The Medicare Part D prescription drug plan open enrollment period for 2013 runs from October 15 through December 7, 2012. If you get your prescription drug coverage through Medicare Part D, now is the time to compare plans to see if you can get better coverage. Once the open enrollment period closes on December 7th you won’t be able to change plans until the next open enrollment period in the fall of 2013.

If you are happy with your current drug coverage you don’t have to do anything during open enrollment, but since this is your one chance to change plans for the coming year it is a good idea to review your coverage and compare it with other available plans to see if you can get a better deal. To compare Part D plans you can use the Medicare Plan Finder on the Medicare website at: https://www.medicare.gov/find-a-plan/questions/home.aspx. Comparing plans can be a complex process, so you might want to get some help. You can get help by calling the Medicare helpline at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), TTY 1-877-486-2048 or TILRC staff are happy to help you. For assistance contact Kevin at 233-4572.

Before you compare plans there are some important terms you should know to be able to fully understand just what you are comparing. No matter which drug insurance plan you choose there are various costs you may be responsible or that you need to be familiar with. Most plans have a “deductible”, which is the amount you have to pay out-of-pocket before the plan will cover any of the remaining costs. Many plans have a drug “premium”. The premium is a periodic (usually monthly) payment you make on your Part D plan. You may also have a drug “copayment” (or copay) which is your share of the cost of a prescription. The remaining cost is paid by your plan.
If you are an individual with an annual income below $16,775 ($22,695 for a couple) you may be eligible for extra help in covering your prescription drug costs. Most people who qualify for extra help under Part D pay no premiums or deductibles and have reduced copays. To find out if you are eligible for extra help contact your advocate or use the online tool on the Benefits Check-up website at: http://www.benefitscheckup.org/.

It is also important to understand what the drug “formulary” is. The formulary is simply the list of drugs covered by the plan. If any of your medications are not on the formulary, you will have to pay the full price of the drug. To avoid this problem your doctor can switch you to a similar drug that is covered in the plan’s formulary. Some plans also require “prior authorization” for some drugs. That means your doctor has to submit a form that explains why you need to take that particular medication before the plan will cover it. Prior authorization rules usually will require your doctor to try a less expensive drug to see if it works before approving the more expensive drug. Then if the cheaper drug proves to be ineffective the plan may approve coverage for the more expensive drug. Some drug plans have what is called “tiered coverage.” That means your copays will vary depending on which “tier” the drug is in.
For example, a generic drug may be in a lower tier and cost less than a name brand drug in a higher tier.

Before you start comparing plans you’ll need to know:

- Your zip code
- Your Medicare number and start date of your coverage (these are both on your Medicare card)
- Your date of birth
- A list of all your medications, their dosages and how often you take them. (you can get a list from your pharmacist) and
- The name of the pharmacy you want to use.

When using the online Medicare Plan Finder tool it will ask you to enter the personal information listed above. Then you will be asked to enter all the information about the medications you take and to choose a pharmacy, if you have a preference of where you get your medications.

Once you’ve entered all that information you’ll be ready to view “Your Plan Results.” The tool allows you to do a side-by-side comparison of up to three plans at a time. When comparing plans it is important to consider several factors:

- Does the plan have a deductible you’ll have to pay before coverage begins?
- How much is the monthly premium you’ll pay for the plan?
- What are your copays for each medication you take?
- And perhaps most importantly, are all my medication covered in the plan’s formulary?

An effective strategy for selecting a plan is to try to find one that covers all your medications. Barring that, consider selecting a plan that covers the most expensive drugs.

As you can see the process of comparing Part D drug plans can be rather complex and time consuming. This article is not intended to be exhaustive. There are factors to consider that we couldn’t cover here. The sooner you get started the better. You can begin comparing plans anytime, but remember if you don’t select a different Part D plan by December 7th you’ll be locked into your current plan for another year. Don’t hesitate to call us if you need help determining which plan is best for you.

