



Access to Independent Living

The Access

From the Executive Director's Desk

February 2022

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Vaccines are effective against the COVID-19 Virus

Hopefully by the time you read this newsletter, COVID infections in Kansas are declining. As I am writing this article, infection rates in Kansas rival and even exceed levels previously seen during the pandemic. I lost count of the number of people I know who died from COVID, **unvaccinated**, because they believed false information about the vaccine or just simply thought it would never happen to them. These people left behind grieving family and friends and a void that will take years to fill.

By now, nearly 5 billion people around the world received at least their first dose of the vaccine. We have plenty of data to show that the vaccine is effective at keeping you from getting seriously ill from COVID and the current variants we are seeing in Kansas. Despite misinformation on dubious internet sites, **the vaccine is safe**. If you are still concerned, please talk with your doctor. 3Rivers provides assistance for several individuals who have serious, long lasting effects from COVID. These individuals contracted

COVID before the vaccine was available and they encourage everyone to get vaccinated to avoid the serious effects of this virus.



The Center for Disease Control and Prevention just reported new research showing the COVID booster shot is 94% effective in keeping you from getting seriously ill from the Delta variant and 82% effective against the Omicron variant. Those are excellent odds! If you are NOT vaccinated, you are 14 times more likely to get seriously ill from COVID and you are 53 times more likely to die if you do contract COVID!

So please, help yourself, help your family, your neighbors and our local medical personnel who are exhausted...Get vaccinated and boosted. While you are at it, get the flu vaccine. Stay Safe and Stay Healthy. If you have questions or concerns please contact us. If we don't have the answers to your questions, we will find someone who does.

Thank you!

PPE Available at 3Rivers!

3Rivers has masks and sanitizer available while supplies last.

Call 1-800-555-3994 or email whitneyl@threeriversinc.org to request these items.



This newsletter is funded in part through the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents do not necessarily represent the official views of ACL or HHS, and you should not assume endorsement by the U.S. Government.

Notice:

3Rivers will be closed all day Thursday, March 31st for our annual, mandatory agency training.

We will open again Friday, April 1st at 8:30am.

No fooling!

Consumer Corner

The fight for equality for people with disabilities (PWD) has been long and difficult. While the fight continues today, there are many laws and policies in place to protect PWD. However, many people do not know these laws exist or what they cover. Below are just a few important laws and policies created to protect the rights and interests of PWD.



The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The ADA prohibits discrimination against PWD who are seeking employment, state and local government positions, public accommodations and the use of commercial facilities, transportation and/or telecommunications. The ADA is one of the largest policies for PWD and covers a wide range of services. To learn more about the ADA, visit www.ada.gov.

Voting Accessibility Act of 1984

This act requires polling places in the United States to be physically accessible for federal elections. When there is no accessible location, there must be an alternate means of casting a ballot on the day of the election. Because of this act, states are also required to make voter registration accessible.



Architectural Barriers Act

Buildings and facilities that are designed, constructed or altered with Federal funds or leased by a Federal agency must comply with Federal standards for physical accessibility. This act focuses only on the standards of accessibility of the buildings themselves and not the activities conducted in those buildings.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1975

The IDEA act requires that all public schools provide free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment appropriate for each child with a disability. This includes creating an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each child and reviewing it on an annual basis. The IEP is formed in collaboration with the child, the child's parents, the child's teacher and an agency representative.



Financial Management Services (FMS)

Did you know... All Direct Service Workers (DSW), who are paid by 3Rivers, are employees of their Self-Direct Consumer. DSWs are not employed by 3Rivers. 3Rivers pays the worker on behalf of the Consumer and provides administrative duties to support the Consumer as the employer.

What is Self-Direction? Under Kansas Medicaid rules, qualifying individuals may choose to self-direct services that assist them in living independently in their homes. Consumers direct their DSWs in all aspects of their work, and are responsible for hiring, training, scheduling, supervising, and terminating their employees. The Kansas legislature sets the rate used to pay worker wages, applicable taxes, unemployment, and worker's compensation. Consumers set their worker's wages within the budget provided to them by the State. Consumers contract with Fiscal Management Service Providers (like 3Rivers) to handle payment of worker's wages, taxes, etc.

