

# HEALTHPLAN

BLUE CROSS AND BLUE SHIELD OF KANSAS  
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# HEALTHPLAN

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## Obesity - it starts early

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**I**t might surprise you to know that the No. 1 health problem in the United

States is not cancer, heart disease or arthritis. It is obesity, a condition that we have created ourselves by the poor choices we make when it comes to our diet and nutrition.

In Kansas, more than one in five adults are obese and almost three in five are overweight. The problem begins in childhood – an estimated 40 percent of today's children are overweight or clinically obese – and literally, grows into an adult problem.

Many chronic conditions, such as heart disease, diabetes, skeletal problems and hypertension, are linked directly to poor diet and being overweight.

Below are a few key steps you can take to improve your eating habits:

- Eat more fruits, vegetables and grain products
- Scale back on salt and sugar
- Limit foods that are high in cholesterol
- Learn healthy cooking habits
- Eat in moderation by understanding portion sizes

Visit [www.bcbsks.com/resourceblue](http://www.bcbsks.com/resourceblue) or call 1-877-867-9648 to learn how to receive discounts on nutritional counseling through our Resource Blue program.

## HEALTHY options can put you on the road to good health

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas recently unveiled Healthy Options, a series of care management programs that can be your road to good health. Healthy Options programs are designed to help members with the diseases listed below better understand and manage their health conditions.

- Diabetes
- Congestive heart failure
- Coronary artery disease

Members who participate in one of the free and voluntary Healthy Options programs periodically receive information on steps

they can take to stay healthy, in addition to following their doctors' treatment plans. A Healthy Options nurse care manager contacts each participating member on a regular basis to offer one-on-one guidance and support in managing their condition. Now you can start down the road to good health by taking advantage of the Healthy Options care management programs. For access to additional information on a wide variety of topics that can help you make healthy living choices, visit [www.bcbsks.com/resourceblue](http://www.bcbsks.com/resourceblue) or you may call 1-800-520-3137.

## Get BCBSKS news even faster

Healthplan has long been the company's primary publication to keep you, the employer, informed about what is happening at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas. But did you know that we offer an additional

way for you to stay abreast of what's new?

Employers of all sizes are invited to sign up for our e-Newsletter. Sent via e-mail to those who sign up, **e-News** serves as a

## New Medicare subsidiary formed



**I**n an effort to enhance its opportunity to win a contract to handle Medicare operations in a four-state region, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas created Wheatlands Administrative Services, a wholly-owned subsidiary dedicated solely to its Medicare business.

Wheatlands recently assumed responsibility from its parent organization for all activities associated with its roles as the fiscal intermediary for Medicare Part A in Kansas and the carrier for Part B in Kansas, Nebraska and Northwest Missouri. Wheatlands also has responded to a request for proposal to serve as Medicare contractor for the newly created Jurisdiction 5 (Parts A and B in Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri and Iowa). The winner of the contract is expected to be announced in July 2007.

Approximately 350 people are employed by Wheatlands. The organizational structure for the new subsidiary consists of its own board of directors as well as a management team to run day-to-day operations.

## www.bcbsks.com

supplement to Healthplan, providing timely details of what's new on our Web site and other information about BCBSKS.

To sign up simply go to [www.bcbsks.com](http://www.bcbsks.com), select the

Employers button from the home page and click the E-Mail List link in the left menu.

Don't miss your opportunity to get the latest information right in your e-mail inbox

## Healthier school vending machines

**S**lowly but surely elementary and middle school students are being weaned of sugary soft drinks – at least while they're on school grounds.

In a deal brokered by former President Bill Clinton and the American

Heart Association, the nation's largest beverage distributors have agreed to begin stocking their elementary and middle school vending machines with water, unsweetened juice and low-fat milk. High school vending machines will continue to offer juice, sports drinks and diet sodas.

Even without the efforts of politicians and charity groups, many school districts around the country are voluntarily responding to the child obesity crisis by getting rid of soda and candy in vending machines and replacing them with healthier items such as nutrition bars, dried fruits and nuts.

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## Healthier school vending machines — cont.

Clinton's Presidential Foundation continues targeting obesity in children but realizes solving the problem will not happen overnight. The agreement is scheduled to be phased in over the next three years. The Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 9 million school children between the ages of six and 19 are overweight. That's a number that's doubled since 1980 and tripled among adolescents. And, there's even more work to do in exposing children to nutritious food. While the Department of Agriculture sets detailed standards for nutrient content and portion sizes for the official school meals, it currently has little authority to regulate foods sold outside those meals, whether in vending machines or a la carte (snack) lines in cafeterias.