**ATTENTION KANSAS MEDICAID RECIPIENTS**

In November 2012, you should be receiving a letter from the Kansas Department on Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) informing you of the KanCare Managed Care Organization (MCO) to which you have been assigned. People who have Medicaid as of October 2012 will have about 90 days from when they receive their enrollment information to decide if they want to remain in that plan or switch to one of the two other MCO plans.

It is important that you review the plan you are assigned to and compare it with the other plans. A couple things you will want to consider are:

- Which plan includes your current or preferred health care providers and
- Which plan provides the array of services that best meets your need.
Make an Impact. Vote!

One person’s vote CAN make a difference! Don’t believe it? Then consider this. In the recent Kansas primary elections one race was decided by 46 votes, another by only eight votes. One race was so close it had to be decided by a coin toss! In that race just one vote would have literally decided the election.

The percentage of people with disabilities that vote has been increasing, but it still lags behind the percentage of the general population that vote. A recent study by researchers at Rutgers and Syracuse Universities found, “People with disabilities are less likely than those without disabilities to vote and engage in other forms of political activity. Analysis … confirms there is a substantial disability voting gap, indicating increased turnout of people with disabilities could make an important difference in elections. If the disability gap were fully closed, there would be an additional 3.0–3.2 million voters with disabilities.”

Mobility issues appear to be a major impediment to voters with disabilities who need assistance to travel outside the home or don’t drive. The study found that, “Absentee voting can be an attractive alternative for people with mobility impairments or other transportation difficulties, and is about twice as high among voters with disabilities.”

In Kansas any voter can vote by absentee or advance ballot and people with disabilities can apply for permanent advance voting status. Once your permanent advance voter application has been approved you will receive an advance ballot in the mail prior to each future election. You fill out your ballot in the privacy of your own home and mail in your completed ballot. Although the form to register as a permanent advance voter requires you to state the “nature” of your disability you are not required to provide information specific to your individual disability. Simply stating that you have a permanent disability as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is sufficient. Another nice thing about voting by permanent advance ballot is that you do NOT have to provide a Photo ID to vote if you register before January 1, 2013. Advance voting ballots must be received in the office of the County Election Officer by close of polls on Election Day, November 6th.

Speaking of Photo Identification, the new state voter ID requirements are in effect for the 2012 elections. When you go to the polls to vote you will be required to show a valid Photo ID. For more information on what documents are acceptable as a valid ID see the poster on page 6 of this newsletter. People that register to vote for the first time in Kansas after January 1, 2013 are required to provide proof of US citizenship. For more information on voter registration or the new voter identification and proof of citizenship laws in Kansas you can check out the Disability Rights Center of Kansas’ Voting Project at: http://drckansas.org/drc-programs/voting or contact your TILRC advocate.
TILRC hosts successful 2012 Candidates Forum; Candidates respond to survey on disability-related issues

During every election season Topeka Independent Living Resource Center (TILRC) hosts a forum to provide candidates the opportunity to share their views on disability-related issues that affect the local electorate. On September 14th the 2012 TILRC Candidates Forum attracted a sizable crowd of interested voters who listened to the candidates remarks and asked them questions about issues impacting their lives.

Candidates in attendance were Janet Mitchell (R) and Virgil Weigel (D) who are both competing for the 56th Kansas House District, Carolyn Campbell (D), the incumbent in District 4 of the State Board of Education; Dennis Havwer (L), competing for the 2nd Congressional District; Annie Teitze (D), 53rd Kansas House District incumbent; Shanti Gandhi (R), competing for the 52nd Kansas House District; Sean Gatewood (D), 50th Kansas House District incumbent, Bruce Hanson (D), competing for the 47th Kansas House District; Terry Crowder (D), competing for the 20th Kansas Senate District; Marci Francisco, incumbent in the 2nd Kansas Senate District; Casey Moore (R), competing for the 19th Kansas Senate District; John Lamb (D), competing for the Shawnee County Commission 3rd District and Presidential candidate Gary Johnson (L) was represented by Al Terwelp.

