



## A Message from the Secretary

Dear Colleagues:

Results of a public opinion poll released earlier this month suggest that support for more investment in public health would be strong in Kansas. The poll was conducted by the non-partisan Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

The poll showed that Americans as a whole overwhelmingly support increased funding for prevention programs to reduce disease and keep people healthy. Seventy percent of respondents ranked the importance of investing in prevention between an eight and 10 on a 10-point scale. Forty-six percent rated prevention as 10 out of 10.

Community-based programs to increase physical activity, promote healthy eating habits and prevent smoking and other tobacco use are the keys to improving health, and provide the best defense for averting future medical costs. Tobacco use remains the number one preventable cause of death, linked to over 3,800 Kansas deaths per year. About 3,700 deaths per year in our state are attributed to physical inactivity and poor nutrition.

Another note about the importance of prevention: National Men's Health Week took place June 15-21. Men tend to die about six years younger than women. Heart disease -- the leading cause of death in Kansas -- accounted for 2,764 male deaths in 2007. The most important things men can do to stay healthy are to get recommended screening tests, be tobacco free, be physically active, eat a healthy diet, maintain a healthy weight and take preventive medicines if needed.

I'd like to conclude by talking briefly about the H1N1 flu virus. On June 11, the World Health Organization declared a pandemic in response to the virus. While this action is not surprising, it does serve as an important reminder. New cases are still occurring, and could likely increase when the regular flu season begins. Fortunately, most illnesses so far have been mild, but this could change as the virus evolves or exchanges bits of genetic material with other flu viruses.

This is one reason why KDHE, along with our local, state and federal partners, is continuing to provide support for the thorough investigation and management of each case. To help minimize the spread of any flu virus, everyone should remember to wash their hands, cover coughs and sneezes, remain at home when sick, and stay healthy by eating a balanced diet, drinking plenty of water and getting adequate rest and exercise.

Be well,

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