Health Care Assistant
- direct services such as case management, utility assistance, rental assistance, and more at a social services nonprofit organization
- managed the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)
- wrote thesis on Grandparents

- Raising Grandchildren
- established and led a municipal Senior Services Department including the operation of two active senior centers with meals, social activities, health and wellness programs, information sessions, and workshops and classes of all kinds

- established a nonprofit organization with the sole mission to raise funds for programs at the two senior centers
- addressed quality of life concerns for older adults

See **Pantaleo**, page 15

Important Dates

FEBRUARY 2024

		1:30PM
05-	Sub-Region IV-Syracuse	12 Sub-Region III-Lakin
	10:00 a.m.	10:00 a.m.
		13 Sub-Region
07-	Sub-Region VI-Medicine Lodge	14 Valentines Day
	10:00 a.m.	19 Presidents Day-SWKAAA offices closed
08-	Sub-Region I-Hugoton	20 Board of Directors Meeting-Dodge City
	1:00 p.m.	10:00 aa.m.
09	Sub-Region V-Lacrosse	

Inside This Issue

• Caregiving	4
• Nutrition	5
• Social Security	7
• Physical Activity	12
• Senior Boomer Expo	16

**January 2024**

January 1
New Year's Day

January 3
Fruitcake Toss Day

January 4
National Spaghetti Day
Trivia Day

January 5
National Bird Day

January 6
Bean Day
Cuddle Up Day

January 8
Bubble Bath Day

January 10
Bittersweet Chocolate Day
Houseplant Appreciation Day

January 12
National Hot Tea Day

January 13
Friday the 13th
Make Your Dream Come True Day
National Rubber Duckie Day

January 14
Dress Up Your Pet Day

January 15
Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday – celebrated on the third Monday
National Bagel Day
National Hat Day

January 19
National Popcorn Day

January 20
National Buttercrunch Day
National Cheese Lover Day

January 21
National Hugging Day

January 22
Chinese New Years – date varies

January 23
National Pie Day

January 27
Chocolate Cake Day

January 29
National Puzzle Day
National Cornchip Day

February 2024
February 1

National Freedom Day
No Politics Day
Spunky Old Broads Day

February 2
Ground Hog Day

February 3
Eat Ice Cream for Breakfast Day – first Saturday of the month
Feed the Birds Day

February 4
Thank a Mailman Day

South West Kansas Area Agency on Aging, Inc.

**Michelle Pantaleo,
Executive Director**

**Kristina Lindow,
Editor**

Our Mission:

“To promote the well being of older Kansans and individuals with disabilities in southwest Kansas.”

Visit us on the web at
www.swkaaa.org
or visit us on Facebook

February 7
Send a Card to a Friend Day – obviously created by a card company
Wave All Your Fingers at Your Neighbor Day

February 8
Boy Scout Day – celebrates the birthday of scouting
Kite Flying Day – in the middle of winter!?! (Perfect in Kansas with our wind!!)

February 10
Chinese New Year – date varies

February 11

See **Dates,**
page 3

Donor List Thank You to Our Donors

Jim and Karen Howard

Ted Koehn

Larry and Jeannie Rudd

Marilyn Yost

Robert and Vickie

Waddell

Macksville VIP Center

Dates, from page two

Don't Cry over Spilled Milk Day
 Make a Friend Day

President's Day – third Monday of the month

February 12
 Abraham Lincoln's Birthday

February 14
 Ash Wednesday – date varies
 National Organ Donor Day
 Valentine's Day

February 15
 Susan B Anthony Day

February 17
 Random Acts of Kindness Day

February 19

February 20
 Love Your Pet Day
 Mardi Gras Fat Tuesday
 Fat Tuesday and Mardi Gras occur in February this year.

February 22
 George Washington's Birthday
 Be Humble Day
 International World Thinking Day
 Walking the Dog Day

February 26
 National Pistachio Day – it's a nutty day!
 Tell a Fairy Tale Day



February 28
 National Tooth Fairy Day – and/or August 22

February 29
 Leap Day – Yes, 2024 is a Leap year with an extra day in it.

January 27th, Chocolate cake day!!

One Bowl Chocolate Cake
 This homemade chocolate cake recipe is super easy to prepare in one bowl for a deliciously moist and fluffy chocolate cake. This is the best chocolate cake I have ever had! Frost with your favorite frosting.

- Ingredients
- 2 cups white sugar
 - 1 ¾ cups all-purpose flour
 - ¾ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
 - 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
 - 1 ½ teaspoons baking soda
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 2 large eggs
 - 1 cup milk
 - ½ cup vegetable oil
 - 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
 - 1 cup boiling water

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).

Grease and flour two 9-inch round baking pans.
 Stir sugar, flour, cocoa, baking powder, baking soda, and salt together in a large bowl.
 Add eggs, milk, oil and vanilla; mix for 2 minutes on medium speed with an electric mixer.
 Stir in the boiling water. The batter will be thin.
 Pour evenly into the prepared pans.
 Bake in the preheated oven until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, about 30 to 35 minutes.
 Cool in the pans for 10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.
Enjoy!

Need a Hot Meal at Noon?



Friendship Meals are available to seniors age 60 and above and their spouses who need a nutritious meal.
 Meal-on-Wheels for seniors 60 and above are available for those who are assessed and qualified as home bound.

A donation of \$3.50 per meal is suggested for eligible seniors.

To find a meal site near you, call Friendship Meals at 1-620-792-1241

Call the local site at least a day in advance to reserve your meals.



