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District looks for citizen volunteers for wellness committee

Hoopeston Area is looking for citizen volunteers for a new wellness committee.

The committee will be responsible for drawing up a wellness policy mandated by the state to cover areas including health classes, physical education and food and nutrition served during the school day, said Superintendent Mark Conolly at Thursday night's regular board meeting.

Anyone interested in serving on the committee may contact Conolly at (217) 283-6668 or Brenda Crusinberry, 283-6669.

In unrelated business, the board learned that half of Rossville-Alvin eighth graders chose Hoopeston Area as their home high school for next year.

The percentage is up from 25 percent last year, the first year of Rossville-Alvin High School's deactivation.

"We're very happy to have those students," Conolly said. "The ones that are here this year, we enjoy them."

Board president Steve Unger echoed Conolly's thoughts, adding the increased percentage "may be more representative of the future."

Last year, Hoopeston Area and Bismarck-Henning also split teachers in a like percentage to students. Those teachers became permanent employees of each district.

In other business, the board:

- Heard from principals that students are preparing for the ISAT and PSAE standardized state tests.

- Learned Bunker Hill, whom the Cornjerkers played in football last year, is going into a conference and has dropped next year's game. HA is contacting two schools to try to fill the schedule, said high school principal Hank Hornbeck.

- Approved hiring Tim Hillard as a computer technician and Wendy Michael as a cafeteria worker.

- Approved the district seniority list of certified employees.

- Heard from Darrell Brown that the district is setting specifications for two buses. Specifications are expected to be approved and bids sought at the February meeting.

Police News



A **Verizon** cell phone was found Friday at Main Source Bank parking lot, 323 E. Main. The owner may identify and claim it at the police station.

A **38-year-old** man reported Sunday that someone threw a brick through the window of his vehicle. The damage occurred in the 500 block of South Fifth St.

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Letter to the Editor

Help with the Medicare drug plans

I have information that may be helpful to those in need of understanding this Medicare dilemma.

I have run up against the blockages, starting in December when I received the first of over 12 letters from the Social Security office stating that I had been assigned to a Medicare drug plan. They did not tell me what plan. I received a letter from Pacificare about their prescription plan, Prescription Solutions. I had been assigned to them without my knowledge!

I immediately called and, after spending two hours waiting, finally located a real person. I asked when I would receive my membership cards and if they covered each drug I am currently prescribed because many drugs are not covered. I wanted the information so when I went to my doctor's appointment, I could make sure that I was able to provide the information to my doctor as to what drugs needed to be changed. I thought everything was going well until I went to the pharmacy on the second, when I learned many computer systems were not ready for the multitude of over 40 different programs. Many people should, by my understanding, have coverage by both Medicare Part D as well as Public Aid, and or the Circuit Breaker program.

I am still researching the current system, and like many, am very upset that the government left us to the last minute then told us all at once what drugs we can

and can not take based upon affordability. The plan that I am on does have, as was mentioned in Tuesday's article by Ms Crozier, a formulary, or list of drugs that the plan will pay for listed in sections called tiers: Tier 1, the generic preferred (cheapest for you co-pay wise as well as the drug plan); Tier 2, brand name medications (more expensive; when a generic is unavailable, so expect to pay a higher co-pay) and Tier 3, drugs the plan requires your doctor to fill out a prior authorization which is basically a form stating that you have been on other drugs for your condition and that they were not effective for you and the doctor is requesting that you be allowed to obtain this medication that is effective for your condition.

There is some light at the end to all this!

I have spoken to Debbie from CRIS Senior Services, and Susan Redden at the Multi Agency and both of them have been helpful in pointing me in the direction that I am hoping will solve this problem for the upcoming months' refills.

CRIS Senior Service can be reached at (217) 443-2999 and the Multi Agency at (217)283-5544. They can help in filling out any paperwork that you may need to complete.

If you have been assigned a prescription plan and do not know which plan, phone your local Social Security office and ask. They should be able to pull your information up. Be patient when you call these numbers. It takes a long time to have all your vital information prepared when you actually get that live person. Make sure to write down any questions so you do not forget to ask them after the phone call is finished.

I have subscribed to and do read two very good sites that pertain to our situation: www.IllinoisBenefits.org and www.medicarerights.org.

Furthermore we could and should contact our local representatives in both state and federal government and

Weather



Partly cloudy today. High 40. Tonight, mostly clear. Low 27. Tomorrow, chance of flurries. High 43, low 22.

For current weather conditions, call Hoopeston Weather Service, (217) 283-6221.

voice our concern. They have left us in the dark, and only by utilizing the grapevine approach have many of us been able to begin to make any sense of all these changes.

I am afraid that many people will be overwhelmed by the complexity of the system and stop taking their prescribed medications, running the risk of dying without the proper medications, proper dose, and proper combination.

So speak out and let's keep the line of communication open on this topic, and if anyone, comes across a link to good reliable information, please share it!!

We are all in this together

Jeff Keith
Hoopeston

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The God Particle by Richard Cox (science fi)

Polar Shift by Clive Cussler

Judgment Day: a Novel by James F. David (science fi)

Obituaries

SMITH - Martha E. Smith, 81, of Hoopeston died at 6:20 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 19, 2006 at Hoopeston Community Memorial Nursing Home. Funeral services will be at 11 a.m. Monday at First Christian Church, Hoopeston. Burial will be in Floral Hill Cemetery. Visitation was 4-6 p.m. Sunday at Brown-Alkire Funeral Home. Memorials are suggested to the church, 502 E. Main St.