

For Immediate Release

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Kansas Makes Good Showing in National Senior Health Rankings Report

TOPEKA – A report released today by the United Health Foundation examining the health and well-being of American seniors ranks Kansas 18th in the nation, and finds that Kansas has the second highest percentage of highly rated nursing homes in the country. The report also shows Kansas as having a high rate of volunteerism and social supports for older adults compared to the rest of the nation.

“America’s Health Rankings Senior Report for 2013” was released by the United Health Foundation on Wednesday along with its overall rating for the state. These reports focus on health determinants, such as behavior, environment, availability of care and the policies and practices of public and private health systems, and on outcomes for adult aged 65 and older. The data used to prepare the reports was obtained from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Agency on Aging, the National Center for Health Statistics, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Census Bureau, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the U.S. Department of Labor, the Bureau of Labor Statistics and several academic studies.

“Overall, Kansas has made a very good showing in this report. We do have areas we need to improve upon, and we will use this information to create a healthier community for older adults in our state,” Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services Shawn Sullivan said. “I am proud of our high rates of volunteerism and the number of highly rated nursing home beds here. This reflects very positively on our commitment to older adults in Kansas.”

Highlights of the report show:

- Kansas has a high rate of 4- and 5-star rated nursing homes beds at 64.6 beds per 100,000 adults age 75 and older;
- Kansas has a high percentage of low-care nursing home residents at 18.2 percent of nursing home residents;
- In Kansas, a high percentage of seniors volunteer in their communities; 36 percent of adults aged 65 and older participate in volunteer activities;
- A high percentage of older adults in Kansas receive social supports, with a rate of 83.9 percent of adults aged 65 and older.

“Two of our areas that need strengthening include the use of home- and community-based services to care for seniors with ‘low-care needs’ instead of nursing homes, and our relatively low rating in how we manage diabetes. But both of these issues are being addressed directly through our KanCare quality strategies, and I expect to see those ratings improve in future reports,” Secretary Sullivan said.

“Health plan providers’ payments under KanCare are tied to improved diabetes care and a reduction in the number and duration of hospital stays,” Secretary Sullivan added. “This structure creates an environment for quality improvement among diabetics as well as those suffering from other chronic conditions. KanCare also provides incentives for identifying individuals who are eligible for nursing home admission but who may be able to succeed in a community placement if provided additional services at home. “

The complete report can be found at:

http://cdnfiles.americashealthrankings.org/SiteFiles/Mediacenter/Americas_Health_Rankings_Senior_Edition_2013_final.pdf

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The Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services’ mission is to foster an environment that promotes security, dignity and independence, while providing the right care at the right time in a place called home.