Aging & Disability Resource Center

1-855-200-ADRC (2372)

www.kdads.ks.gov

Coping with caregiving



Take Care of Yourself While Caring for Others

It can be a labor of love, and sometimes a job of necessity. Millions of Americans provide unpaid care for someone with a serious health condition each year. These often-unsung heroes provide hours of assistance to others. Yet the stress and strain of caregiving can take a toll on their own health. NIH-funded researchers are working to understand the risks these caregivers face. And scientists are seeking better ways to protect caregivers' health.

Many of us will end up becoming or needing a caregiver at some point in our lives. Chances are we'll be helping out older family members who can't fully care for themselves. Caregiving responsibilities can include everyday tasks, such as helping with meals, schedules, and bathing

and dressing. It can also involve managing medicines, doctor visits, health insurance, and money. Caregivers often give emotional support as well.

People who provide unpaid care for an elderly, ill, or disabled family member or friend in the home are called informal caregivers. Most are middle-aged. Roughly two-thirds are women. Nearly half of informal caregivers assist someone who's age 75 or older. As the elderly population continues to grow nationwide, so will the need for informal caregivers.

Studies have shown that some people can thrive when caring for others. Caregiving may help to strengthen connections to a loved one. Some find joy, fulfillment, and a sense of being appreciated in looking after others. But for many, the strain of caregiving can become overwhelming. Friends

and family often take on the caregiving role without any training. They're expected to meet many complex demands without much help. Many caregivers hold down a full-time job and may also have children or others to care for.

"With all of its rewards, there is

a substantial cost to caregiving—financially, physically, and emotionally," says Dr. Richard J. Hodes, director of NIH's

See **Cope**,
page 9

Medicare Fraud and Abuse Affect All Of Us...

It is estimated that Medicare loses **BILLIONS** of dollars each year to fraud and abuse.

Consider the following tips from the Senior Medicare Patrol to help you **PROTECT, DETECT, and REPORT** concerns...

- Review your Medicare Summary Notice or Explanation of Benefits quarterly for accuracy.

Look for three things :

1. Charges for something you didn't get.
2. Billing for the same thing twice.
3. Services that were not ordered by your doctor.

- Protect your Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security numbers as you would a credit card.
- Do NOT give out personal information to unknown callers, visitors, or providers whom you have not contacted for services.
- REPORT any concerns to the Kansas Senior Medicare Patrol.

For Information or Assistance Call the Kansas Senior Medicare Patrol at 1-800-860-5260



Gut troubles – pain, gassiness, bloating and more

Everyone has pain or discomfort in their gut occasionally. Maybe you ate something that didn't agree with you. Or you had an infection that made you sick to your stomach for a few days.

But if pain and other gut symptoms go on for weeks or longer, something more serious might be wrong. Digestive system diseases and disorders are very common. Around 60 to 70 million people in the U.S. live with a digestive disease.

It's important not to ignore symptoms in your gut. Many digestive disorders are easiest to treat when they first develop.

Potential Causes

One of the most serious gut disorders is inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), although it's not very common. IBD occurs when **immune system** cells in the gut overreact to a perceived threat to your body. Often, that "threat" is the normal bugs that make up the microbiome—the microscopic creatures like bacteria, fungi, and viruses—that live in your gut. This overreaction can damage the digestive (gastrointestinal or GI) tract.

The two main types of IBD are ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease. "Crohn's can occur anywhere in the digestive tract, from the mouth to the anus," says Dr. Judy Cho, an IBD expert at Mount Sinai. Ulcerative colitis happens only in the large intestine.

These two diseases also differ in how deeply they can

damage tissue. "Ulcerative colitis causes damage in the gut lining," explains Dr. Dermot McGovern, who studies IBD at Cedars-Sinai. "Crohn's disease can go all the way through the gut." Severe cases of Crohn's can lead to narrowing of the intestines and even holes in the gut.

Other conditions can harm the lining of the stomach and lead to a type of **inflammation** called gastritis. The most common cause of gastritis is infection with bacteria called *Helicobacter pylori*. Other causes include the long-term use of some pain medications. If left untreated, gastritis can lead to painful ulcers.

Twelve percent of people in the U.S. have irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). "This is a very common disorder. It's characterized by abdominal pain, bloating, and changes in bowel habits," says Dr. Anthony Lembo, an IBS researcher at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

Researchers don't understand exactly what causes IBS. It may have different causes in different people. Sometimes it involves problems with how the brain and gut work together.

Other things that can cause pain and discomfort in the GI tract are acid reflux or food sensitivities.

Pinpointing the Problem

It can be tricky to diagnose a digestive disease because they share a lot of symptoms, explains Cho. Symptoms of

many gut conditions include pain, gassiness, bloating, and diarrhea.

"But for IBD, there are several red-flag symptoms," she says. These are blood in the stool, weight loss, and signs of inflammation found in a blood test. A sign of IBD in children is failure to grow, Cho adds.

IBS can give some people diarrhea and others constipation. Some people go back and forth between the two.

Gastritis and food sensitivities can also cause long-term gut discomfort. To figure out what's causing gut troubles, doctors may need to run a variety of tests. These can

include blood tests and a stool test to look for infection.

Some people may have an imaging test, such as a CT scan. Others may need to have an endoscopy. Endoscopy uses a long, flexible tube with a tiny camera on the end to look in the intestines or stomach.

Treating Pain and Discomfort

While symptoms for different gut disorders can be similar, treatments vary widely. For gastritis caused by bacterial infection, antibiotics are used

See **Gut**,
page 8



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The KanCare Ombudsman's Office has two satellite offices, one in Wichita and one in Olathe, as well as the main office in Topeka. We take phone calls from our toll-free line and assist current Medicaid consumers and people who have questions about the Medicaid application process. We also assist people who need help filling out an application if they call and make an appointment to come in.