All candidates competing in the Shawnee County Commission 3rd District, State Board of Education 4th District, local Kansas House and Senate Districts, 2nd U.S. Congressional District and U.S. Presidential races were asked to complete a survey on disability-related issues. Candidates were asked to share their thoughts on what they perceive as the most significant problems that people with disabilities face today and what they can do as elected officials to address them. The survey also encouraged the candidates to share their insights into a number of topics of perennial concern to the disability community, including affordable, accessible housing; access to transportation; community based long-term services and supports (including the privatization of the Kansas Medicaid system through KanCare); education and employment.

Several of the candidates who attended the forum also completed the survey as well as a number of candidates who were unable to attend the event. Candidates who completed the survey were Marcie Francisco, Kansas Senate 2nd District; Laura Kelly (D) and Dick Barta (R), Kansas Senate 18th District; Anthony Hensley (D), Kansas Senate 19th District; Bruce Hanson (D), Kansas House 47th District; Sean Gatewood (D), Kansas House 50th District; Annie Kuether (D), Kansas House 55th District; Janet Mitchell (R) and Virgil Weigel (D), Kansas House 56th District; Harold Lane (D), Kansas House 58th District; Dennis Hawver (L), 2nd Congressional District, John Lamb (D) and Bob Archer (R), Shawnee County Commission 3rd District and Carolyn Campbell, State Board of Education 4th District. (continued)
The Candidate Survey responses are now available on the TILRC website homepage, [http://www.tilrc.org](http://www.tilrc.org). To obtain a printed copy of the survey responses drop by the TILRC office or call us at 785-233-4572 and ask for Kevin. Large print and Braille format copies are available upon request.

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**got photo ID?**

If you’re registered to vote in Kansas, all you need is a driver’s license, military ID, Kansas college ID, or other qualifying ID card.

**The new Kansas voting law—it’s just that easy.**

**TAK** **E** **I** **T** **O** **H** **E** **T** **E** **P** **O** **L** **L** **S**.

Visit [www.gotVoterID.com](http://www.gotVoterID.com) for more info.

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**KANSAS VOTER ID LAW**

Beginning in 2012, every voter must show photo ID when voting. A voter requesting a ballot by mail must either write his or her driver’s license number on the application or send a copy of a photo ID.

**VALID PHOTOGRAPHIC IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTS**

- Driver’s license or ID card issued by Kansas or by another state
- U.S. passport
- Student ID card from an accredited post-secondary education institution in Kansas
- U.S. military ID
- ID card issued by an Indian tribe
- Employee badge or ID issued by a government office
- Concealed carry of handgun license issued by Kansas or by another state
- Public assistance ID card issued by a government office

Certain individuals are exempt from the ID requirements: permanent advance voters (voters with illnesses or disabilities), military and overseas voters and their spouses and dependents, and voters with religious objections who sign declarations. A voter age 65 or older may use an expired document.

- Visit [www.gotVoterID.com](http://www.gotVoterID.com) or call 1-800-262-8663 for more information.

**PROVIDED BY THE KANSAS SECRETARY OF STATE’S OFFICE**
Join us for fun outdoors with the TILRC Recreation Committee

Do you like having fun outdoors? Then you should join the TILRC Recreation Committee. The committee is a group of TILRC staff and consumers who enjoy outdoor activities and work together to organize fun activities that are accessible to people with disabilities throughout the spring, summer and fall. The only qualifications you need to join the committee are a love of the outdoors and a willingness to participate in organizing some fun activities.

On Friday, May 25, 2012; the committee hosted a fishing outing at the Westlake Pond at Gage Park. The committee provided the group fishing license, fishing equipment, bait and refreshments for the anglers and TILRC staff were available to offer assistance as needed.