Important Reminders:

- Kansas Medicaid requires all workers to use AuthentiCare when reporting time worked. The Consumer's phone must be utilized when calling AuthentiCare. Consumer phone number changes must be reported to 3Rivers by the Consumer.
- Consumers with Plans of Care consisting of 40 hours per week or more are required to have approval by 3Rivers prior to a worker logging more than 40 hours per week.
- Workers must adhere to their Consumer's Plan of Care. Hours worked above the Plan of Care cannot be paid by 3Rivers.
- Missed clock in/out must be reported to 3Rivers within 24 hours by the Consumer.
- 3Rivers keeps a current Worker Registry List on file. Consumers who need a new worker can request this list. The Consumer is then responsible for contacting and hiring their new attendant. Workers who are not already on this list may contact our office to be added.

If you have any questions, please call the 3Rivers FMS Payroll Department at 785-456-8573

Welcome Aboard!



Rhonda Hubert joined the 3Rivers team this January as an Independent Living Specialist. She grew up and graduated high school in the great state of Oregon. After high school, she joined the military and travelled the world. She is a Desert Storm Veteran and left the military in 1994. Rhonda graduated from Kansas State University in 2000 and, from 2007-2012, she worked with 3Rivers as a Targeted Case Manager. She then went on to work with Managed Care Organizations in Kansas. We are excited to have Rhonda back with us!

Most played song on her phone: Let Her Cry by Hootie and The Blowfish

Favorite Quote: "Do the right thing even when no one is looking"

Favorite Outdoor Activity: Everything, including fishing, kayaking, camping and more fishing!

3Rivers welcomes Michelle Walker as an Independent Living Specialist for Atchison, Doniphan, and Brown counties. The army brought her and her husband to Kansas in 2009. Michelle spent two years in Fort Riley, then transferred her job with the Army to Fort Leavenworth in 2011. She worked for the Child and Youth Services/US Army MWR for 20 years. Michelle has 1 daughter and 3 beautiful grandchildren. She also has 2 dogs, 4 cats, 3 goats, and lots of chickens! Michelle and her husband have a farm, Walker Creek, where they grow a variety of vegetables, fruits, and plants. They sell the produce along with eggs, baked goods, wood crafts, and Walker Creek Specialty Lemonade at the Atchison Farmers Market and a few others. 3Rivers is excited to have Michelle!

Favorite Time of Day: Nothing beats the quiet and calm of early mornings!

What Do You Miss Most About Being a Kid? Summer days spent playing baseball and picnicking at the park with her parents, brothers and sisters.

Something People May Not Know About Michelle: She LOVES the St. Louis Cardinals.



Advocacy and Legislation

Healthy Aging

The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) released its annual update in December 2021. The update included new goals focused on promoting healthy aging to delay the onset of Alzheimer's disease and other related dementias.

Through extensive research, HHS discovered that certain factors such as high blood pressure, physical inactivity, diabetes, and depression can increase the chances of developing dementia. Furthermore, Black and Latino Americans as well as women are at a higher risk of developing the disease. From this research, HHS has created five ambitious goals:

1. Prevent and effectively treat Alzheimer's disease and related dementias by 2025
2. Enhance care quality and efficiency
3. Expand supports for people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias and their families
4. Enhance public awareness and engagement
5. Improve data and track progress

Although Alzheimer's disease and related dementias cannot yet be prevented, these new goals provide an avenue towards healthier aging for generations to come. For more information, talk with your primary care provider or visit www.alzheimers.gov.



strength

BE SAFE
with me 

Health providers for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) have reported that a staggering 40% of their direct support professionals are unvaccinated against COVID-19. Due to these high numbers, Interhab teamed up with Sunflower Health Plan and KCDD to create the "Be Safe With Me" campaign. This campaign strongly recommends the COVID-19 vaccine so that these professionals can safely support persons with IDD. To watch their short videos and learn more about the campaign, visit www.interhab.org/besafewithme.

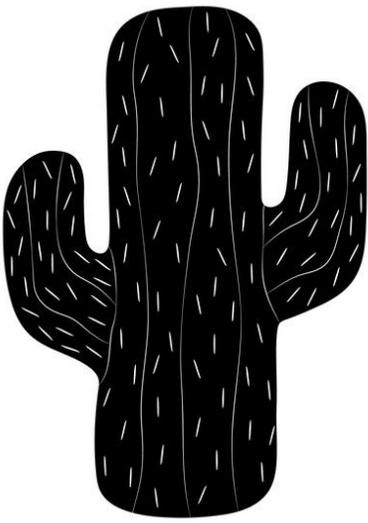
Mental Health

In December, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murphy highlighted the increasing need to address the United States' youth mental health crisis. Since the pandemic suicidal behaviors, attempts and deaths have increased considerably in youths aged 10-24 along with overall feelings of hopelessness and sadness. The pandemic has added to these challenges due to virtual learning, little in-person social opportunities and more difficult access to necessities such as food, healthcare, housing and social services.



