



# Kansas Insurance Department

Sandy Praeger, Commissioner of Insurance

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Commissioner's Corner—February 2009** **By Sandy Praeger, Commissioner of Insurance**

### **Ensure yourself of a healthier heart**

TOPEKA, Kan. – February's emphasis on Valentine's Day and matters of the heart take on a new perspective when you factor in the idea of cardiovascular disease (CVD).

CVD, which includes a wide variety of heart and blood vessel diseases, remains the leading cause of death, accounting for more than one in three Kansas deaths. Young, old, active, inactive, men, women – there is no way to define when CVD can strike.

That's why during this month of heart-related topics, I want to emphasize the American Heart Association's *Go Red for Women* campaign, aimed at educating women about heart disease and empowering us to reduce our risk and live stronger, heart-healthy lives.

A quick view of some of the statistics bears out the need for increased women's awareness of the campaign. For example:

- CVDs are the No. 1 killer of women in Kansas
- Approximately 11 women a day died from heart disease and stroke in the state in 2006, the most current reporting year.
- More women die of CVD than the next five causes of death combined, including all forms of cancer.

*National Go Red for Women Day* is Friday, Feb. 6. Women are urged to wear something red to show their collective desire to wipe out heart disease and to take charge of their heart health.

I urge you to go online to [GoRedForWomen.org](http://GoRedForWomen.org) to complete a free heart checkup. When you are finished, you will have an easily read report that evaluates your risk of having a heart attack or other cardiovascular event within the next 10 years. That can be the focus of a discussion with your medical provider, if conditions warrant.

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You might have heard or read about my feelings toward personal responsibility for health matters. I am a firm believer in preventive measures. When we live healthier lives we reduce the need for expensive health care services.

Being knowledgeable about health and medical conditions and making healthy lifestyle choices can be personal life-saving actions. Participating in and speaking for *Go Red for Women* are good ways to show outward support for this nationwide initiative.

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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).*