



Posted on Sun, Jan. 21, 2007

Childhood health, prevention are keys

CHILDHOOD HEALTH, PREVENTION ARE KEYS

BY MARNI VLIET

I know I'm not alone in making New Year's resolutions. Though the goals may be different for everyone, I believe many of us have set some type of health-related resolution.

At the Kansas Health Foundation, we strive each day to further our mission of improving the health of all Kansans. For more than 20 years, we've made it a priority to reach out to Kansans, hear their concerns and work to address these issues.

Our work over the years has focused on preventative measures and is guided by the approach to do the most good for the most people with a long-term perspective. This led us to our focus on early childhood development -- ensuring our children have a lifetime of health and happiness.

We've also learned that these preventative measures are just part of what accounts for the overall health of Kansans. As addressed in the "Society and Population Health Reader," a person's health is dependent on many factors, including health behaviors, societal characteristics and medical care.

It is the issue of health/medical care that currently is a topic of conversation throughout the state. The people of Kansas have recognized the strain that health care costs can have on individuals and organizations.

While there is no easy answer to solve all our health care needs, a focus on early childhood health and prevention will pay dividends for years to come. Access to quality health care for children is one way to make a vital investment in the future of our state. Today's healthy children have a much better chance of being tomorrow's healthy adults.

This discussion has been needed for many years. In 2007, we have an opportunity to chart a new and healthier course for our state, and through broad-based, bipartisan solutions find a sustainable answer to the health care needs of Kansans.

Marni Vliet is president of the Kansas Health Foundation in Wichita.

© 2007 Wichita Eagle and wire service sources. All Rights Reserved.
<http://www.kansas.com>