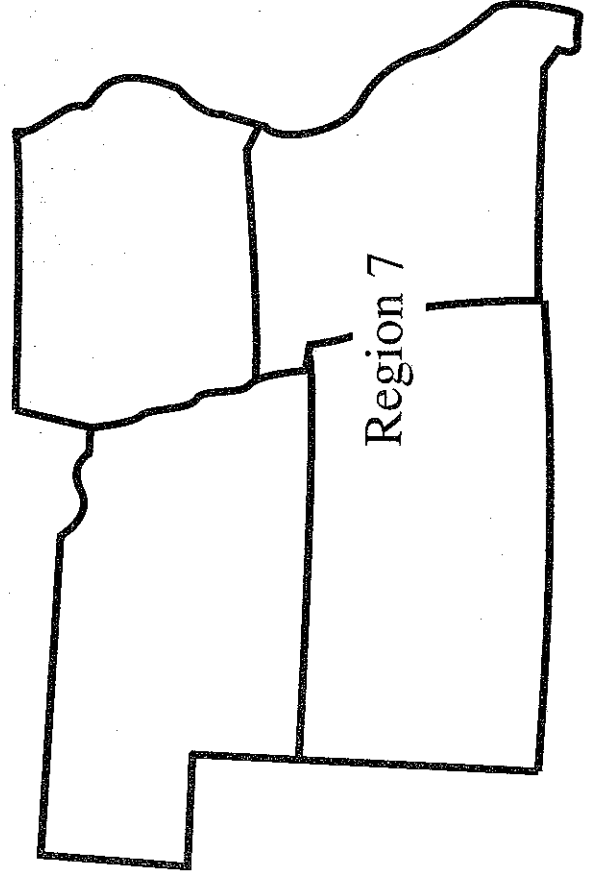


U.S. Department of Health & Human Services



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Region 7

601 E. 12th Street, Room S 1801
Kansas City, MO 64106
816-426-2821

Rev. 01/07

A note from the Regional Director Fred Schuster

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is the United States government's principal agency for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves.

The Department manages more than 300 programs, covering a wide spectrum of activities. Some highlights include:

- + Medical and social science research
- + Preventing outbreak of infectious disease, including immunization services
- + Assuring food and drug safety
- + Medicare health insurance for elderly and disabled Americans) and Medicaid (health insurance for low-income people)
- + Financial assistance and services for low-income families
- + Improving maternal and infant health
- + Head Start (pre-school education and services)
- + Preventing child abuse and domestic violence
- + Substance abuse treatment and prevention
- + Services for older Americans, including home-delivered meals
- + Comprehensive health services for Native Americans

HHS is the largest grant-making agency in the federal government, providing 60,000 grants per year. HHS's Medicare program is the nation's largest health insurer, handling more than 900 million claims per year. Our agency has divided up the country into ten regions. We are Region 7, which includes Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska. In my capacity as Regional Director, I serve as HHS Secretary Michael Leavitt's direct representative responsible for the guidance and coordination of HHS policies and initiatives with state, local and tribal governments in the region. We have prepared this pamphlet to help you understand what we do and how you can get more information for services you may need, but most importantly, we wanted to share some ideas with you so you can stay healthy. Feel free to contact me at 601 E. 12th Street, Rm 51801, Kansas City, MO 64106, or by phone at (816) 426-2821.



HHS works with states and federal agencies to prevent exposure to hazardous substances from waste sites. The agency conducts public health assessments, health studies, surveillance activities, and health education training in communities around waste sites on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Priorities List. For more information, log on to www.atsdr.cdc.gov.

HHS Agencies in Region 7

Administration on Aging (AoA)

Jim Varpness, Regional Administrator
601 E. 12th St. Room 1731
Kansas City, MO 64106
Ph: (816) 426-3511

AoA supports a nationwide network of supportive services to the elderly, enabling them to remain independent as long as possible. This includes 240 million meals for the elderly each year, including home-delivered "meals on wheels;" helps provide transportation and at-home services; ombudsman services for the elderly; and policy leadership on aging issues.

Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

Linda K. Lewis, Regional Administrator
601 E. 12th St. Room 276
Kansas City, MO 64106
Ph: (816) 426-3981

ACF is responsible for programs which provide services and assistance to needy children and families; administers the state-federal welfare program, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families; administers the national child support enforcement system and the Head Start program; provides funds to assist low-income families in paying for child care; and supports state programs to provide for foster care and adoption assistance. For more information, log on to www.acf.hhs.gov.