The surgeon general and his advisory board have outlined a series of recommendations to improve youth mental health. These recommendations include recognizing that mental health is an essential part of overall health and that supporting the mental health of youths in educational, community and childcare settings is a necessity.

For more information or to read the entirety of the report, visit www.hhs.gov and search "Youth Mental Health Reports and Publications."



**WE STICK
TOGETHER**

Vaccine Villa

Make Your COVID-19 Vaccine or Booster Appointment Today! 4 Options for Finding a COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic

COVID-19 Vaccines are now available for everyone ages 5+. COVID-19 Boosters are now available for everyone ages 16+. Here are 4 quick and easy ways to find a vaccine clinic near you:

1. Visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) and click "Find COVID-19 Vaccines and Boosters"
2. Text your ZIP Code to GETVAX (438829) for English or VACUNA (822862) for Spanish to immediately receive addresses of nearby available vaccine centers
3. Call 3Rivers at 785-456-9915 or toll-free at 1-800-555-3994
4. Ask your primary care provider

Don't Wait! Remember: Stay Safe, Get Boosted!

How Expensive is COVID-19?

At the start of the pandemic, insurance companies were waiving copays for COVID-19 treatment. Now, these charges have increasingly come back. Most, if not all, insurance companies have begun charging individuals their original deductible, co-payment and coinsurance costs. What does this mean for those who need treatment for COVID-19? A Blue Cross Blue Shield Association study found that total costs for treatment for COVID-19 hospitalized patients averaged \$22,500 to \$45,000 with the patient paying approximately \$13,500 out-of-pocket after insurance. For patients in the ICU, they could pay approximately \$33,750 out-of-pocket. These are crazy high costs. With these higher costs come higher infection rates as people do not seek treatment and infect their neighbors, family and friends. However, the vaccine, time and time again, has proven a safe and effective option to keep a majority of us out of the hospital and away from these high costs.



DIRECT SERVICE WORKERS:

Earn up to \$100! 3Rivers wants to compensate you for your time spent traveling to a vaccine clinic and receiving your vaccine and booster. You can receive \$50 compensation for completing the vaccine series* and \$50 compensation for completing the booster.** The compensation will be in the form of a gift card mailed to the address we have on file for you. All you need to do is email (julies@threeriversinc.org) or fax (785-456-9923) your COVID-19 vaccine card to us!

*If you already received \$50 compensation for completing the vaccine series, you can receive the \$50 compensation for completing the booster. You will need to resend your vaccine card to show that you received the booster.

**EVERYONE ages 16+ is eligible to receive the COVID-19 booster. You must be 6 months past your Pfizer or Moderna vaccines or 2 months past your J&J vaccine to receive the booster.

2021: A Year in Review

2021 Stats and Facts from 3Rivers

- Assisted **526** consumers in developing an independent living plan
- Provided Information & Referral services to an additional **1,585** people
- **23,970** services provided
- Assisted consumers in achieving **709** goals

Proudest Accomplishments of 2021

- 1) Moved **11** people from a nursing facility to their own residence
- 2) Promoted employment & job exploration to **55** youths with disabilities
- 3) Hosted **3** COVID-19 vaccine clinics
- 4) Operated **4** PPE pick-up sites

Toughest Challenges of 2021

- 1) Decreased availability of Direct Service Workers
- 2) Vaccine hesitation from vulnerable adults
- 3) More internet & phone meetings to increase safe service delivery during the pandemic

Goals for 2022

- 1) Increase the availability of accessible transportation & housing
- 2) Assist more people with employment & nursing facility transition



Order Your Free At-Home COVID-19 Tests

Every home in the U.S. is eligible to receive 4 FREE at-home COVID-19 tests. Order your tests by visiting www.covidtests.gov and clicking on "Order Free At-Home Tests." Once you enter your name, address, and email, click "Check Out Now" to place your order.

You can only receive 4 individual tests per residential address from this specific program. These tests are FDA authorized, at-home rapid antigen tests. Once you place your order, your free tests will ship within 7-12 days.