Call us today at (855) 643-8180, or visit our [website](http://www.kancare.ks.gov/kancare-ombudsman-office) (www.kancare.ks.gov/kancare-ombudsman-office).

Breaking down food - a closer look at what you eat

Food provides energy and nutrients that are essential for your health. These include proteins, carbohydrates, and fats (called macronutrients), and vitamins and minerals (called micronutrients). Having a balanced diet helps ensure you get all the nutrients your body needs.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans offer guidance on what a balanced diet looks like. These recommendations are based on the latest scientific information about nutrition.

The guidelines are updated every five years because our understanding of what's healthy continues to grow. Scientists are working to learn more about how different nutrients affect the body. They're also looking for better ways to personalize nutritional recommendations.

Finding Nutritious Foods

Macronutrients make up the bulk of the **calories** you eat each day. They provide the nutrients that your body needs to make energy. They also give your cells important building blocks needed for all their different functions, like fighting diseases.

Your body needs only small amounts of each micronutrient. But they are critical for healthy development and disease prevention.

Experts advise adults to stay within their recommended calorie limits while choosing food and drinks that are rich

in nutrients. The guidelines suggest getting 10% to 35% of your calories from protein; 25% to 35% from fat; and 45% to 65% from carbohydrates. Learn how to personalize nutrition recommendations at MyPlate (USDA).

To find the amounts of different nutrients in a food, look at the Nutrition Facts label. You can also find resources about nutrients in foods at Nutrition.gov (USDA).

Meeting Your Body's Needs

Your body still might be able to function when it's not getting enough of the different macronutrients, says Samantha Adas, a nutritionist at NIH, "but that doesn't mean it's optimal."

Proteins are needed for cells to perform critical functions in your body. They're broken down by your body into amino acids. Amino acids are used by cells to build muscle, skin, and organs; break down toxins; and do many other critical jobs.

Proteins can also be used for energy. "They give a stronger sensation of fullness than carbohydrates," says Dr. Christopher Lynch, the acting director of the NIH Office of Nutrition Research.

But, explains Adas, "carbohydrates are the body's preferred source for energy because they provide energy right away."

Your body turns carbohydrates into glucose, a type of sugar. Nearly every cell in

your body uses glucose as its main fuel source.

There are three different types of carbohydrates: simple carbohydrates (sugars), complex carbohydrates (starches), and fiber.

Simple carbs are made of one or two sugar molecules. Your body digests and absorbs these quicker than complex carbohydrates. Complex carbs are larger chains of sugars, so they take longer to break down and move into your blood.

Simple carbohydrates may raise your blood glucose higher and faster than complex carbs. Having blood sugar levels that are too high over time can lead to many health problems.

Limiting how much added sugar you eat to no more than 10% of your daily calories can help lower your health risks. So can choosing more complex carbohydrates, like whole grains, beans, legumes, and starchy vegetables. Complex carbs can help you get more fiber, too. Fruits and vegetables are also a great source of fiber and are rich in micronutrients.

"If you eat a meal that is high in fiber, you feel fuller longer," says Dr. Katherine Anguah, a nutrition researcher at the University of Missouri. This can help you better control your calories.

Most Americans aren't getting the recommended 14 grams of fiber for every 1,000 calories. Anguah is studying

the health benefits of consuming a fiber-rich diet.

Foods rich in fiber are important for gut health. They can also lower the amount of fat and cholesterol (a waxy, fat-like substance) in your blood. Fat and cholesterol buildup can lead to heart disease and stroke. High-fiber foods may help protect against these and other health conditions, like diabetes.

Although too much fat can cause trouble, you still need some in your diet. Fats are broken down into fatty acids. Your body uses these to make energy, build certain cell structures, absorb certain vitamins, and protect your organs. Some organs, like your heart, prefer to use fat as fuel.

Experts recommend limiting a certain type of fat called saturated fats to less than 10% of your daily calories. Saturated fats are solid at room temperature, such as the fats in red meats, lard, and full-fat milk and dairy products. Meanwhile, fats found in nuts, seeds, vegetable oils, and fatty fish have been shown to be beneficial for heart health.

"Healthy fats have a place in the diet, but within reasonable calorie limits," says Dr. Alison Brown, a nutrition scientist at NIH. It's important to watch how much of them you eat.

See **Food,**
page 8

Do you need a new or replacement Social Security card? We're making it easier

If you need a new or replacement Social Security card, we've got great news! You may be able to complete, or at least start, your application on our website – and, if necessary, use our online scheduling tool to book an appointment at a local office.

Start your application

Do you need to apply for a Social Security number (SSN) and card? You can visit www.ssa.gov/number-card to begin the process. You'll answer a series of questions to determine whether you can:

• Complete the application process online.

• Start the application process online, then bring any required documents to your local Social Security office to complete the application, typically in less time.

• Complete the application process at your local office.

If you can't complete the application online, you must visit a Social Security office. To learn more, please review our publication, *Your Social Security Number and Card*, at www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10002.pdf.

Replace your Social Security card

Want to replace your card? The Card Replacement Screener on our Replace Social Security card webpage at www.ssa.gov/number-card/replace-card helps you determine the best way to do so.

Depending on your situation, you may be able to request

a replacement card without visiting a local office. Choose "Answer a few questions" on the Replacement Card webpage at www.ssa.gov/number-card/replace-card to get started. Even if you can't complete the process online and must visit an office, you can still save yourself time by starting the application online.