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)

Denise Jordan-Izaguirre, Senior Regional Representative
500 State Ave. Suite 182
Kansas City, KS 66101
Ph: (913) 551-1310

ATSDR works with states and federal agencies to prevent exposure to hazardous substances from waste sites. The agency conducts public health assessments, health studies, surveillance activities, and health education training in communities around waste sites on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Priorities List. For more information, log on to www.atsdr.cdc.gov.

Prescription Drugs from Foreign Sources

The issue of United States consumers buying prescription drugs from foreign sources is a significant concern for FDA. A growing number of Americans obtain their medications from foreign locations, often seeking out suppliers in Canada. The FDA cannot ensure the safety of drugs bought from these sources.

For more information on the agency's policies regarding drug imports, go to www.fda.gov.

Substance Abuse/ Methamphetamine

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) was created as a services agency to focus attention, programs, and funding on improving the lives of people with or at risk for mental and substance abuse disorders. SAMHSA's vision is consistent with the President's New Freedom Initiative that promotes a life in the community for everyone. SAMHSA is working to ensure that people with or at risk for a mental or addictive disorder have the opportunity for a fulfilling life that includes a job, a home, and meaningful relationships with family and friends.

You can find more information at: <http://www.samhsa.gov/about/background.aspx>.

One of the most effective ways to keep children from getting involved with drugs and alcohol is to establish and maintain good communication with your child. Read more about the importance of talking to your children about these topics at <http://www.theantidrug.com/>, and <http://family.samhsa.gov/>.

Methamphetamine is a highly addictive drug that attacks the central nervous system. The illegal use of methamphetamines is an epidemic that is taking hold of many communities. It is particularly devastating to native communities throughout the country. The highly addictive properties of meth make anyone who tries it vulnerable to addiction. For more information visit these websites:

www.drugabuse.gov/info-facts/methamphetamine and
www.hhs.gov/medialprograms/behavioral/

Head Start and Early Head Start

Head Start and Early Head Start are comprehensive child development programs that serve children from birth to age 5, pregnant women, and their families. They are child-focused programs and have the overall goal of increasing the school readiness of young children in low-income families. The Head Start program has a long tradition of delivering comprehensive and high quality services designed to foster healthy development in low-income children. Head Start grantee and delegate agencies provide a range of individualized services in the areas of education and early childhood development; medical, dental, and mental health; nutrition; and parent involvement. In addition, the entire range of Head Start services is responsive and appropriate to each child's and family's developmental, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage and experience. All Head Start programs must adhere to Program Performance Standards. These standards define the services that Head Start Programs are to provide to the children and families they serve. They constitute the expectations and requirements that Head Start grantees must meet. They are designed to ensure that the Head Start goals and objectives are implemented successfully, that the Head Start philosophy continues to thrive, and that all grantee and delegate agencies maintain the highest possible quality in the provision of Head Start services. For more information, log on to www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb/.

Promoting Responsible Fatherhood

Over the last four decades, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of children growing up in homes without fathers. In 1960, fewer than 10 million children did not live with their fathers. Today, the number is nearly 25 million. More than one-third of these children will not see their fathers at all during the course of a year. Studies show that children who grow up without responsible fathers are significantly more likely to experience poverty, perform poorly in school, engage in criminal activity, and abuse drugs and alcohol. HHS supports programs and policies that reflect the critical role that both fathers and mothers play in building strong and successful families and in the well-being of children. Some programs reach out directly to fathers to promote responsible fatherhood and strengthen parenting skills. Other programs work to discourage young men from becoming fathers until they are married and ready for the responsibility. HHS also partners with states and faith-based and community organizations to promote responsible fatherhood in local communities nationwide. HHS also conducts extensive research into the role that responsible fathers play in ensuring the healthy development of children. More information about many HHS initiatives promoting fatherhood is available at <http://fatherhood.hhs.gov>.

Child Support Enforcement

The Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Program is a Federal/State/local partnership to collect child support. The CSE Program sends the strongest possible message - that parents cannot walk away from their children. Its goals are to ensure that children have the financial support of both their parents, to foster responsible behavior toward children, and to reduce welfare costs. It functions in all States and territories, through the State/County Social Services Department, Attorney General's Office or Department of Revenue. Most States work with prosecuting attorneys, other law enforcement agencies, and officials of family or domestic relations courts to carry out the program at the local level. State Child Support Programs locate non-custodial parents, establish paternity, establish and enforce support orders, and collect child support payments. While programs vary from State to State, their services are available to all parents who need them.