Several people caught some nice-sized catfish, while others simply took advantage of the opportunity to get out and enjoy the mild, spring weather. The committee had planned another outing for June, but the hot weather arrived so soon and lasted so long that any outdoor activities were out of the picture until recently.

Recently, the committee held a fall outing on October 19, 2012 at Lake Shawnee. Once again TILRC provided the license, equipment and bait for folks who wanted to fish from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the accessible fishing dock. Then TILRC hosted a picnic lunch for 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

If you are interested in participating in future outings please contact Evan at 233-4572 by October 15th. You can contact him any time to find out more about the Recreation Committee and how you can get involved.
George Wolf interns create accessible computer lab, now open to the community

Each summer TILRC offers youthful members of the disability community, ages 14 through 19, the opportunity to gain some work experience and learn about independent living philosophy through the George Wolf Summer Youth Internship Program. The six week program begins with an introduction to the history of the independent living movement and philosophy and disability rights laws. After that it is time for the interns to get to work on that summer’s project. This summer the interns were tasked with creating an accessible computer lab that the public could use to explore different kinds of assistive devices and software and to access the Internet, write documents and other computer-related activities.

The interns investigated the possibilities for computer accessibility by taking a tour of the Topeka Kansas Workforce Center’s accessible work stations that are available for use by job seekers with disabilities and by searching the Internet for free or low cost accessibility software programs and equipment. The interns worked together with TILRC staff to install assistive technology and accessibility software on the computers in the existing TILRC computer lab to make it accessible to people with all types of disabilities.

Thanks to the 2012 George Wolf interns the accessible computer lab is now available, at no cost, to members of the public who need accessibility modifications to use the computer or to those who wish to explore computer accessibility options. For more information call us at

Pictured are the 2012 George Wolf interns: Jacob Rosebrough, Antione Howard, Phillip Niemackl, Allyson Rothrock, Ingrid Reyes, Haley Mason, Alaura Pressgrove, Shelby Ronsse, Matthew Blum and the George Wolf Internship Program Committee Chair Kim Dietrich.
Let us help you achieve your independent living goals

If you are a TILRC consumer you may already know how we help people who want to transition from an institution, like a nursing facility, back into the community or how we help folks get the attendant care services they need through the Medicaid Home and Community Based Waiver Programs, but you may not be aware of all the other ways we help people with disabilities maintain or increase their independence. Here are just a few of the ways our advocates can help you be more independent in many aspects of daily living. All of these services can be provided on an individual basis or in a group/classroom setting:

**HOUSING** – Finding affordable, accessible, integrated housing is never easy. We can help you find the housing that fits your needs. We can connect you with programs to make accessible modifications to your home. If you are a renter we can educate you on your rights and responsibilities or provide assistance requesting reasonable accommodations.

**ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY** – Accessing the right kinds of assistive technology can dramatically enhance a person’s independence. We can help you find resources and funding for all kinds of assistive technology like audible smoke alarms, video telephones or hand controls for your vehicle.

**INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS** – If you are adjusting to a newly acquired or advancing disability or just new to living in your own place you may want some help learning the skills you need to run your own household. We can help you learn cooking, housekeeping, organizational and other daily living skills. If you’re having trouble keeping a handle on your finances we can help you develop a budget or set up bill payment services.

**TRANSPORTATION** – If you need accessible transportation or don’t drive just getting around in the community can be a challenge. Whether you need to learn to ride the bus or apply for the LIFT Paratransit Service, we can help you navigate the public transit system. We can also provide assistance with accessing Medicaid transportation for medical appointments.

**WORK** – If you want to work we can help you access services and programs provided by Kansas Vocational Rehabilitation Services to look for a job, put together a resumé or we can connect you with work incentive programs, like the Working Healthy Program or Social Security’s Plan for Achieving Self Suppport (PASS).

