



Working Healthy

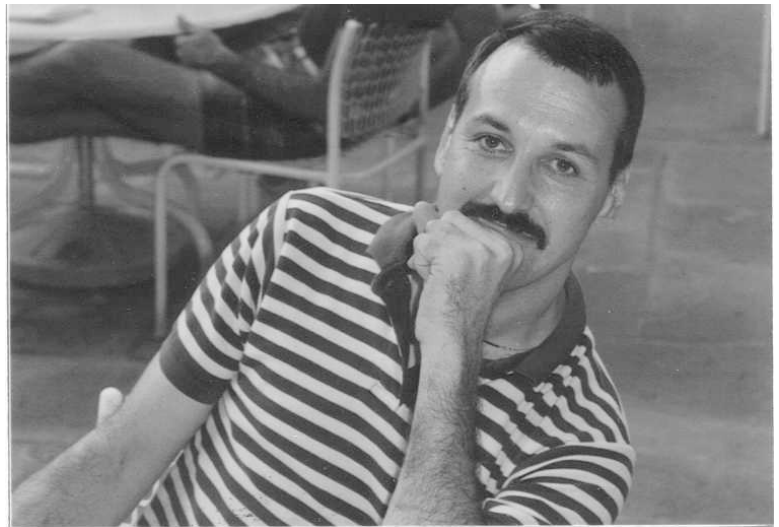
Making health care work

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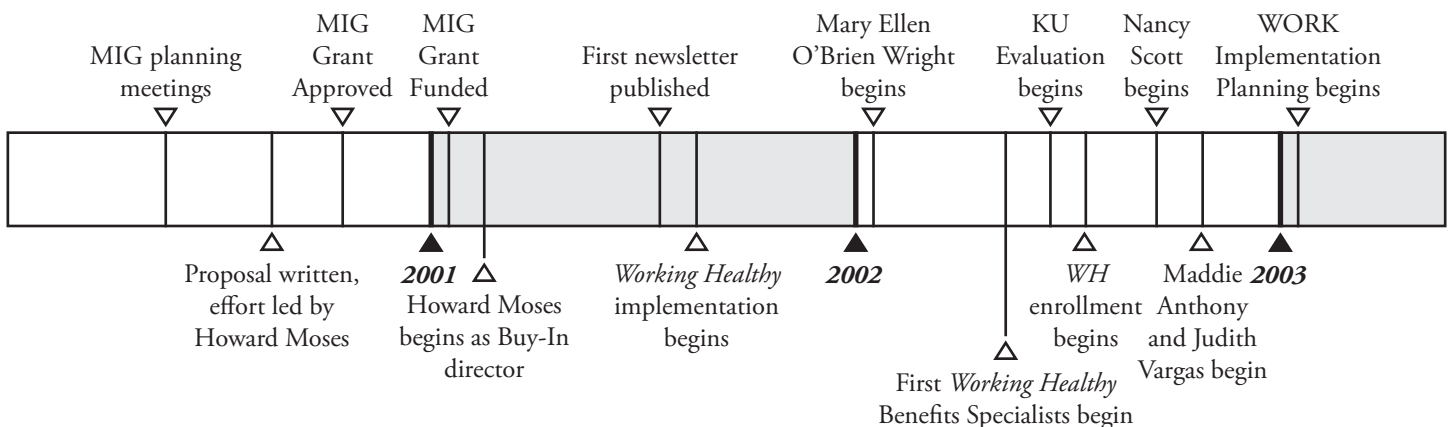
This first newsletter in the tenth volume of the *Working Healthy* newsletter is dedicated to Howard Moses, who wrote the original funding application for *Working Healthy* and was the program's first director. Howard was a native Kansan, an amazing person, and a tireless advocate for people with disabilities. Early in his career, he served as the executive director of the Kansas Committee on the Employment of the Handicapped, and helped to establish several of the centers for independent living still operating in the state. His work then took him to Washington, DC where he worked in various capacities, including as legislative analyst for the President's Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities, deputy director of the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and deputy assistant secretary in the US Department of Education. He worked behind the scenes in writing the Americans with Disabilities Act and helped to get it passed. Later, he came home to Kansas and continued his service to the state and his advocacy efforts.



Howard Moses
1950-2001

Though it sounds cliché, Howard was truly an inspiration to all who knew him. He had an incredible work ethic, frequently sending out emails until after midnight and starting over again by 5:00 in the morning. Despite his hard work, Howard also had a quick sense of humor and never took himself too seriously. The *Working Healthy* program serves as a legacy to Howard's lifetime of efforts to empower people with disabilities here in Kansas and across the country.

- Jean Hall, Ph.D, Principal Investigator



Benefits Specialists' Corner

As we enter the 10th year for *Working Healthy* overall, July marks the end of the 8th year of *Working Healthy* as an available service under Medicaid. It is also the 8th year WH Benefits Specialists have provided outreach, benefits planning and helped consumers, service providers and stakeholders understand *Working Healthy*. Initially, five Benefits Specialists were hired and they, along with team leader Craig Perbeck, gathered in Topeka in May 2002 to learn the mysteries of Social Security's work incentives. Two of these original six remain today, myself and Dan Hallacy, who you will hear from in a moment.