Domestic Violence

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a serious, preventable public health problem affecting more than 32 million Americans (Tjaden and Thoennes 2000). The term "intimate partner violence" describes physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse. This type of violence can occur among heterosexual or same-sex couples and does not require sexual intimacy. IPV can vary in frequency and severity. It occurs on a continuum, ranging from one hit that may or may not impact the victim to chronic, severe battering. Repeated abuse is also known as battering. There are four main types of intimate partner violence: physical, sexual, threats of physical or sexual and psychological/emotional. IPV is a serious problem that is common in our society. Violence by an intimate partner is linked to both immediate and long-term health, social, and economic consequences. Factors at all levels-individual, relationship, community, and societal-contribute to the perpetration of IPV. Preventing IPV requires a clear understanding of those factors, coordinated resources, and empowering and initiating change in individuals, families, and society. To learn more on IPV log on to www.cdc.gov/violence.

HHS Agencies in Region 7 (cont'd)

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)

Tom Lenz, Regional Administrator
601 E. 12th St., Room 235
Kansas City, MO 64106
Ph: (816) 426-5233

This agency administers the Medicare and Medicaid programs, which provide health care to America's aged and indigent populations (about 1 in every 4 Americans, including nearly 18 million children), and nursing home coverage for low-income elderly. CMS also administers the Children's Health Insurance Program through approved state plans that cover more than 2.2 million children. For more information, log on to www.cms.hhs.gov.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

John Thorsky, District Director
11630 W. 80th St.
Lenexa, KS 66214
Ph: (913) 752-2144

The FDA is responsible for protecting the public health by assuring the safety, efficacy, and security of human and veterinary drugs, biological products, medical devices, our nation's food supply, cosmetics, and products that emit radiation. The FDA is also responsible for advancing the public health by helping to speed innovations that make medicines and food more effective, safer, and more affordable; and helping the public get the accurate, science-based information they need to use medicines and foods to improve their health. For more information, log on to www.fda.gov.

Office of Public Health and Science (OPHS)

RADM John Babb, Regional Health Administrator, 601 E. 12th St., Room S1801, Kansas City, MO 64106
Ph: (816) 426-3291

OPHS focuses its efforts on six health priorities: Assure a healthy start for every child; promote personal responsibility for healthy lifestyles and behaviors; eliminate racial disparities in health status and health care access and quality; enhance mental health prevention, treatment, and outcomes; increase awareness of and attention to global health concerns and their effects on the American people; lead the national response to the health consequences of bio-terrorism; and promote the safety and availability of the blood supply.
www.cdc.gov/ophs

Office for Civil Rights (OCR)

Fred Laing, Regional Manager,
601 E. 12th St., Room 248,
Kansas City, MO 64106
Ph: (816) 426-6367

The Office for Civil Rights promotes and ensures that people have equal access to and opportunity to participate in and receive services from all HHS programs without facing unlawful discrimination. Through prevention and elimination of unlawful discrimination, OCR helps HHS carry out its overall mission of improving the health and well-being of all people affected by its many programs. This mission is communicated throughout the Department and is reflected in the customer service nondiscrimination objectives that have been developed in the Department's strategic plan. Ensuring the nondiscriminatory provision of services funded by or provided directly by the Department is an ongoing focus for all Department employees. For more information, log on to www.hhs.gov/ocr.

Other agencies under the HHS umbrella:

Indian Health Service (IHS)

While its headquarters are located in Maryland, IHS also has "area offices." This agency supports a network of 37 hospitals, 60 health centers, 3 school health centers, 46 health stations and 34 urban Indian health centers. The Aberdeen, South Dakota area office serves the federally recognized tribes in Iowa and Nebraska.

Ph: (605) 226-7531. The Oklahoma City area office serves the tribes in Kansas. Ph: (405) 951-3768. For more information, log on to www.ihs.gov.