Were You Asked to Come into an Office? Here's What You Should Know

If you start the application online and we determine you need to come into an office, you can use our new Online Self-Scheduling option. This option allows you to:

- Select your language preference.
- Select the most convenient office to receive service.
- Choose to receive communications and appointment reminders through email or text.
- Conveniently use your mobile device to check-in for your appointment.

You can also reschedule, modify, or cancel your appointment online without having to call or visit the office.

Please note that this service is not available in Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, or American Samoa. We hope to make it available soon.

It's never been easier to do business with us! Please share this information with your friends and family—and post it on social media.



New employee

Vicki Miller

Vicki is the newest Housing Specialist for the Ford County Housing Authority. She is a Kansas native and grew up in Offerle, Kansas.

Vicki has a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration and a Master of Science degree in General Psychology. Vicki also has over 11 years' experience in low-income housing.

In her spare time, she loves to read, crochet, spend time with her family, friends, and pets. Vicki also has a passion for painting, creating landscapes, still life's, and other media.

She is excited to join the Ford County Housing Authority as she loves to help people achieve their dreams and be happy. "Providing safe, decent, and affordable housing is something everyone deserves, and it is an honor for me to help people achieve these important goals."

Gut, from page five

to kill the germs. If medications are causing gastritis, switching to a different kind of drug will usually allow the stomach to heal.

Food sensitivities can be managed by changing your diet. A nutritionist can help you figure out what foods might be irritating your gut. Acid reflux can also often be improved by changes in your diet and medication.

Treatment isn't one-size-fits-all for IBS, Lembo explains, because it can have different causes. Some people can get some relief by adjusting their diet. (See the Wise Choices box for foods that can trigger gut symptoms.)

"We also tell patients to eat two to three meals a day, maybe have a snack or two. But don't eat all day long. Give your gut a chance to rest," he says.

And while stress doesn't cause IBS, it can trigger

flare-ups of symptoms in many people, says Lembo. Stress reduction strategies and cognitive behavior therapy—a type of talk therapy—can help some people manage symptoms of IBS.

IBD is harder to treat than most gut disorders. "It's impossible to cure IBD right now," says Cho. Treatments focus on stopping inflammation long enough to allow the gut tissue to heal, she explains.

Some medications used for IBD control inflammation. Other newer drugs suppress the immune system. But these newer drugs can have serious side effects and are usually only used when others don't work.

"Research has discovered that the earlier you use these medications, the more likely you are to respond," says McGovern. So, people with high-risk disease may get these drugs first now, he explains.

Looking for Better Treatments
Researchers are searching for new ways to prevent and manage gut disorders. Lembo, for example, is testing whether peppermint oil can help the gut muscles relax in people with IBS.

Existing treatments for IBD only work for about a third of people who try them. And even then, McGovern says, they may lose their effects over time.

Both Cho and McGovern are working to understand the genetics of IBD. This information could be used at all stages of the disease, explains Cho. For example, if a test could identify children at higher risk of developing IBD later in life, "theoretically it could be prevented," she says. Strategies could include giving anti-inflammatory drugs before IBD develops or changing the gut microbiome to prevent an immune attack.

"And what we're all interested in is: Can we use some of these genetic signatures to identify new drug targets for IBD?" adds McGovern. That could also eventually help predict who would most likely benefit from a drug, he says.

One of the newest drugs being tested for IBD was based on a genetic discovery, Cho explains. "There's increasing precision in treatment," she says. "Using genetic knowledge to help choose therapies for IBD is something that I think is doable in the next five to 10 years."

For now, talk with your doctor if gut discomfort or pain are impacting your quality of life. Available treatments can help most people get their insides back in order again.

Article compliments of National Institutes of Health

Letter from Social Security

Dear Colleague,

During inclement weather, Social Security may temporarily close our offices to in-person services until travel conditions improve. Your clients can stay up-to-date about the operating status of your local office by visiting our www.ssa.gov/agency/emergency page. There, they can sign up for email alerts so

they'll be notified right away when offices in their area are temporarily closed for in-person services.

Did you know that most business does not require a visit to a Social Security office?

See **Letter,**
page 10

Food, from page six

Fats have more than twice as many calories per gram as protein or carbohydrates, so can add extra calories to your day. Eating too many calories can lead to weight gain. Excess weight and obesity can increase your risk for many serious diseases.

Getting Personal

Our genetic makeup interacts with our diet and may affect how each person's body breaks down food. Scientists are now digging deeper to better understand these

differences. NIH has launched a precision nutrition study to learn more about how various food components affect people differently. The study is enrolling 10,000 people to learn what factors predict how people's bodies will respond to different types of foods.

The researchers hope to learn how to tailor what you eat based on your genes, culture, and environment to improve your health. Learn more at Nutrition for Precision Health.

Cope, from page four

National Institute on Aging. “One important insight from our research is that because of the stress and time demands placed on caregivers, they are less likely to find time to address their own health problems.”

Informal caregivers, for example, may be less likely to fill a needed prescription for themselves or get a screening test for breast cancer. “Caregivers also tend to report lower levels of physical activity, poorer nutrition, and poorer sleep or sleep disturbance,” says Dr. Erin Kent, an NIH expert on cancer caregiving.

Studies have linked informal caregiving to a variety of

long-term health problems. Caregivers are more likely to have heart disease, cancer, diabetes, arthritis, and excess weight. Caregivers are also at risk for depression or anxiety. And they’re more likely to have problems with memory and paying attention.

“Caregivers may even suffer from physical health problems related to caregiving tasks, such as back or muscle injuries from lifting people,” Kent adds.