**BENEFITS** – If you need assistance in finding out about or obtaining the benefits you are eligible for we can help. TILRC has trained staff with a proven track record in assisting folks in obtaining Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. We can also help you find the Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plan that is right for you.

**SOCIALIZATION** – We can provide information on social and recreational activities in our community and welcome your involvement in events organized by TILRC’s Social and Recreational Committee.

**SELF-ADVOCACY** – Nobody knows what you need better than you. We can help you learn how to effectively communicate your needs to policymakers, bureaucrats and others, so you can speak up for your own rights.

These are just some of the many ways we can help you live a more independent lifestyle. To learn more call 233-4572 and ask for Evan (outside the Topeka area call 1-800-443-2207).
TILRC celebrates Americans with Disabilities Act 22nd Anniversary

On July 27, 2012; consumers, staff members and friends of the Topeka Independent Living Resource Center gathered together at the Oxford Building, 408 S.W. Jackson Street, to celebrate the 22nd Anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Topeka Mayor Bill Bunten presented a proclamation commemorating the day and talked about how passage of the ADA has benefited Topekans with disabilities and the entire community. TILRC Executive Director Mike Oxford shared an ABC News clip that aired directly following the passage of the ADA. Oxford reminded folks of the wide spread discrimination against people with disabilities that preceded the ADA, the resistance to it’s passage and the progress that has been made. He also reminded the crowd that more work and continued vigilance is needed to insure full inclusion of people with disabilities in our society. Dallas Hathaway and Sharon Stansbury shared their personal stories of how their lives had benefited from the ADA. Dallas related how he used the ADA to make his high school accessible to students with disabilities and Sharon talked about how the ADA had made it possible for her to live independently in her own home. Celebrants wrapped up the occasion by enjoyed a light lunch of hotdogs and ice cream.
Network to Examine Disability in Film  
By Shaun Heasley, Disability Scoop, July 25, 2012

A month-long film series on cable this fall will focus on people with disabilities as portrayed by Hollywood.

Turner Classic Movies will air more than 20 films harkening from the 1920s to the 1980s during the month of October that include storylines about those with disabilities, the network said Tuesday.

Films included in the series will touch on everything from the experiences of those with intellectual disabilities to psychiatric disorders. Some like “An Affair to Remember,” which deals with paralysis, and Oscar-winner “Charly,” which focuses on a man with intellectual disability who is turned into a genius, are well-known classics while others featured are likely to be less familiar.

All of the movies will be offered with closed captioning and audio descriptions via secondary audio to ensure accessibility for viewers with sight or hearing impairments, officials said.

“From returning veterans learning to renegotiate both the assumptions and environments once taken for granted to the rise of independent living, Hollywood depictions of disability have alternately echoed and influenced life outside the movie theater,” said Lawrence Carter-Long of the National Council on Disability who curated the series for TCM. “When screened together, everything from ‘The Miracle Worker’ to ‘One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest’ reveals another layer where what you think you know is only the beginning.”

Since 2006, TCM has dedicated one month each year to focus on a particular issue and how it’s been depicted in film. Previous series have looked at the experiences of people from various racial groups as well as the gay and lesbian community.

The series dubbed “The Projected Image: A History of Disability in Film” will air Tuesdays in October beginning Oct. 2 at 8 p.m. ET.


Real-life disabled veteran Harold Russell (left) starred with Fredric March and Dana Andrews in The Best Years of Our Lives, a classic film about returning WWII veterans’ struggle to reintegrate into civilian society. Russell won two Academy Awards for his performance. He later went on to serve as the long-time Chair of the President’s Commission on Employment of the Handicapped.
Let us know about any changes.
Just check the appropriate box and mail the form back to us at:
Topeka Independent Living
c/o Kevin Sick
501 SW Jackson St.
Topeka, KS 66603

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☐ Large Print
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☐ I don’t use TILRC services but would like to subscribe for $10 a year.

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Visit TILRC’s website at www.tilrc.org