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

With headquarters in Maryland, NIH's 17 separate institutes make it the world's premier medical research organization supporting 35,000 research projects nationwide in diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer's, diabetes, arthritis, heart ailments and AIDS. Ph: (301) 496-2433. For more information, log on to www.nih.gov.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Headquartered in Maryland, SAMHSA works to improve the quality and availability of substance abuse prevention, addiction treatment, and mental health services. Ph: (301) 443-4795. For more information, log on to www.samhsa.gov.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

This Atlanta-based agency provides a system of health surveillance to monitor and prevent the outbreak of diseases. CDC guards against international disease transmission, maintains national health statistics, provides immunization services, and supports research into disease and injury prevention. Ph: (404) 639-7000. For more information, log on to www.cdc.gov.

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

This agency, located in Maryland, supports research designed to improve the outcomes and quality of health care, reduce its costs, address patient safety and medical errors, and broaden access to effective services. The research sponsored, conducted, and disseminated by this agency provides information that helps people make better decisions about their health. Ph: (301) 594-1364. For more information, log on to www.ahrq.gov.

HHS Priority Activities

Value Driven Health care: The growth of health care costs is restrained because consumers know the comparative costs and quality of their health care - and they have a financial incentive to care. Consumers gain control of their health care and have the knowledge to make informed health care decisions.

Health Information Technology: The medical clipboard becomes a thing of the past. Secure interoperable electronic records are available to patients and their doctors anytime, anywhere. Immediate access to accurate information reduces dangerous medical errors and helps control health care costs.

Medicare RX: Every senior has access to affordable prescription drugs. Consumers will inspire plans to provide better benefits at lower cost. Medicare Part D is streamlined and improved to better connect people with their benefits. Pay for Performance methodologies act to increase health care quality.

Medicaid Modernization: Sustainable Medicaid programs help provide coverage for millions of people who are not covered now. People in differing economic situations are helped through flexible benefits and incentives tailored to meet their needs. People with disabilities have access to care in their homes and communities.

New Orleans Health System: Adversity turns to advantage. The New Orleans health system of antiquated, inefficient emergency room care becomes a place where every citizen has a medical home that is prevention-centered, neighborhood-located and electronically-connected.

Personalized Health Care: Health care is tailored to the individual. Prevention is emphasized. Propensities for disease are identified and addressed through preemptive intervention. Discovery and innovation move higher quality and safer medical products to the market faster and more cost effectively.

Prevention: The risk of many diseases and health conditions are reduced through preventative actions. A culture of wellness deters or diminishes debilitating and costly health events. Individual health care is built on a foundation of responsibility for personal wellness, which includes regular physical activity, eating a healthful diet, taking advantage of medical screenings, and making healthy choices to avoid risky behaviors.

Pandemic Preparedness: The United States is better prepared for an influenza pandemic. Rapid vaccine production capacity is increased, national stockpiles and distribution systems are in place, disease monitoring and communication systems are expanded and local preparedness has been dramatically enhanced. Planning and preparedness encompasses all levels of government and society.

Emergency Response and Commissioned Corps Renewal: We have learned from the past and are better prepared for the future. There is an ethic of preparedness at HHS and throughout our Nation. We have a Commissioned Corps that is bigger, better trained, and deployable.

Pandemic Flu

A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. A flu pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus emerges for which people have little or no immunity, and for which there is no vaccine. The disease spreads easily person-to-person, causes serious illness, and can sweep across the country and around the world in a very short time.

It is difficult to predict when the next influenza pandemic will occur or how severe it will be. Wherever and whenever a pandemic starts, everyone around the world is at risk. Countries might, through measures such as border closures and travel restrictions, delay arrival of the virus, but cannot stop it.

Health professionals are concerned that the continued spread of a highly pathogenic avian H5N1 virus across eastern Asia and other countries represents a significant threat to human health. The H5N1 virus has raised concerns about a potential human pandemic because: it is especially virulent, it is being spread by migratory birds, it can be transmitted from birds to mammals and in some limited circumstances to humans, and like other influenza viruses, it continues to evolve.

The United States has been working closely with other countries and the World Health Organization (WHO) to strengthen systems to detect outbreaks of influenza that might cause a pandemic.

The effects of a pandemic can be lessened if preparations are made ahead of time. Planning and preparation information and checklists are being prepared for various sectors of society, including information for individuals and families.

HHS and other federal agencies are providing funding, advice, and other support to states to assist with pandemic planning and preparation.

