



As a non-profit organization, the Rice County Council on Aging advocates for, serves and empowers the aging citizens of Rice County, Kansas, providing them with the resources needed to continue living an active, healthy and independent lifestyle.



RICE COUNTY COUNCIL ON AGING  
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LYONS, KS 67554

[www.ricecountycouncilonaging.com](http://www.ricecountycouncilonaging.com)

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# Grains of Rice

Grains of Knowledge for Rice County Seniors



## MEET THE FLEET!

by Alecia Gaines, Dispatcher, RCCA

The Rice County Council on Aging has a fleet of three transportation vehicles, all with their own duties and drivers. Below is a breakdown of the vans, so you can get acquainted.

- The first van in the photo is the oldest in our fleet, the **2013 Dodge Grand Caravan minivan**. This van is our out-of-county vehicle. We have applied for a grant to have it replaced in 2019 with a new minivan. It has a ramp for those who might have a harder time with steps or if you are in a wheelchair. It will seat five, or three and one person in a wheelchair. We have three part-time drivers to help us out with these trips, Rocky, Larry, and Roger.
- The second van in the photo is the **2017 Ford Transit van**. This is the one with the teal and green decals. It is our Monday, Wednesday, Friday Hutchinson van. Monica takes our clients to dialysis on these days. The seats are easily configured, but right now we have it set up for one person in a wheelchair and five other people. It has a lift to assist people in and out of the van, which means easy on and off.
- The last, newest, and largest addition to our fleet just arrived in December. This is the one with the red and grey decals. It is a **2018 Ford Transit 350 van**. We are using it for our in-county riders. It seats 8 riders and has a lift for easy on and off. If any of our riders are in a wheelchair, our in-county driver, Rick, can take out a seat or two with minimal effort, and he is good to go! We do use different vans for different rides, so don't be surprised if you book a ride and a different van shows up than you expected.

**Book your ride today and see which van comes to your door!**





# No Bull from Rocky

ROCKY GAINES, Board President  
Rice County Council on Aging



## HELP WANTED? ASKING FOR & ACCEPTING HELP

As we've said many times, the mission of the Rice County Council on Aging (RCCA) is, **"To identify the needs of the citizens 60 years of age and older living in Rice County, Kansas."** In that case, who better to identify those needs than the citizens who are 60 years of age and older living in Rice County?

One of the cultural foot stompers in this area (and the Midwest in general) is **NOT to whine, nor complain, nor ask for help—even when help is critical.** Think about it. How many people do you know who have suffered a serious illness or a traumatic injury all by themselves or within their family?

Which elders can you think of who can't fix a door or window, hang a picture, mow their lawn, or get to the store? How many of our homes are slowly deteriorating because their owners / residents

can't afford or are physically unable to perform even simple tasks? Who doesn't have any heat this winter?

**YOU have the answers.** If you know of someone who might need help, check with them; talk to them. Find out what's going on. The solution may be as simple as involving a family member, a church member, or a healthcare professional. Maybe it's an information problem where the answer or solution is right there, but the individual doesn't know about it.

Perhaps it just takes a call to the RCCA (257-5153) for transportation, help dealing with the bureaucracy, housekeeping, or personal care.

If you are one of those who could use a hand, talk to someone, share, and perhaps most importantly...accept help.

# HELP WANTED!



# Ride.

MONDAY-FRIDAY · 7:30 - 5:00



\*STOPS ARE \$1.50 IN LYONS. ADDITIONAL STOPS ARE \$1.50.

TRANSIT TO CHASE, STERLING OR OTHER TOWNS IN RICE COUNTY ARE \$2.50 FOR EACH DIRECTION.

PUNCH CARDS ARE \$20.00 FOR 20 RIDES! A \$10.00 SAVINGS!

APPOINTMENTS ARE FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVED.

THIS PROJECT FUNDED BY THE KDOT TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM AND THE RCCA.



"Mum says she wants to stay in her own home, but failing that, she'll settle for a villa in Spain."

## Attendant Care Services

Attendant Care Services include the basic care services that will enable an individual in need of care to live in their home and carry out functions of daily living, mobility, and self-care, rather than living in a care facility. The RCCA can provide supervision and/or assistance with bathing, medications, dressing, and personal appearance under the direction of a licensed health professional.

Call for more information  
and/or to set up an appointment.

# 620.257.5153

# HOW

can we help you?

## WOULD YOU GIVE YOUR KEYS TO A STRANGER?

To a scammer, your Medicare card is the key to stealing your benefits.