Caregivers may face different challenges and risks depending on the health of the person they’re caring for. Taking care of loved ones with cancer or dementia can be especially demanding. Research suggests that these

caregivers bear greater levels of physical and mental burdens than caregivers of the frail elderly or people with diabetes.

“Cancer caregivers often spend more hours per day providing more intensive care over a shorter period of time,” Kent says. “The health of cancer patients can deteriorate quickly, which can cause heightened stress for caregivers. And aggressive cancer treatments can leave patients greatly weakened. They may need extra care, and their medications may need to be monitored more often.”

Cancer survivorship, too, can bring intense levels of uncertainty and anxiety. “A hallmark of cancer is that it may return

months or even years later,” Kent says. “Both cancer survivors and their caregivers may struggle to live with ongoing fear and stress of a cancer recurrence.”

Dementia can also create unique challenges to caregivers. The health care costs alone can take an enormous toll. One recent study found that out-of-pocket spending for families of dementia patients during the last five years of life averaged more than \$60,000, which was 81% higher than for older people who died from other causes.

Research has found that caregivers for people with dementia have particularly high levels of stress hormones. Caregivers and care recipients often struggle with the problems related to dementia, such as agitation, aggression, trouble sleeping, wandering, and confusion. These caregivers spend more days sick with an infectious disease, have a weaker immune response to the flu vaccine, and have slower wound healing.

One major successful and expanding effort to help ease caregiver stress is known as REACH (Resources for Enhancing Alzheimer’s Caregiver Health). Just over a decade ago, NIH-funded researchers showed that a supportive, educational program for dementia caregivers could greatly improve their quality of life and reduce rates of clinical depression. As part of the program, trained staff connected with caregivers over six months by making several home visits, telephone calls, and structured

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST
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Medicare Enrollment Form

Companies and agents selling Medicare Advantage and Prescription Drug plans cannot claim to be coming from or sent by Medicare.



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SMPRESOURCE.ORG

See **Cope2**,
page 10

Cope2, from page nine

telephone support sessions.

“REACH showed that what caregivers need is support. They need to know that there are people out there and resources available to help them,” says Dr. John Haaga, who oversees NIH’s behavioral and social research related to aging. REACH II, a follow-up intervention, was tailored for culturally diverse caregivers.

The REACH program is now being more widely employed. It’s been adapted for use in free community-based programs, such as in local Area Agencies on Aging. It’s also being used by the U.S. Department of Veterans

Affairs and by the Indian Health Service, in collaboration with the Administration for Community Living.

“We know how to support families caring for an older adult. But that knowledge is not easily accessible to the families who need it,” says Dr. Laura Gitlin, a coauthor of the REACH study and an expert on caregiving and aging at Johns Hopkins University. “Caregivers need to know it’s not only acceptable, but recommended, that they find time to care for themselves. They should consider joining a caregiver’s support group, taking breaks each day, and keeping up with

Letter, from page eight

Our online services allow your clients to apply for retirement, disability, and Medicare benefits online, check the status of an application or appeal, request a replacement Social Security card, print a benefit verification letter, and more.

Those who can’t complete their business online can call us toll-free at 1-800-772-1213 between 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. local time to speak to a representative. For quicker access to a representative, try calling early in the day (between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. local time) or later in the afternoon (between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. local time). We are less busy later in the week (Wednesday to Friday) and later in the month. We also offer many automated telephone services 24 hours a day, without speaking to a representative.

While appointments are not

required, they are strongly recommended. An appointment reduces the wait time and ensures that your client knows what documents to bring, so that we can complete their request in one visit. Our offices tend to be less busy later in the day, later in the week, and later in the month.

To learn more about scheduling an appointment and our safety measures and restrictions before visiting our offices, visit our webpage, How to Get Help from Social Security.

Please share this information with your family, friends, and clients.

Sincerely,

John Powell
Regional Communications
Director

Social Security Administration

their own hobbies and interests.”

To learn more about aging-related and dementia caregiver resources, contact NIH’s National Institute on Aging at 1-800-222-2225 or niaic@nia.nih.gov (link sends e-mail). To learn

about cancer-related caregiver resources, contact NIH’s National Cancer Institute at 1-800-422-6237. See the Web Links box to find a variety of online caregiving resources.



KanCare Ombudsman
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**Questions about KanCare?
Need Help?**

Kansas Medicaid, known as KanCare, can be hard to understand. The KanCare Ombudsman* office can help with:

- Answers to questions
- Resolving issues
- Understanding letters from KanCare
- Responding when you disagree with a decision or change
- Completing an application or renewal
- Filing a complaint (grievance)
- Filing an appeal or fair hearing
- Learning about in-home services, also called Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)

*An ombudsman is known as a problem solver.

Contact Us

Toll Free: 855-643-8180

Relay: 711

Email:

KanCare.Ombudsman@ks.gov

Website:

www.KanCareOmbudsman.ks.gov

Facebook:

www.Facebook.com/KanCareOmbudsman

Economic & Employment Services Energy Assistance

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a Federally funded program that helps eligible households pay a portion of their home energy costs by providing a one-time per year benefit.

The 2024 LIEAP application period will begin December 18, 2023 and will continue until the close of business on Friday, March 29, 2024. If you would like to receive a paper application or if you have questions about an application you've submitted, you can call 1.888.369.4777.

The following summary describes basic LIEAP eligibility provisions. Additional information may be obtained by calling 1-888-369-4777.

Persons Eligible

In order to qualify, applicants must meet the following requirements:

An adult living at the address must be personally responsible for paying the heating costs incurred at the current residence, payable either to the landlord or the fuel vendor.

Applicants must demonstrate a recent history of payments toward purchase of the primary heating energy.