To stay current on all aspects of the Pandemic Flu, please go to www.pandemicflu.gov. The federal government will provide up-to-date information and guidance to the public through the public media and this web site should an influenza pandemic unfold. Information on state/federal planning and cooperation, including links to state pandemic plans, is available on this site. Also, you will find a list of resources such as Preparation checklists, each of the 50 states pandemic documents, current information from the World Health Organization, the latest vaccine information and much more.

Health Disparities and Cultural Competency

Health Disparities

Health disparities are defined as significant differences between one population and another. The Minority Health and Health Disparities Research and Education Act of 2000, which authorizes several HHS programs, resolves these disparities differences in "the prevalence of disease, incidence, prevalence, morbidity, mortality, and disabilities." Many different populations are affected by disparities including racial and ethnic minorities, residents of rural areas, women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.

Cultural Competency

The increasing social interaction with racial and ethnic communities and linguistic groups, each with its own cultural beliefs and health practices, presents a challenge to the health care delivery service industry in this country. The health care system is better recognizing their individual differences in language and culture to the health care practitioners. Health care practitioners must be encouraged to achieve social, access, and quality health care.

Limited English Proficiency

Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English may be limited in their participation in health care services. Limited English Proficiency individuals may be entitled to language assistance with respect to a particular type of service. Health care providers for more information, log on to www.hhs.gov.

The Office of Minority Health (OMH)

OMH operates the OMH Resource Center (OMHRC), which serves as a free information and referral service on minority health issues for community groups, consumers, professional and students. It assists OPHS and OMH in disseminating health information and culturally-competent health information, encourages public participation in HHS activities, assists in conducting health campaigns. OMH maintains minority health knowledge and resources, helps identify people to HHS health care resources, distributes publications, manages exhibits, publishes grant opportunities, maintains a list of health care resources available to the public, and provides information on health care services. Information, log on to www.hhs.gov/omh. OMHRC operates a toll-free helpline (1-800-458-5231), accessible throughout the United States, to answer inquiries in Spanish, English, and other languages. For the hearing impaired, call (202) 205-1549. For the hearing impaired, call (202) 205-1549. For the hearing impaired, call (202) 205-1549.

Value Driven Health Care

Consumers deserve to know the quality and cost of their health care. Health care transparency provides consumers with the information necessary, and the incentive, to choose health care providers based on value.

Providing reliable cost and quality information empowers consumer choice. Consumer choice creates incentives at all levels, and motivates the entire system to provide better care for less money. Improvements will come as providers can see how their practice compares to others.

"Every American should have access to a full range of information about the quality and cost of their health care options."

- HHS Secretary Michael Leavitt

Health care transparency is built on four cornerstones

Building a value-driven health care system requires four interconnected cornerstones. With the growing use of electronic health records, all four are within our grasp.

- **Connecting the System:** Every medical provider has some system for health records. Increasingly, those systems are electronic. Standards need to be identified so all health information systems can quickly and securely communicate and exchange data.
- **Measure and Publish Quality:** Every case, every procedure, has an outcome. Some are better than others. To measure quality, we must work with doctors and hospitals to define benchmarks for what constitutes quality care.

- **Measure and Publish Price:** Price information is useless unless cost is calculated for identical services. Agreement is needed on what procedures and services are covered in each "episode of care."

- **Create Positive Incentives:** All parties - providers, patients, insurance plans, and payers - should participate in arrangements that reward both those who offer and those who purchase high-quality, competitively priced health care.

Transparency Leads to Change

Transparency is a broad-scale initiative enabling consumers to compare the quality and price of health care services, so they can make informed choices among doctors and hospitals.

In cooperation with America's largest employers and the medical profession, this initiative is laying the foundation for pooling and analyzing information about procedures, hospitals and physician services. When this data foundation is in place, regional health information alliances will turn the raw data into useful information for consumers.

Visit the website <http://www.hhs.gov/transparency/> for more information

The Administration's Online Resources

HealthierUS.gov is the source for credible, accurate information to help Americans choose to live healthier lives.

Healthfinder.gov A free guide to reliable consumer health and human services information, developed by the Department of Health and Human Services. This site leads to selected online publications, clearinghouses, databases, web sites, and support and self-help groups, as well as government agencies and not-for-profit organizations that produce reliable information.

Nutrition.gov This site provides easily accessible government information on nutrition, healthy eating, and food safety. Providing accurate scientific information on nutrition and dietary guidance is critical to the public's ability to make the right choices in the effort to curb obesity and other food related diseases.