Here's how you can protect against health care fraud:

- Don't give your Medicare number to strangers
- Check medical bills and statements with your personal healthcare journal
- Report errors and suspicious charges to 800-432-3535



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**PROTECT**  
Medical Numbers

**PREVENT**  
Scams and Errors

**REPORT**  
Your Concerns



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## COUNT ME IN!

Please take a little time to fill out the coupon below. This helps us to use the funds we have wisely and to know whether Grains of Rice is serving the seniors of our community.

☐ I want to support **Grains of Rice**, enclosed is my donation.

☐ I wish to receive **Grains of Rice** as an email attachment. My email address is:



# How Medicare Covers Kidney Dialysis

Need Help with Medicare? 1-800-432-2703

## DIALYSIS SERVICES AND SUPPLIES COVERED BY MEDICARE

### MEDICARE PART A COVERS

- Inpatient dialysis treatments (if you're admitted to a hospital for special care)

### MEDICARE PART B COVERS

- Outpatient dialysis treatments (if you get treatments in a Medicare-approved dialysis facility)
- Outpatient doctors' services
- Home dialysis training (includes instruction for you and the person helping you with your home dialysis treatments)
- Home dialysis equipment & supplies (like the machine, water treatment system, recliner, alcohol, wipes, sterile drapes, rubber gloves & scissors)
- Certain home support services (may include visits by trained hospital or dialysis facility workers to check on your home dialysis, to help in emergencies when needed, and to check your dialysis equipment and water supply)
- Most drugs for home and in-facility dialysis
- Other services and supplies that are a part of dialysis (like laboratory tests)

## DIALYSIS SERVICES AND SUPPLIES NOT COVERED BY MEDICARE

- Paid dialysis aides to help you with home dialysis
- A place to stay during your treatment
- Any lost pay to you or the person who may be helping you during home dialysis training
- Blood or packed red blood cells for home dialysis unless part of a doctors' service

# How Medicare Covers Kidney Transplant

### MEDICARE PART A COVERS

- Inpatient services in a Medicare-certified hospital
- Kidney registry fee
- Laboratory and other tests needed to evaluate your medical condition\*
- Laboratory and other tests needed to evaluate medical condition of potential kidney donors\*
- The cost of finding the proper kidney for your transplant surgery (if there's no kidney donor)
- The full cost of care for your kidney donor (including care before surgery, the actual surgery, and care after surgery)
- Any additional inpatient hospital care for your donor in case of problems due to the surgery
- Blood you need while a hospital inpatient

*\*These services are covered whether they're done by the Medicare-approved hospital where you'll get your transplant, or by another hospital that participates in Medicare.*

### MEDICARE PART B COVERS

- Doctors' services for kidney transplant surgery (including care before surgery, the actual surgery, and care after surgery)
- Doctors' services for your kidney donor during their hospital stay
- Immunosuppressive drugs (for a limited time after you leave the hospital following a transplant)
- Blood you need as an outpatient

# LIEAP LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

LIEP REGISTRATION 2019 · JANUARY 22 - MARCH 29

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a federally funded program that helps eligible households pay a portion of their home energy costs by providing a one-time per year benefit.

**In order to qualify, applicants must meet the following requirements:**

- 1) An adult living at the address must be personally responsible for paying the heating costs incurred at the current residence, payable either to the landlord or the fuel vendor.
- 2) Applicants must demonstrate a recent history of payments toward purchase of the primary heating energy.

**Things to bring to your appointment:**

- 1) Information on all persons living in the home, including social security numbers and birth dates.
- 2) Documentation of ALL income.
- 3) Copies of the last THREE (3) months utility bills for each vendor.

INCOME GUIDELINES	Household Size	1	Maximum Gross Income	\$1,316
	Household Size	2	Maximum Gross Income	\$1,784
	Household Size	3	Maximum Gross Income	\$2,252
	Household Size	4	Maximum Gross Income	\$2,720
For each additional family member add \$468.00				

# HOMESTEAD REFUND/SAFE SENIOR Property Tax Refunds

**The Homestead/Safe Senior Refund** is a rebate program for the property taxes paid by homeowners. The refund is based on a portion of the property tax paid on a Kansas resident's home. The maximum refund is \$700 for the Homestead or possibly more for the Safe Senior.

To qualify you must be a Kansas resident, living in Kansas the entire year. Your total household income must be \$35,000 or less for the Homestead or \$19,800 or less for the Safe Senior Tax Refund.

