



# K a n s a s I n s u r a n c e D e p a r t m e n t

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COMMISSIONER OF INSURANCE

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## **KANSANS ENCOURAGED TO “GET SMART” ABOUT INSURANCE**

*Insurance Commissioner Sandy Praeger Sponsors Get Smart About Insurance Week*

Every January, Americans resolve to “exercise more” or “lose weight” in the coming year, but most likely “get smarter about insurance” is not at the top of their self-improvement resolution lists. However, setting this goal may be more important than one might think. In fact, according to a recent survey by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC), even though most Americans feel they have about the right amount of insurance coverage (72 percent), only 33 percent say they understand the details of those policies “very well.”

This unfortunate — and often costly — information gap is completely avoidable. When it comes to insurance, knowledge is your best policy. That’s why Kansas Insurance Commissioner Sandy Praeger has designated **January 19–23, 2004** as *Get Smart About Insurance* week, encouraging consumers to get smart about their coverage.

During this special week, consumers are urged to call the Kansas Insurance Department’s Consumer Hotline at 1-800-432-2484 to receive free assistance or visit [www.ksinsurance.org](http://www.ksinsurance.org) to get information about what they need and should expect from insurance coverage.

“The main idea behind Get Smart About Insurance Week is educating consumers, not about selling or buying insurance policies,” says Commissioner Praeger. “The Kansas Insurance Department is here to give consumers impartial insurance information in order to make sure their families are properly covered.”

### **Survey finds room for improvement**

To gauge Americans’ understanding and perceptions of their insurance coverage, telephone surveys of 1,009 adults who are 18 years and older were conducted by the national research company OCR International.

The number of people who think they have the right amount of insurance has increased since a year ago (72 percent versus 67 percent, respectively). However, the number of consumers who say they understand the details of their coverage “very well” has remained about the same (33–34 percent).

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“This information shows that many Americans may have a false sense of security when it comes to their insurance coverage,” Commissioner Praeger says. “Although most Americans find peace of mind in having insurance, a better understanding will put them in the driver’s seat.”

The youngest adults (ages 18–24) are the least likely to understand the details very well (20 percent). Understanding increases with age, as almost half of the participants 65 and older claim they know their insurance details very well (45 percent).

“Young adults are particularly in need of education about the nature of insurance coverage, given their limited life experience and pending lifestyle changes, as they begin family responsibilities,” Commissioner says.

### **“Get smart” tips for consumers**

During Get Smart About Insurance Week, consumers are encouraged to take several steps to become more educated about their insurance coverage.

“It is in the hands of consumers to watch out for their own best interest,” Commissioner Praeger says. “We advise consumers to shop around and know what kind of coverage they need before they purchase their policy.”

Other tips from the Kansas Insurance Department include:

- Call the Kansas Insurance Department’s toll-free Consumer Hotline at 1-800-432-2484 or visit [www.ksinsurance.org](http://www.ksinsurance.org) for free tips and up-to-date information prior to purchasing health, life, auto, home, or other insurance coverage.
- Schedule a routine “check-up” with your insurance providers at least once a year. Inquire about the cost benefit of opting for higher deductibles.
- Ask specifically about discounts for good driving records, good health, good grades, special education, or training.
- Shop around for identical products and services. Not every company charges the same rate.
- Remember an insurance policy is a legal document. Read it carefully.

“We strongly advise people to visit the Kansas Insurance Department,” Commissioner Praeger adds. “We are not only your best source for insurance-related questions, but we also understand better than anyone the unique insurance needs of people living in Kansas. No matter what your situation is, we are here to help you get smart about your insurance.”

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