Fitness.gov This site, run by the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, updates the public on the Council's fitness promotion activities and serves as a comprehensive resource for organizations and individuals wishing to take part in the Council's awards programs. The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports is an advisory committee of volunteer citizens who advise the President through the Secretary of Health and Human Services about physical activity, fitness, and sports in America. For more information on programs and awards go to www.fitness.gov/about_overview.htm

Grants.gov As of November 7, 2003, the Office of Federal Financial Management requires that all Federal agencies post grant opportunities online as of November 7, 2003. This site allows organizations to electronically find and apply for competitive grant opportunities from all Federal grant-making agencies. The Find Grant Opportunities feature provides the ability to search for Federal government-wide grant opportunities and to receive notification of future grant opportunities. For more information, log on to www.grants.gov.

Smokefree.gov and **Surgeongeneral.gov/tobacco** are websites that provide information on the health risks of smoking and offer consumer guides to stop smoking.

Health Websites for Kids

www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/kids - An informational and fun website for kids and teens filled with facts on things like food safety, bone health, animals, vaccines, medicines and more!

www.healthfinder.gov/kids - Healthfinder kids know lots of ways to be healthy and have fun!

www.smallstep.gov/kids - Find out COOL stuff about FOOD and what it can do for YOU! Explore this site to learn how to RUN, THROW, THINK and EAT BETTER!

www.hhs.gov/publications/publications/kids - Learn about Native American stories, safety, culture and health on this kids' site created by Indian Health Services.

www.kidshhealth.org - KidsHealth has separate areas for kids, teens, and parents - each with its own design, age-appropriate content, and tone. There are literally thousands of in-depth features, articles, animations, games, and resources - all original and all developed by experts in the health of children and teens.

Health Websites for Youth

www.yetknow.com - YERB is a national campaign urging kids to play and be active in their daily lives.

www.teens.drugabuse.gov - The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), a component of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), created this Web site to educate adolescents ages 11 through 15 (as well as their parents and teachers) on the science behind drug abuse. NIDA enlisted the help of teens in developing the site to ensure that the content addresses appropriate questions and timely concerns.

www.toosmartostart.samhsa.gov/youth.htm - An underage alcohol use prevention initiative for parents, caregivers, and their 9 to 13 year-old children.

Health Websites for Girls

www.girlpower.gov - A national public education campaign sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to help encourage and motivate 9 to 13 year-old girls to make the

most of their lives. Girls 8 or 9 typically have very strong attitudes about their health, so Girl Power! seeks to reinforce and sustain these positive values among girls 9-13 by targeting health messages to the unique needs, interests, and challenges of girls.

www.girlshhealth.gov - This site was created to help girls (ages 10-16) learn about health, growing up, and issues they may face. It focuses on health topics that girls are concerned about and helps motivate them to choose healthy behaviors by using positive, supportive, and non-threatening messages. The site gives girls reliable, useful information on the health issues they will face as they become young women and tips on handling relationships with family and friends, at school and at home.

www.cdc.gov/powerfulbones - You'll find lots of cool information on this site about how to be a powerful girl and take good care of your bones.

Health Websites for Parents & Adults

www.smallstep.gov - Want to get healthy, but don't know how to begin? Start with our list of small steps and find some that work for you. Then let us help you separate healthy fact from fiction with our great selection of resources. Continue with the activity tracker, great recipes and newsletter. Finish with a healthier you!

www.toosmartostart.samhsa.gov - We know you are busier than ever, so we set out to create a page offering easy-to-access information and resources to help keep your 9 to 13 year-old alcohol free.

www.kidshhealth.org - KidsHealth is the largest and most-visited site on the Web providing doctor-approved health information about children from before birth through adolescence. Created by The Nemours Foundation's Center for Children's Health Media, the award-winning KidsHealth provides families with accurate, up-to-date, and jargon-free health information they can use.

PACE

Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly

Under this program, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) will make it easier for organizations to start or expand programs that allow frail elderly who meet nursing home level of care to live in their communities and receive comprehensive care. The goal of the PACE program is to maximize each enrollee's autonomy and continued community residence and to provide quality of care at lower cost to Medicare and Medicaid enrollees.