See **LEAP**,
page 14

SOUTHWEST KANSAS SENIOR CITIZENS LAW PROJECT

AAA SCHEDULE 2024

Kansas Legal Services

DATE	SENIOR CENTERS	KLS ATTORNEY	TIME
01-04-24	Pratt Senior Center	Noah Hahs	10:30am
01-04-24	Great Bend Senior Center	Noah Hahs	1:30pm
01-12-24	Dodge City Senior Center	Noah Hahs	10:00am
01-19-24	Liberal Senior Center	Noah Hahs	10:00am
01-19-24	Garden City Senior Center	Noah Hahs	1:00pm
DATE	SENIOR CENTERS	KLS ATTORNEY	TIME
02-01-24	Larned Senior Center	Noah Hahs	11:00am
02-01-24	Great Bend Senior Center	Noah Hahs	1:30pm
02-02-24	Ulysses Senior Center	Noah Hahs	1:00pm
02-09-24	Dodge City Senior Center	Noah Hahs	10:00am
02-16-24	Liberal Senior Center	Noah Hahs	10:00am
02-16-24	Garden City Senior Center	Noah Hahs	1:00pm
DATE	SENIOR CENTERS	KLS ATTORNEY	TIME
03-01-24	Scott City Senior Center	Noah Hahs	12:00pm
03-07-24	Great Bend Senior Center	Noah Hahs	1:30pm
03-08-24	Dodge City Senior Center	Noah Hahs	10:00am
03-15-24	Liberal Senior Center	Noah Hahs	10:00am
03-15-24	Garden City Senior Center	Noah Hahs	1:00pm
DATE	SENIOR CENTERS	KLS ATTORNEY	TIME
04-04-24	Pratt Senior Center	Noah Hahs	10:30am
04-04-24	Great Bend Senior Center	Noah Hahs	1:30pm
04-05-24	Syracuse Senior Center	Noah Hahs	11:00am
04-10-24	Tribune Senior Center	Noah Hahs	1:30pm
04-12-24	Dodge City Senior Center	Noah Hahs	10:00am
04-12-24	Meade Senior Center	Noah Hahs	2:30pm

* An attorney will visit only if appointments are scheduled. Please contact your local Senior Center or Kansas Legal Services (620-227-7349) if you plan to meet with the attorney.

You're never too old - keep active as you age



We've all heard that exercise is good for you. Did you know that it's as true for older people as it is for any age group? You're never too old to get moving, get stronger, and improve your health.

Fitting exercise and physical activity into your day can enhance your life in so many ways. Regular physical activity can improve your balance and boost or maintain your strength and fitness. It may also improve your mood and help you manage or lessen the impact of conditions like diabetes, heart disease, osteoporosis, and depression.

Despite these proven benefits, exercise and physical

activity rates among older people are surprisingly low. Only about 30% of people ages 45 to 64 say they engage in regular leisure-time physical activity. This falls to 15% of those between the ages of 65 and 74 and 5% of people age 85 and older.

Experts recommend four types of exercise for older adults: endurance, balance, strength, and flexibility. Brisk walking, dancing, and other endurance exercises improve the health of your heart, lungs, and circulatory system. These exercises can make it easier for you to mow the lawn, climb stairs, and do other daily activities. Strength exercises include lifting weights or using resistance bands. They

can increase muscle strength to help with activities such as carrying groceries or lifting grandchildren. Balance exercises can help prevent falls—a major health risk for older adults. Stretching, or flexibility exercises, can give you more freedom of movement for bending to tie your shoes or looking over your shoulder as you back out of the driveway.

“Even if you haven't been active previously, it's important to get started and stay active,” says Dr. Richard J. Hodes, director of NIH's National Institute on Aging. “We know that people want to live independently for as long as they possibly can. By exercising regularly and including more physical activity in their daily routine, older people can preserve their physical function, which is key to doing the everyday things they want to do.”

To help you get started and keep moving, NIH brought together some of the nation's leading experts on aging, exercise, and motivation. They developed a guide to exercise for older adults. The guide serves as the basis for a national exercise and physical activity campaign for people ages 50 and older. It's called *Go4Life*.

“Older adults can exercise safely, even those who have physical limitations,” Hodes says. “*Go4Life* is based on studies showing the benefits of exercise and physical activity for older people, including those with chronic

health conditions.”

Go4Life exercises are designed to be done safely at home without special equipment or clothing. The free book *Exercise & Physical Activity: Your Everyday Guide from the National Institute on Aging* is the core resource for the campaign. Other free materials, such as tip sheets, are also available. *Workout to Go*, a mini exercise guide, shows you how you can be active anytime, anywhere.

To learn more, visit the *Go4Life* website at go4life.nia.nih.gov. You'll find exercises, success stories, and tips to help you stay motivated. Or call 1-800-222-2225, or e-mail niaic@nia.nih.gov (link sends e-mail).

Wise Choices

Benefits of Exercise

Exercise and physical activity can help you:

Maintain and improve your physical strength and fitness.

Improve your ability to do everyday things.

Improve your balance.

Manage and improve diseases like diabetes, heart disease, and osteoporosis.

Reduce feelings of depression and may improve mood and overall well-being.

Improve your ability to shift quickly between tasks, plan an activity, and ignore irrelevant information.

Physical activity leads to good health

Almost anyone, at any age, can do some type of physical activity. You can still exercise even if you have a health condition like heart disease, arthritis, chronic pain, high blood pressure, or diabetes. In fact, physical activity may help. For most older adults, physical activities like brisk walking, riding a bike, swimming, weightlifting, and gardening are safe, especially if you build up slowly. You may want to talk with your doctor about how your health condition might affect your ability to be active.