If you need more than 4 tests, call your insurance company! They will reimburse you for 8 at-home COVID-19 tests per month for each person on your plan. You can purchase these tests at your local pharmacy. There are also over 20,000 free testing sites across the country if you need an immediate COVID-19 test result.

3Rivers may be receiving 300 COVID-19 test kits that we could deliver to you as well. More information soon!

Call 3Rivers at 785-456-9915 if you have questions, or if you need assistance placing your order, purchasing other at-home tests, or finding a testing site near you.

				2				5
			9		5			7
	3	2	1			4	9	
	5	8			4			1
			5	3	9			
7			2			3	5	
	9	4			6	1	8	
8			4		1			
6				8				

Sudoku:

- Every square must contain a single number
- Only the numbers 1 through 9 can be used
- Each 3 by 3 box can only contain each number from 1 through 9 once
- Each vertical column can only contain each number from 1 through 9 once
- Each horizontal row can only contain each number from 1 through 9 once
- Once the puzzle is solved, every row, column, and 3 by 3 box will contain every number from 1 through 9 once
- Answers to this and the word search are located on the last page

Spring Word Search

Find the following words:

- Blossom
- Daffodil
- Green
- Growth
- Melting
- Puddle
- Rainbow
- Raindrops
- Seeds
- Sunshine
- Tulips
- Umbrella

q	w	n	m	s	t	j	g	d	o	b	i
h	v	e	l	d	d	u	p	c	e	l	r
m	e	l	t	i	n	g	z	n	r	o	a
x	j	m	s	u	s	x	i	j	a	s	i
y	u	t	h	v	l	h	g	i	i	s	n
s	p	m	b	o	s	i	d	r	n	o	d
g	f	o	b	n	o	e	p	e	b	m	r
r	w	w	u	r	c	o	e	s	o	j	o
e	k	s	r	d	e	r	z	d	w	w	p
e	w	b	b	g	n	l	t	o	s	c	s
n	g	r	o	w	t	h	l	a	q	c	o
t	c	l	i	d	o	f	f	a	d	m	f

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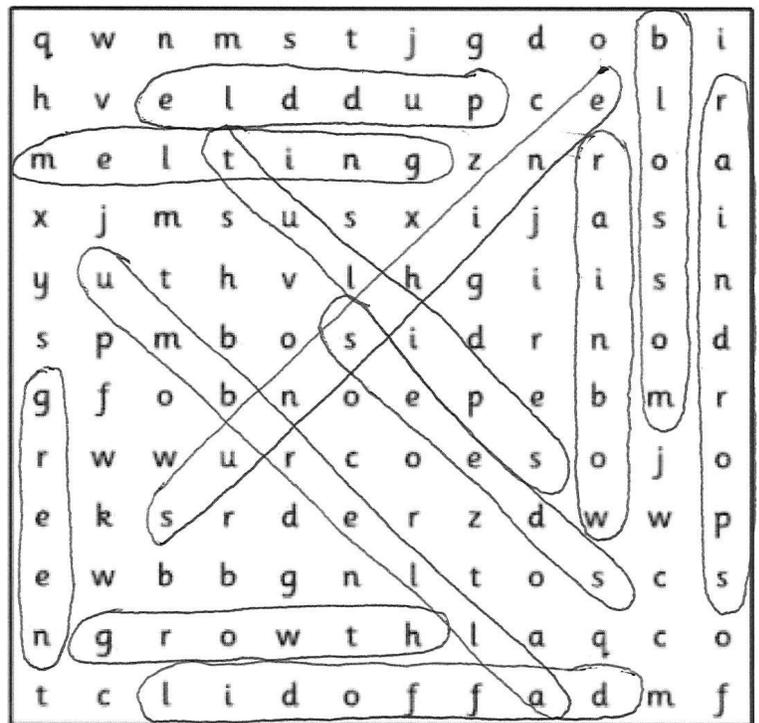
785-456-9915
Toll Free: 800-555-3994
Fax : 785-456-9923

www.threeriversinc.org



Solved Sudoku from Page 7

9	4	7	8	2	3	6	1	5
1	8	6	9	4	5	2	3	7
5	3	2	1	6	7	4	9	8
3	5	8	6	7	4	9	2	1
4	2	1	5	3	9	8	7	6
7	6	9	2	1	8	3	5	4
2	9	4	7	5	6	1	8	3
8	7	3	4	9	1	5	6	2
6	1	5	3	8	2	7	4	9



Solved Word Search from Page 7