**In order to qualify, applicants must meet the following requirements:**

- 1) You were born before Jan. 1, 1963; **OR**
- 2) You must have been totally and permanently disabled or blind during the entire year, regardless of your age; **OR**
- 3) You must have had a dependent child living with you all of last year who was born on or before Jan. 1, 2018, and was under the age of 18 the entire year.

**Things to bring to your appointment:**

- 1) Documentation of **ALL** income.
- 2) Documentation of **ALL** persons living in the home, including social security numbers and birth dates.
- 3) Copy of your last property tax statement.

# Winter Weather

A P Z C G Z Y R T N I W Y E F S X W A F  
V J K W O V X G J H K G I Z Q P S I R C  
Z W Y Z A N L E B E A M H N J H M R B F  
V X U P P D I N R P D M K C Q Y V N L B  
N P H K K J Q F K E F P J A H C L S S B  
C O S T I N G I N G V R E T T I B U N V  
B L E S L V Y N R O B E V K Q G L F O K  
B A A J U O V F F Y F Q S V Q K A L W S  
L R V R G X M B K Y F G O F R V E C Y I  
E A L O M N Y I X Z A M U R U O P M S R  
A Z X J E A Y T O R T T G O G V S N I B  
K Q Q Z E E J I C Y P N Q S E T A W S E  
S C O N B R J N D K I Z T T P P N H W R  
B R T K E O P G N B Y D H Y P H I O T W  
F C X D B B J Q M I U Z P Y H V R O P L  
Z D I G I R F U A T P E G E E J E X A I  
F L W I O E N A Z S E P U R A Y Y T U Q  
P K G M Y P U A Z N P W Y Q E L I D B R  
V T M X X Y C N Q E Z N E Y N F R A T K  
Q S R J W H T O H G L Z B Y H A S W P A

BITING	BITTER	BLEAK	BRISK	CHILL
CRISP	FRIGID	FROSTY	FROZEN	HYPERBOREAN
ICY	NIPPY	NUMBING	POLAR	SEVERE
SHIVERY	SNAPPY	SNOWY	STINGING	WINTRY

Would you like an email copy of *Grains of Rice*? **Call 620-257-5153 to sign up!**

*Grains of Rice* is also available on our website: **[www.ricecountycouncilonaging.com](http://www.ricecountycouncilonaging.com)**

# Rice County Senior Centers

<p><i>Alden</i></p> <p>Township Hall Heidi Bolton 785-223-1248</p>	<p><i>Chase</i></p> <p>Chase Senior Center Silver Ingram 620-938-2010</p>	<p><i>Little River</i></p> <p>Senior Center Meredith Davis 620-897-6672</p>	
<p><i>Bushton</i></p> <p>Township Hall Marlin Sittner 620-562-0332</p>	<p><i>Geneseo</i></p> <p>55+ Club on Main St. Joyce Mullen 824-6489</p>	<p><i>Lyons</i></p> <p>Park Place Darla Graff 620-680-6150</p>	

## Housekeeping Services

Rice County Council on Aging has openings for housekeeping services. If you would like to schedule an appointment to talk about our services, call

**620.257.5153.**

*Do you need help running the vacuum?  
Is your laundry piling up?*



### RICE COUNTY COUNCIL ON AGING BOARD of DIRECTORS

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- Joyce Mullen, Vice President
- Sue Elliott, Treasurer
- Heidi Bolton, Alden Representative
- Shirley Fair, Alden Alternate
- Marlin Sittner, Bushton Representative
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- Bert Buchanan, Little River Representative
- Elizabeth Prose, Little River Alternate
- Karen Snyder, Lyons Representative
- Lou Ann Cobb, Lyons Alternate
- Marvin Hook, Sterling Representative

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE ON PAGE 4

A P Z C G Z Y R T N I W Y E F S X W A F  
V J K W O V X G J H K G I Z Q P S I R C  
Z W Y Z A N L E B E A M H N J H M R B F  
V X U P P D I N R P D M K C Q Y V N L B  
N P H K K J Q F K E F P J A H C L S S B  
C O S T I N G I N G V R E T T I B U N V  
B L E S L V Y N R O B E V K Q G L F O K  
B A A J U O V F F Y F Q S V Q K A L W S  
L R V R G X M B K Y F G O F R V E C Y I  
E A L O M N Y I X Z A M U R U O P M S R  
A Z X J E A Y T O R T T G O G V S N I B  
K Q Q Z E E J I C Y P N Q S E T A W S E  
S C O N B R J N D K I Z T T P P N H W R  
B R T K E O P G N B Y D H Y P H I O T W  
F C X D B B J Q M I U Z P Y H V R O P L  
Z D I G I R F U A T P E G E E J E X A I  
F L W I O E N A Z S E P U R A Y Y T U Q  
P K G M Y P U A Z N P W Y Q E L I D B R  
V T M X X Y C N Q E Z N E Y N F R A T K  
Q S R J W H T O H G L Z B Y H A S W P A