Staying physically active: Alzheimer's disease and

related dementias

Researchers are assessing the benefit of exercise to delay mild cognitive impairment (MCI) in older adults and to improve brain function in older adults who may be at risk for developing Alzheimer's disease. Older adults with MCI may be able to safely do more vigorous forms of exercise, similar to older adults without MCI, provided there are no other underlying health concerns.

Being active and getting exercise may help people with Alzheimer's or another dementia feel better and can help them maintain a healthy weight and have regular toilet and sleep habits. If you are a

caregiver, you can exercise together to make it more fun.

Tips for helping a person with dementia stay active

Take a walk together each day. Exercise is good for caregivers, too!

Use exercise videos or check your local TV guide to see if there is a program to help older adults exercise.

Dance to music.

Be realistic about how much activity can be done at one time. Several short "mini-workouts" may be best.

Make sure he or she wears comfortable clothes and shoes that fit well and are made for exercise.

Make sure he or she drinks water or juice after exercise.

Even if the person has trouble walking, they may be able to:

Do simple tasks around the home, such as sweeping and dusting.

Use a stationary bike.

Use soft rubber exercise balls or balloons for stretching or throwing back and forth.

Use stretching bands.

Lift weights or household items such as soup cans.

Exercising with arthritis

For people with arthritis, exercise can reduce joint pain and stiffness. It can also help with losing weight, which reduces stress on the joints.

Flexibility exercises such as upper- and lower-body stretching and tai chi can help keep joints moving, relieve stiffness, and give you more freedom of movement for

everyday activities.

Strengthening exercises, such as overhead arm raises, will help you maintain or add to your muscle strength to support and protect your joints.

Endurance exercises make the heart and arteries healthier and may lessen swelling in some joints. Try activities that don't require a lot of weight on your joints, such as swimming and biking.

If you have arthritis, you may need to avoid some types of activity when joints are swollen or inflamed. If you have pain in a specific joint area, for example, you may need to focus on another area for a day or two.

Physical activity and COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease)

If you have COPD, talk with your healthcare provider or a pulmonary therapist to learn what he or she recommends. You may be able to learn some exercises to help your arms and legs get stronger and/or breathing exercises that strengthen the muscles needed for breathing.

Pulmonary rehabilitation is a program that helps you learn to exercise and manage your disease with physical activity and counseling. It can help you stay active and carry out your day-to-day tasks.

See **Active,**
page 14

To Begin Receiving Older & Bolder

Please Contact:

236 San Jose Dr.

PO BOX 1636

Dodge City, KS 67801

Phone: 620-225-8230

Email: swksaaa@swksaging.org

OR

Cut out this ad, fill out with your information and mail to above address



Full Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Active, from page 13

Exercising with type 2 diabetes

For people with diabetes, exercise and physical activity can help manage the disease and help you stay healthy longer. Walking and other forms of daily exercise can help improve glucose levels in older people with diabetes. Set a goal to be more active most days of the week, and create a plan for being physically active that fits into your life and that you can follow. Your healthcare team can help.

A few easy steps to be more active:

Stretch during TV commercial breaks.

Walk around when you talk on the phone.

Take more steps by parking farther away from stores, movie theaters, or your office.

Exercising when you are overweight

If you are overweight, don't let that stop you from doing physical activities, including all four types of exercises. If you have difficulty bending or moving easily or feel self-conscious, try different activities, like walking, water exercises, dancing, or weightlifting, to see what works best for you. Anything that gets you moving—even for only a few minutes a day in the beginning — is a healthy start.

Exercise and heart health

Your heart keeps your body running. As you grow older, some changes in the heart and blood vessels are normal, but

others are caused by disease. Choices you might make every day, such as eating healthy, maintaining a healthy weight, and aiming to be more physically active, can contribute to heart health. Inactive people are nearly twice as likely to develop heart disease as those who are active. A lack of physical activity can worsen other heart disease risk factors as well, such as high blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels, high blood pressure, diabetes and prediabetes, and overweight and obesity. Being physically active is one of the most important things you can do to keep your heart healthy. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week.

Sidney's story

"About 5 years ago, I had triple bypass surgery. I didn't exercise much before my surgery, but I knew I needed to be more active to stay healthy. I was worried about pushing myself. I started slowly and gradually built up to running outside and on the treadmill at my gym. Being active makes me feel better and it's good for my heart."

Exercising with osteoporosis

Weight-bearing exercises, which force you to work against gravity, such as walking, jogging, or dancing three to four times a week, are best for building muscle and strengthening bones. Try some strengthening and balance exercises, too, to help avoid falls, which could cause

a broken bone. Doing these exercises is good for bone health for people with osteoporosis and those who want to prevent it.

Exercising with chronic pain

Most people living with chronic pain can exercise safely, and it can assist with pain management. In fact, being inactive can sometimes lead to a cycle of more pain and loss of function. Talk to your doctor about what exercises/activities might be right for you. Each type of exercise—endurance, strength, balance, and flexibility — has its own benefits, so a combination may be best.

Exercise can help you maintain a healthy body weight,

which may relieve knee or hip pain. Putting on extra weight can slow healing and make some pain worse. Remember to listen to your body when exercising and participating in physical activities. Avoid over-exercising on "good days." If you have pain, swelling, or inflammation in a specific joint area, you may need to focus on another area for a day or two. If something doesn't feel right or hurts, seek medical advice right away.

Quick tip

Pain rarely goes away overnight. Talk with your doctor about how long it may take before you feel better. As your pain lessens, you can likely become even more active.

