

FOCUS

News from and about the Kentucky
Cabinet for Health and Family Services

February 14, 2014



More than 231,000 Kentuckians have signed up for affordable health insurance through kynect

Private insurance plans account for 21 percent of enrollees

Signups for affordable health insurance are not only going strong in the Commonwealth – they are accelerating. More than 231,000 Kentuckians are now enrolled in new health coverage, or an average of 1,500 per day. That’s even faster than the initial rate last fall of 1,000 signups per day.

kynect administrators report that the website consistently supports 2,000 concurrent users during heaviest usage times.

One out of every four kynect signups is for private health insurance.

kynect administrators strongly encourage those who have enrolled in private insurance plans desiring a Jan. 1 effective date but have not paid their first premiums to do so as soon as possible. However, open enrollment continues through March 31 for any Kentuckian seeking health insurance.

kynect has been hailed as a national model since its launch for its smooth operation and easy interface for users looking for affordable health coverage.

If you began the process of signing up for coverage and selected a plan but haven’t yet received your insurance cards in the mail, don’t worry. Insurers are processing a high volume of new enrollments. To verify coverage with your insurer, go to your kynect account. On the dashboard, click “View Details”, then “Future Enrollments” to get your Enrollment ID Number.

Providing your kynect Enrollment ID Number to your insurance provider will assist issuers in locat-



kynect
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ing new enrollees in their systems. Welcome packets and invoices should arrive soon for people who signed up in the past several weeks.

Weekly statistics report

The below statistics reflect activity on kynect as of 10 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 13:

- More than one million unique visitors viewing more than 38 million web pages
- 689,820 preliminary screenings
- 231,367 Kentuckians are enrolled in new health coverage, including Medicaid and private insurance
- 181,705 have enrolled in Medicaid
- 49,662 have enrolled in a qualified health plan
- 59,665 have been found eligible for a subsidy to purchase a qualified health plan, but some have yet to select a plan
- 15,684 enrolled in standalone dental plans
- 569 small businesses have started applications for employee coverage
- 512,694 calls handled by the kynect contact center.

Make resolutions for more productive work year

A new year is already under way, but it's not too late to make a few resolutions that can make our work lives more productive. In a piece for Parade.com, writer and web entrepreneur Ilya Pozin offers several tips to help rethink our professional goals.

- Understand your contributions. Most of us just had a year-end evaluation from supervisors. Use this feedback to better understand your role in your office and how you can better contribute to your team's main mission.
- Be more organized. Now is the time to clean up your office and cull out old records. Be organized on the surface – your desk and file cabinets and beneath – your electronic files and emails. If you haven't used it in three years, you probably don't need it. Use your electronic calendar or organization programs and apps to simplify your appointments and notes.
- Take on a new challenge. Get out of your comfort zone by tackling a project that expands your skills. Resolve to try something new that isn't so easy for you. You'll develop new talents and maybe a new professional passion.
- Update your resume. Even if you're not looking for another job, giving your resume a facelift can help

PEAK PERFORMANCE

Anya Armes Weber



you reflect on your recent accomplishments and help you decide what skills you may need to hone this year.

- Get a new skill. It's important to never stop learning, and there are plenty of opportunities in state government. Consider course offerings from the Office for Human Resource Management, the Personnel Cabinet or the Department for Libraries and Archives, or join a professional development group.
- Reduce stress. This can help every aspect of your life. Work problems seem even exaggerated when you are stressed. Try to eliminate the things that keep you busy but not productive – like checking email too frequently, going to meetings you don't need to attend or filling your to-do list with tasks someone else is already doing. For one day, write down everything you do – you may be surprised at the number of things that are time wasters or redundant tasks.

Social services staff invited to share thoughts on profession

Social services staff, March is your time in the spotlight.

CHFS social services staff is invited to share their views about their work with Focus readers in recognition of Social Work Month next month.

How has social services work changed your life? What inspired you to become involved in social services work? Or, your thoughts could focus on the National Association of Social Workers' 2014 Social Work Month theme: "All People Matter." We're looking for stories of inspiration to share with all staff.

Submit your replies to Anya Weber by Monday, Feb. 24. Please include your job title and work county. You may also send a digital photo for possible online publication.

Submissions may be edited for length and content.

Governor's Volunteerism and Service nominations sought

The Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service (KCCVS) is proud to announce the call for nominations for the Governor's Awards for Volunteerism and Service.

Once again, it's time to nominate an award-worthy individual, group, nonprofit or business for the 19th annual awards program, honoring service completed in 2013. Please read the guidelines carefully, as there have been a few changes to the required information, as well as the introduction of a new Veteran Volunteer Service Award category. The awards ceremony for winners will be held at the Governor's Mansion in Frankfort in late spring/early summer 2014. Check out the short video of last year's ceremony on YouTube.

Questions about the awards program should be directed to Shannon Ramsey at (502) 564-7420, ext. 3841.

Adverse Weather Leave options

Low temperatures and above average snowfall already have meteorologists comparing this winter to some of the harshest of the past 40 years.

The weather has already disrupted school and work schedules and employees of CHFS are no exception. Employees who are not able to come to work safely may use Adverse Weather Leave to make up the missed work later.

Adverse weather conditions are not limited to snow; in fact, adverse weather includes flooding, ice, tornadoes, and blizzards.