There are 25 PACE sites, in 13 states, and each site has about 200 enrollees. New sites may be added each year. An approved PACE organization in your region is Alexian Brothers Community Services, St. Louis, MO. For more information: www.medicare.gov/nursing/alternatives/pace.asp

Community Health Centers

Community Health Centers play a key role in providing health care for low income and uninsured people. Expanding community health centers, including the addition of new health centers to Region 7, will bolster this health care safety network. President Bush's five-year plan is to build or expand 1,200 health centers by 2006 and increase the number of patients served annually to more than 16 million - up from 10 million in 2001. This will increase patients' access to physicians in both urban and rural communities, and enhance continuity of health care by doctors for medically underserved individuals and families. The Health Resources and Services Administration manages these health centers. You can find one near you by visiting: www.hrsa.gov.

Medicare

The solid success of the Prescription Drug Reimbursement program, more than 2.8 million Medicare beneficiaries enrolled in 2003, is a testament to the program's drug coverage. More than 3 million beneficiaries are filled every day. While saving people with Medicare drug plans an average of \$1,200 a year, program costs are 25 percent less than predicted and, according to recent surveys, more than 80 percent of adults in plans are satisfied with their coverage.

In just two years, Medicare has undergone unprecedented improvements in benefits, including the addition of prescription drug coverage and new and updated preventive care. Said Secretary Lewent, "Equally important thanks to our tens of thousands of dedicated partners, Medicare now has robust anti-drugstore support network. With their help, we'll be putting a greater emphasis on prevention. We're going to work with people to help them make the most of their benefits - to stay healthier, so they can spend less on doctors and hospitals, and even less on prescription drugs."

MyMedicare.gov provides direct internet access to your Medicare benefits eligibility enrollment (including prescription drug) and preventive health information. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, visit my.medicare.gov to sign up and MyMedicare will email you a password to allow you access to your personal Medicare information. MyMedicare also allows you to view your scheduled appointments, address information, and publications and receive important messages from Medicare. Information is available to www.medicare.gov and www.medicare.gov by calling 1-800-MY-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a modern-day form of slavery. Victims of human trafficking are subjected to force, fraud, or coercion, for the purpose of sexual exploitation or forced labor. Victims are young children, teenagers, men and women. After drug dealing, human trafficking is tied with the illegal arms industries as the second largest criminal industry in the world today, and it is the fastest growing. If you think you have come in contact with a victim of human trafficking, call the Trafficking Information and Referral Hotline at 1-888-373-7888. For more information on human trafficking, visit www.act.hhs.gov/trafficking.

Rural Health

The Office of Rural Health Policy (ORHP) helps America's rural communities build their health care services by supporting state initiatives and partnerships in rural health development. By administering the state office program, ORHP helps coordinate federal and state strategies in rural health. Under the program, each state office serves its rural communities in four ways: by collecting and disseminating information within the state; by improving recruitment and retention of health professionals into rural areas; by providing technical assistance to attract more federal, state, and foundation funding; and by coordinating rural health interests and activities across a state. For more information contact: (301) 443-0835, or see: www.ruralhealth.hrsa.gov

Organ & Tissue Donations

Organ and tissue donation saves lives and it is easy to become a donor. You can download Frequently Asked Questions about being a donor, as well as a copy of a donor card at <http://organdonor.gov/>. Say yes to organ and tissue donation on your donor card or driver's license. *Workplace Partnerships for Life* was also launched, creating a nationwide network of employers that offer employee information, support, and the opportunity to donate life. The Secretary has issued a challenge to all the members of the President's Cabinet to participate in the *Blood Donation Challenge* by supporting blood donation in their workplaces, and by actively promoting blood donation in their departments. For more information call a blood center near you, the American Association of Blood Banks, or the American Red Cross, or access the links to those organizations from organdonor.gov.

Faith Based & Community Organizations

Through this initiative, the Administration is working to remove unnecessary barriers that may prevent these organizations from competing fully for Federal funding and to create a "level playing field" between faith-based and community organizations and other groups that receive federal funds to provide social services. The *Compassion Capital Fund (CCF)* assists the grassroots organizations that are the focus of President Bush's faith-based and community initiative. The CCF will be used to expand the role that faith-based and community groups play in providing social services to those in need. The CCF reflects the administration's recognition that faith-based and community organizations are uniquely situated to partner with the government in serving low-income individuals and families, particularly those with the greatest needs such as families in poverty, prisoners reentering the community and their families, children of prisoners, homeless families, and at-risk youth. More information about the President's initiative and the HHS Center for Faith Based and Community Initiatives is available at <http://www.hhs.gov/fbci>. For more information, call 202-456-6718, or visit www.fbci.gov.