Farm Animals

K	N	C	D	B	A	L	H	C	F	S	O	A	E
E	S	G	E	F	U	L	P	I	I	C	A	L	F
O	N	O	S	E	L	F	S	D	D	N	E	H	H
G	L	A	T	F	B	H	F	L	R	O	A	C	D
O	E	T	G	I	S	E	S	A	A	D	A	H	U
O	I	A	M	A	L	L	E	S	L	M	R	I	C
S	O	A	D	E	E	R	K	S	G	O	B	C	K
E	P	T	R	S	N	M	B	D	H	A	S	K	B
E	I	T	U	B	E	E	I	N	B	N	N	E	K
R	I	I	L	R	E	S	R	O	H	I	K	N	O
E	C	E	G	H	K	A	D	C	A	M	S	I	M
C	D	O	G	O	R	E	S	R	A	A	K	O	H
G	S	G	E	E	S	E	Y	S	A	L	E	F	N
H	S	O	S	S	H	E	E	P	L	S	E	G	A

BEES
TURKEY
ANIMALS
BUFFALO
HORSE
DUCK
BIRDS
DOG
GOAT
FISH
CHICKEN
CALF
LLAMA
DEER
GOOSE
SHEEP
BISON
HEN
GEESE
LAMB

Pantaleo, *from page one*

living in long-neglected inner city neighborhoods created and taught several non-credit courses related to aging for two municipal adult education programs developed and taught a 3-credit upper level sociology course titled Aging in American Society for Central Connecticut State University taught at 4 colleges/universities Psychology of Aging, Adult Development, Lifespan Development, Principles of Sociology and General Psychology identified a need for senior services specific to older adults living with HIV and secured a \$1,000,000 grant to open a dedicated senior center to offer programs and services aligned with the Healthy People 2030 five Social Determinants of Health Michelle comes to Kansas from Fort Worth, Texas and prior to that her home state

of Connecticut. Michelle most recently held the position of Director of Client Services at the AIDS Outreach Center (AOC) in Fort Worth and was responsible for the newly created Seasoned Survivors program and senior center, HUD Housing Assistance Programs, Medical and Non-Medical Case Management, Nutrition Center, Medical Transportation, and Outreach Services. Michelle is married to her husband, Roger Clough, and they are raising their two beloved miniature dachshunds, Sobe and Bina. Michelle enjoys cooking and baking, selling vintage and antique items on eBay, exploring new areas, hiking, motorcycle and ATV riding, travel, and cruises. Michelle looks forward to investing her leadership qualities and working beside the dedicated team of passionate individuals who put SWKAAA's customers first.



LEAP, *from page 11*

One-on-One LIEAP Application Support: DCF, along with Atmos Energy, Black Hills Energy, Evergy and Kansas Gas Services, is offering in-person assistance to Kansans who are applying for LIEAP benefits. Find a location near you by calling 1.888.369.4777. The combined gross income (before deductions) of all persons living at the address may not exceed 150% of the federal poverty level according to the guidelines listed below:

2024 Income Eligibility Guidelines

Persons Living at the Address:
Maximum Gross Monthly Income

1:	\$1,823
2:	\$2,465
3:	\$3,108
4:	\$3,750
5:	\$4,393
6:	\$5,035
7:	\$5,678
8:	\$6,320
9:	\$6,963
10:	\$7,605

11: \$8,248
12: \$8,890
+1 \$643 for each additional person

address
Type of dwelling
Type of heating fuel

Benefits
Benefit levels vary according to the following factors:
Household income
Number of persons living at the

See **LEAP,**
page 16

Let us help brighten your day through...



SILVER SOUND

Telephone reassurance program to help positively impact loneliness, depression and anxiety

- Receive A Call Once Weekly
- Think Through Needs
- Share Practical Tips
- Create Community Relationships
- Promote Social Connection
- Combat Loneliness
- Alleviate Isolation
- Conduct Wellness Check-ins

Southwest Kansas Area Agency on Aging

Contact Evie Griffith: 620-225-8230

LIEAP Online Application Information



Website:

Visit <https://www.dcf.ks.gov/> and click **Apply for Services** in the upper right corner

For technical support, call 1-877-782-7358



Helpful Documents when Applying:

The following documents are helpful for clients to have in front of them when beginning the LIEAP application process.

- Date of birth for all people living in the home
- Proof of income for all adults in the home
- Current heating and electric utility bills
- Landlord name and phone number



Account Information:

- All clients **must have a Self Service Portal (SSP) account** to apply for benefits
- Passwords **expire every 60 days**
- Users **are not prompted** to reset their password after 60 days
- Returning SSP users who have trouble signing in should try the **Forgot User Name** and/or **Forgot Password** links prior to creating a new account

If a user does not have an email address tied to their account and/or remember their security questions, they will need to create a new account

SAVE *the* DATE

SOUTHWEST KANSAS
AREA AGENCY ON AGING'S
SENIOR BOOMER EXPO

APRIL 25, 2024

DODGE CITY CIVIC CENTER

OLDER
AMERICANS
MONTH



POWERED BY CONNECTION: MAY 2024

Join us in promoting Aging - and how we all benefit when older adults remain engaged, active and independent.

For more information, please contact Michelle Pantaleo at michelle.pantaleo@swksaging.org or Serena Watkins at 620-225-8230.

› Single Sign On

The Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) offer **single sign on** for clients who use either SSP to apply for DCF or Medical programs.

This means if a client has an account they use to apply for medical assistance, they can use those same account credentials to apply for LIEAP on the DCF SSP. In addition, if they have an account they use to apply for other DCF programs (Food Assistance, Child Care and/or TANF), the same account can be used to apply for LIEAP.