I began my *Working Healthy* career in Garden City and then transferred to Topeka where I remain now. I would like to take this opportunity to THANK ALL OF YOU who have made referrals to the Benefits Specialists and allowed us to come into your agencies, offices, and homes to promote *Working Healthy*. I know that *Working Healthy*, WORK, and the WH Medically Improved programs have allowed hundreds of people to begin or continue working without losing critical medical coverage.

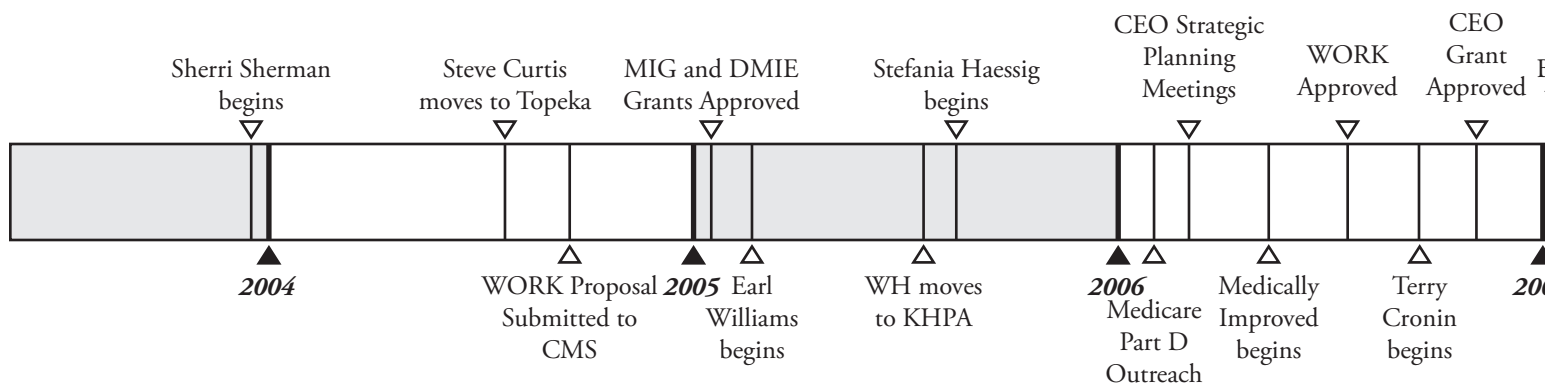
On a personal level, being a Benefits Specialist has been very satisfying. I really think I've learned something every day I've worked in this program. Hopefully, I've remembered more than I've forgotten!

-Steve Curtis, Benefits Specialists Team Leader, Topeka

When *Working Healthy* began I think all of us who were working then – Craig, Gary, Steve, Norm, Carrie and myself – made a sincere effort to know all the rules and regulations that relate to *Working Healthy* and our consumers. I call them “our” consumers because I think we took a personal interest in every person we served – and still do. We remain friends with the Benefits Specialists who have moved on and try to keep up with what is going on in each of their lives. Along the way Sherri, Earl, Terry, Karen, Lisa and our newest Benefits Specialist, Jolynn, have joined our team with the same goals and mission.

The way we approach our job has not changed a lot. However, the creation of Work Opportunities Reward Kansans (WORK) to provide assistance services to eligible *Working Healthy* participants has helped people we were unable to give assistance to previously. We are all curious about how the new national health legislation will help the people we serve now and how we will be better able to assist them in the future. Right now, it is not so much a look at the past that intrigues us, but peering into a crystal ball to see what the future brings.