Indian Tribal Governments

Region 7 has nine Federally recognized Native American Tribes within its borders. They are: Iowa Tribe of Kansas & Nebraska, Kickapoo Nation, Northern Ponca Tribe of Nebraska, Omaha Tribe of Nebraska, Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, Sac & Fox Nation of Missouri, Sac & Fox Nation of the Mississippi in Iowa, Santee Sioux Nation, and the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska. The Regional Director is committed to continuing regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with tribal officials in developing Federal health-related policies affecting tribes and to strengthen the government-to-government relationships between the Department and Indian tribes. Region 7 regularly communicates with the nine tribes by correspondence, conference calls, face-to-face meetings in the Tribal Nation, and general consultation sessions with all nine Tribal chairs and other Tribal officials invited.

Medical Reserve Corps

The MRC was founded after President Bush's 2002 State of the Union Address, in which he asked all Americans to volunteer in support of their country. MRC units are community-based and function as a way to locally organize and utilize volunteers who want to donate their time and expertise to prepare for and respond to emergencies and promote healthy living throughout the year. MRC volunteers supplement existing emergency and public health resources and include medical and public health professionals such as physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, veterinarians, and epidemiologists. Many community members - interpreters, chaplains, office workers, legal advisors, and others - can fill key support positions. There are currently 490 MRC units throughout the United States. Region 7 has a total of 15 active units, two in Iowa, five in Kansas, six in Missouri, and two in Nebraska.

The MRC is led by the Office of the Surgeon General in HHS. For more information, on training, resources, and the monthly Regional MRC newsletters please log onto www.medicalreservecorps.gov.

Emergency Preparedness

The overall goal of the Office of Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) is to ensure sustained public health and medical readiness for our communities and nation against bioterrorism, infectious disease and other public health threats and emergencies.

ASPR has the responsibility to prevent and prepare for public health emergencies, natural and man-made. During a

HIV/AIDS

AIDS is a chronic, life-threatening condition caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). By damaging or destroying the cells of the body's immune system, HIV interferes with the body's ability to effectively fight off viruses, bacteria and fungi that cause disease. This

makes an infected person more susceptible to opportunistic infections the body would normally resist, such as pneumonia and meningitis, and to certain types of cancers.

For more information visit: www.cdc.gov/hiv

Freedom Corps

The President created the USA Freedom Corps office in the White House in 2002 to harness the power of millions, whose acts of charity, compassion, and love make America a better place. Millions of Americans answered the call to service. There are many ways to volunteer. For more information, see the website: USAFreedomCorp.gov - or call 1-877-USA-CORPS.

response, this office is lead for the needed public health and medical response. This is accomplished by coordination with the local, state, tribal and federal agencies responsible for the preparation, response and recovery from any emergency or incident.

In the region, the Regional Emergency Coordinator (REC) is located within the office of the Regional Director. The REC assists the Regional Director and staff in the Continuation of Operations (COOP) and pandemic planning and exercises.

For more information visit: www.hhs.gov/ophp

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

The purpose of the HIPAA provisions are to improve efficiency and effectiveness of our health care system by standardizing the electronic exchange of administrative and financial data.

Who is Covered?

Health plans, health care clearinghouses, health care providers who transmit any health information in electronic form in connection with a transaction for which the HHS Secretary has adopted a standard, and business associates (any person, agent, contractor, or other not in the workforce who performs a function on behalf of a covered entity that involves use or disclosure of protected health information).

All health plans are covered by the HIPAA standards, with this exception:

employer plans with fewer than 50 participants and which are self-administered.

HIPAA Privacy

HHS' health privacy regulations will ensure strong privacy protections while correcting unintended consequences that threatened patients' access to quality health care.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has issued the regulation, "Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information," applicable to entities covered by HIPAA.

CMS will continue to enforce the insurance portability requirements of HIPAA. The HHS Office for Civil Rights (OCR) will enforce the HIPAA privacy standards. CMS and OCR will work

together on outreach and enforcement and on issues that touch on the responsibilities of both organizations - such as application of security standards or exception determinations.

For more information on specific aspects of the Privacy Rule, see: <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/privacy.html>.

Learn more about your rights, including how to file a complaint, from the website at www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/ or by calling 1-866-627-7748; the phone call is free.