The good news is that it appears some schools are finally getting the message. Now it may be time for the message to be spread *outside* of the school grounds.

## Customer satisfaction rates high once again

Historically, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas has rated well in customer satisfaction surveys. Now, a recently completed survey conducted by The Research Partnership once again cites the company for having high customer satisfaction marks. "It's important to note that the high marks represent not only favorable customer service, but also satisfaction with the company's products, services and contacts with BCBSKS personnel," notes Shelley Pittman, vice president of internal sales and member relations.

The Research Partnership, with offices in New York and London, is an independent, international market research agency that provides market research and consultancy to the health care industry.

The survey was conducted by telephone over a three-week period and consisted of 600 respondents representing four lines of business (group 1 – 50, group over 50, individual under age 65 and individual over age 65). The questions were rated on a five-point scale with 5 being the most favorable. Here's a capsulated look at some of the impressive results captured by the survey:

- 85% responded favorably or very favorably that they would renew their health plan
- 81% of the respondents indicated a favorable or very favorable rating to their overall impression of BCBSKS
- 78% rated their current health plan



- favorably or very favorably
- 83% indicated their overall experience with customer service was positive
- 78% responded favorably or very favorably that the enrollment application was easy to complete

The last set of questions centered on the rating of the customer service representative. The questions focused on the rep's willingness to help, courtesy level, knowledge, professionalism and understanding of the problem. An overall 84% of respondents rated these categories favorably or very favorably.

"Being known for good customer service allows no room for sitting on one's laurels," says Pittman. "We're utilizing all of the data we received to identify improvement opportunities."



## BCBSKS underwrites "Eat Small" TV spots

Each message only lasts 15 seconds. But each message is a powerful one. Centered on the fact that American children face an obesity problem, the three spots feature an "Eat Small" theme. Each message reminds children (and parents) to resist the temptation to "super-size" their meals. The Eat Small spots began airing on KPTS, Wichita in late October and are scheduled to run for about 12 months on Tuesdays during children's daytime programming.

## Offering Solid Value for Kansans

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas is proud of our nearly 65-year heritage of providing Kansans with quality health insurance and superior service. We're sharing information about our company as part of a new community report, entitled Solid Value for Kansans. Recently, the colorful flier was distributed to more than 360,000 Kansans as a freestanding insert in several newspapers across the state. The report offers readers insight into the solid value that Blue Cross provides to Kansans and our state.

The company is committed to offering a variety of high-quality products designed to serve all sectors of our community. We strive to meet the needs of businesses large and small, individuals and families, those on Medicare, low-income and previously uninsured Kansans.

Our broad portfolio of products includes coverage for health, dental, life, cancer-only, hospital indemnity plans and more. By offering flexibility in benefit design and dozens of benefit options, we're better able to help address individual needs.



You can view the community report publication online at [www.bcbsks.com/solid](http://www.bcbsks.com/solid). Or look for the Solid Value for Kansans icon whenever you visit our site.

## BCBSKS comes up big for United Way



United Way received generous support from hundreds of BCBSKS employees in Topeka, Wichita and Salina. Here's a quick glance of the locations and the donations to the 2006 campaign.

**Topeka - \$216,006**

**Wichita - \$3,553**

**Salina - \$1,724**



Additionally, a \$25,000 donation from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas Foundation was presented to United Way of Greater Topeka. The United Way of the Plains and the Salina Area United Way each received a \$5,000 donation from the foundation.

## Q&A

**Q:** If a member is covered by the Medicare Exclusion Rider (MER), do they have to sign up for Medicare Part B?

**A:** Medicare Part B is the medical-surgical and outpatient services portion of Medicare coverage. It is important for members with MER to have the medical insurance program of Medicare. If a member elects not to have Part B, any amounts on a claim not covered by Medicare become the responsibility of the member. MER-eligible employees should check with their local Social Security office for Medicare enrollment details.

Part B Medicare pays for: doctors' services; outpatient hospital care; lab tests and x-rays; medical supplies and equipment; ambulance services; some preventive care services; outpatient physical, speech, and occupational therapy; and some home health care not covered under Part A.

**Q:** We have members with questions concerning Medicare Part D. Who should we refer them to?

**A:** Questions regarding Medicare prescription drug plans should be referred to 1-866-755-2776. This is a toll-free number.

**Q:** What is the quickest process for sending in an application or change form?

**A:** Faxing the forms into BCBSKS is the preferred method. Please fax to (785) 290-0770. Remember to keep a copy of your fax confirmation as proof that we received the fax. Applications and change forms are available on our Web site.