-Dan Hallacy, Pittsburg Area Benefits Specialists



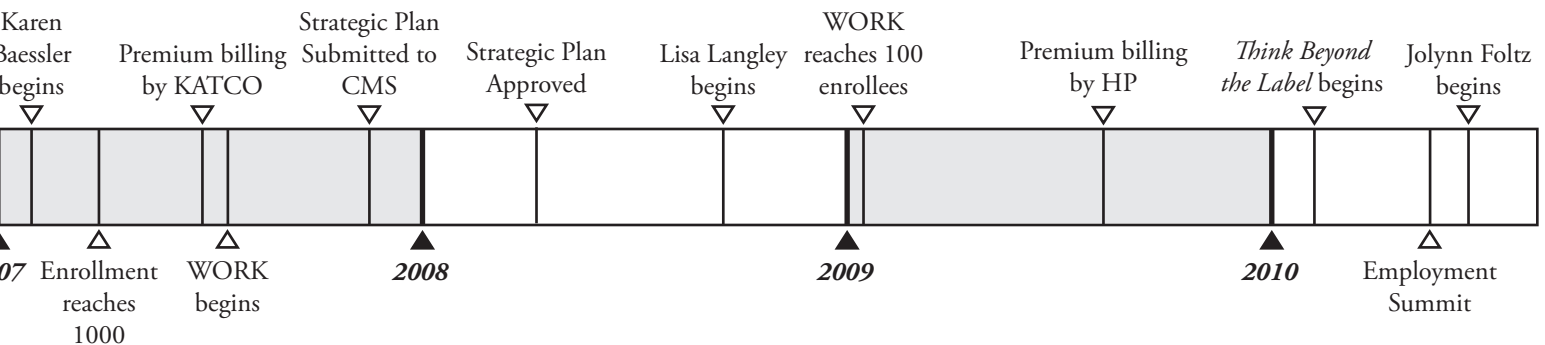
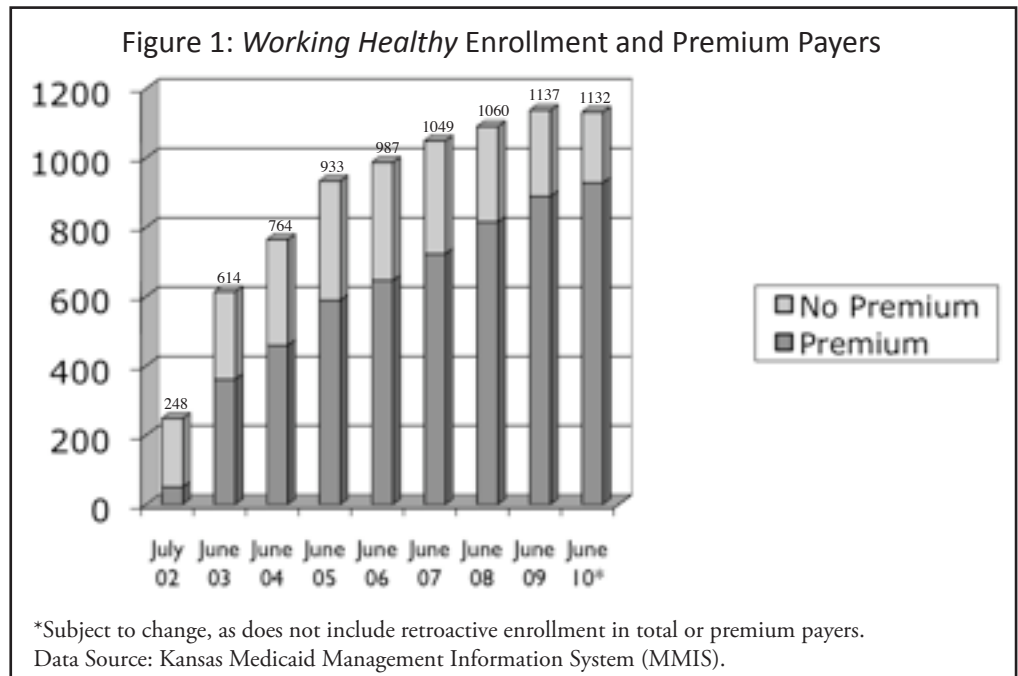
Annual Enrollment Update

By Noelle Kurth, M.S., KU Research & Evaluation Team

The Kansas Medicaid Buy-in, Working Healthy, began enrolling its first participants in July 2002. During this first month, nearly 250 employed Kansans with disabilities enrolled in the program. Working Healthy has experienced steady, continuous growth over the past eight years (see Figure 1). Federal and state policy changes, at times, have caused enrollment numbers to dip in certain months, but due to the quality of the program with outreach and support provided by Benefits Specialists, an overall annual net loss of participants has never occurred to date.

It is important also to note that the percentage of enrollees in Working Healthy who pay premiums (i.e. have income greater than federal poverty level [FPL]) has dramatically increased. When Working Healthy first began, 20% of enrollees were paying a monthly premium and, currently, in 2010 this percentage is at approximately 80% (see Figure 1). Over the course of the past eight years, the program has experienced a clear shift from a majority of individuals

with earnings below FPL to a majority earning above FPL. While the number of individuals earning significantly more than FPL and working themselves off of social security cash assistance (SSDI) remains low in Kansas, the trajectory toward more and more individuals working above FPL is still important. Working Healthy enrollees report consistently that the complete loss of SSDI is too significant to be overcome suddenly when the “cliff” is hit. Consequently, until federal policy changes this issue for people with disabilities will not be overcome and levels of income, though increasing for the Buy-in population as a whole, will not rise above the current SGA level of \$1000/month.



WORKING HEALTHY

University of Kansas
Medicaid Infrastructure Change Evaluation Project
CRL, Division of Adult Studies
Joseph R. Pearson Hall
1122 West Campus Road, Room 521
Lawrence, Kansas 66045-3101
1-785-864-7085

Return service requested

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KU Research & Evaluation Team

Jean P. Hall, Principal Investigator

Michael Fox, Co-Principal Investigator

Noelle K. Kurth, Project Coordinator

Shawna Carroll & Emily Fall, Graduate Research Assistants

Emily Tonsfeldt, Student Assistant



Kansas Health Policy Authority

Mary Ellen O'Brien Wright, Senior Manager

Nancy Scott, Program Manager

Steve Curtis, Benefits Specialist Team Leader