Aside from employees who are designated as mandatory staff for operations (who are not eligible), employees may obtain approval from their supervisors to arrive to work late or leave early due to inclement weather.

However, employees can only make up work if it would not result in working more than 40 hours in any week. Time missed must be made up within 123 days (four months), with each period calculated from the time each day



was missed. If the time is not made up within the specified time frame, annual leave or compensatory leave will be deducted to cover the balance.

If possible any work missed should be made up during the week it is deferred or during a week when the employee has not worked a full schedule (holiday or leave used).

It is important to remember that if you will not be arriving or arriving late to work because of adverse weather please contact your supervisor and follow all office procedures.

For more information about Adverse Weather Leave, including the entire policy, please log onto the CHFS Intranet page.

Humana Vitality survey completion deadline looming

Employees who have not completed the Humana Vitality Health Assessment must do so by May 1.

Employees who chose the Humana LivingWell PPO plan or Living Well CDHP insurance plans during the open enrollment period must complete the Health Assessment as a condition of the plan.

The Health Assessment contains questions about the plan holder's physical and well-being, lifestyle and opinion about current health condition.

All responses to the Assessment are confidential and have no effect on current rates or benefits. To complete the survey please log on to the LivingWell site and click on the HumanaVitality login.

Still time to get protection from influenza with vaccination

With influenza (flu) activity level in the state widespread it is more important than ever to get a vaccination.

Widespread activity is the highest level of flu activity, which indicates increased flu-like activity or flu outbreaks in at least half of the regions in the state.

The flu season can begin as early as October, which is when Kentucky reported its first cases this year, and last through May. February is still a good time to get vaccinated against the flu because peak activity often comes in the early months of the year.

The best way to protect against the flu is to receive a flu vaccination. The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends flu vaccine for all individuals 6 months of age and older. People who are especially encouraged to receive the flu vaccine, because they may be at higher risk for complications or negative consequences, include:

- Children age 6 months to 19 years;
- Pregnant women;
- Young and middle-aged adults for the 2013-2014 influenza season;

- People 50 years old or older;
- People of any age with chronic health problems;
- People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities;
- Health care workers;
- Caregivers of or people who live with a person at high risk for complications from the flu; and
- Out-of-home caregivers of, or people who live with, children less than 6 months old.

Kentuckians should receive a flu vaccination each season for optimal protection. It takes two weeks for the vaccine to become fully effective.

Follow safe sleep suggestions for infants

Additional threat posed to small children during colder winter months

The Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH) is reminding parents to follow recommended safe sleep practices for infants, particularly during the colder winter months that present different challenges for keeping babies warm and free from danger.

“Infant mortality is a serious public health concern, and we live in a state where far too many children don’t live to celebrate their first birthdays,” said Ruth Ann Shepherd, M.D., director of the Division of Maternal and Child Health for DPH. “In fact, Kentucky’s infant mortality rate remains higher than the national average. This is due in part to sleep-related accidents that could be prevented with safety practices.”

Shepherd said the best way to prevent sleep-related deaths is to eliminate environmental factors that put infants at risk for injury or death. Specifically, she emphasized the importance of never smoking around a baby, since secondhand smoke can contribute to sudden, unexplained infant death.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends these safe sleep practices to prevent sleep-related deaths and keep infants safe and comfortable:

- Put baby to sleep alone in a crib, bassinet or play yard. The baby’s sleep area may be in the parent’s room, but not in the parent’s bed. An adult bed is never a safe place for an infant to sleep.
- Consult a health care provider for guidance on when to move the baby to his or her own room.
- Always place infants to sleep on their backs to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Keep the baby’s sleeping area, whether it is a crib, bassinet or play yard, free and clear of soft objects, such as stuffed animals, toys, loose bedding, bumper pads and pillows.
- Breast-feeding your baby reduces the risks of SIDS, but the baby should be put to sleep in their own crib after feedings, in a bed separate from the mother’s.

How to dress infants for sleep can be a great chal-



lenge as the outside temperatures drop and parents and caregivers worry about keeping infants warm enough. DPH recommends the following guidelines for winter sleep:

- Baby can be dressed in one-piece pajamas or wearable blanket. Wearable blankets can be layered over undershirts or onesie. Do not let your baby get too hot by overdressing them or wrapping them up in heavy blankets.
- If possible, keep the baby’s room at a temperature comfortable for an adult.
- If a blanket must be used to keep a baby warm for sleeping, it should cover the baby’s feet and lower body but not come higher than the baby’s chest. It should be tucked in around the mattress at the sides and bottom of the crib so that it cannot slide up to cover the baby’s face.

Sherry Rock, DPH Child Fatality Program administrator, also warned of the dangers of another household item commonly used this time of year when temperatures begin to decrease.

“Remember to keep all portable heaters away from the baby’s sleep area. The baby can overheat if too close to a heater, get burned or tangled up in the cords of small electric heaters,” said Rock. “These are just small steps for parents and caregivers, but they can make all the difference in keeping infants safe.”

There are many safety resources available to the general public, parents, families, professionals and caregivers of infants. Parents, professionals and others can visit the Safe to Sleep public education campaign website at for resources and more information.



Focus is a bi-weekly publication of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. Produced by the Office of Communications
Story ideas or comments? Contact Elden May.