



# Kansas Insurance Department

Sandy Praeger, Commissioner of Insurance

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Consumer alert: Kansans urged to get colon cancer screenings**

TOPEKA, Kan. — Kansas Insurance Commissioner Sandy Praeger has joined forces with state health organizations in urging Kansans to get colon cancer screenings as members of individual and group health plans.

Commissioner Praeger, the American Cancer Society and the Kansas Association of Health Plans (KAHP) are marking March's National Colon Cancer Awareness Month with a joint statement emphasizing the need for Kansans to educate themselves about the screenings and consult with their health care providers about the need to seek one.

The joint news release from the Commissioner and the organizations can be found on the Kansas Insurance Department's Web site, [www.ksinsurance.org](http://www.ksinsurance.org).

"We know that approximately 50,000 Americans will die of colon cancer this year," Commissioner Praeger said. "We also know that 40,000 of those deaths could be prevented if everyone over the age of 50 got screened with a colonoscopy."

The Commissioner backed up her promotion of the screenings by telling a recent news conference that she had undergone the procedure; she pronounced the stigma of having the procedure as "way overblown."

"Because of the importance of preventive screening, I have supported responsible coverage by all Kansas insurers," Commissioner Praeger said. "I'm pleased that the members of the KAHP have voluntarily committed to providing coverage for preventive screenings according to the American Cancer Society guidelines."

KAHP includes the following health plans: Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City, Children's Mercy Family Health Partners, Coventry Health Care of Kansas, Preferred Health Systems, Unicare and United Healthcare.

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Colon cancer is the third most common cancer diagnosed in men and women in the U.S. and is the third leading cause of cancer death. Risk factors of colon cancer increase with age, and more than 90 percent of cases are diagnosed in individuals age 50 and older.

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*The Kansas Insurance Department, established in 1871, assists and educates consumers, regulates and reviews companies and licenses agents selling insurance products in the state. More about the department is online at [www.ksinsurance.org](http://www.ksinsurance.org).*