# MEDICARE CHANGES AHEAD

## Mixed bag for beneficiaries in 2019

Medicare’s annual announcement of payment adjustments revealed several small changes - including a few decreases - that will take effect January 1. Here’s what to expect in 2019.

### PART B

The standard monthly premium rises from \$134 to \$135.50. It covers doctor and outpatient visits.

### MEDICARE ADVANTAGE

The average monthly premium is expected to dip from \$29.81 to about \$28 a month. That’s on top of the Part B premium.

### PART D

The average premium for a Part D prescription drug plan should fall from about \$33.59 to \$32.50. But actual monthly charges can vary by plan depending on where you live, what medicines you use, and the deductibles and copays you incur.

### DEDUCTIBLES

Part A deductibles for hospital stays will go up \$24, to \$1,364 per benefit period. Part B deductibles will rise by \$2 - from \$183 to \$185.

### FLU SHOT?

Many Say No Thanks

About 1 in 4 Americans age 60-plus won’t get a flu shot this year, a new survey reveals.

SHOT MIGHT MAKE ME SICK - 43%  
DON’T BELIEVE IT’S EFFECTIVE - 35%  
DON’T EXPECT TO GET THE FLU - 35%  
JUST DON’T LIKE SHOTS - 22%

For the record, AARP encourages all members to get a flu shot, as data shows it significantly decreases the risk of getting sick.



#### Utilities

Church Women’s Thrift Store  
Lynn Gaines  
First Christian Church  
Anonymous  
Lyle Rickard  
Helen Stockstill Family

#### Equipment

Wayne Schoonover

#### Unrestricted

Myrna Ray  
Anonymous  
Ann Cain  
Tom & Barbara Sherman  
Marilyn Meyers  
Rick & Jo Ann Hager

#### Newsletter

Boyd Hendricks  
Myrna Ray  
Jim Crosby  
Forest & Joanne Johnston  
Anonymous  
Dorothy Grimes  
Judy Burgen  
Poodie Peverly  
Hazel Ekholm

In these days of increased request for service & decreased funding, we are most grateful for each one that donates.

#### Information & Assistance Donations

Bill & Ada Baxter  
Mary Jayne Cain  
Bob & Karen Barker  
Myrna Ray  
Rita January  
Shirley Kelley  
Danny Phillips & Sue Hemry  
Bob & Dee Hammer  
Nelda Gray

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# SAVE YOUR EYESIGHT

by Gabrielle DeGroot Redford, AARP Magazine

Every year 50,000 Americans go blind, most from treatable or preventable eye diseases such as diabetic retinopathy and macular degeneration. Yet just half of the 61 million Americans at high risk of losing their eyesight saw an eye doctor in the past 12 months, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

That’s partly because preventive eye exams are not covered by Medicare or most private insurance, says Peter J. McDonnell, M.D., director of the Wilmer Eye Institute at the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions in Baltimore. Not surprisingly, blindness is among Americans’ most-feared medical conditions, along with Alzheimer’s disease and cancer.

"What’s sadder than working your whole life, getting ready to retire and developing something like macular degeneration, where you lose your central vision?" McDonnell says. "It’s a big issue."

AARP spoke with McDonnell about what’s fueling the rise in eye diseases, steps we can take to protect our eyesight and new developments in the treatment of blindness.

**Q: By 2050, the number of Americans who are blind or visually impaired is expected to double to more than 8 million. What’s behind that trend?**

**A:** The two biggest drivers are the increase in the number of people with diabetes and the fact that we’re living much longer. Thirty years ago, it was pretty rare for us to see someone who was 80 years old. Now, we routinely see patients over 100. Back then, people would have developed these age-related eye diseases, but they didn’t live long enough.

**Q: If you have diabetes, are you destined to get diabetic retinopathy?**

**A:** The better you control your diabetes, the less likely you are to have a problem. And if you do develop the abnormal blood vessels in your retina that are a hallmark of the disease, we can treat them with lasers or medications. Unfortunately, only about 20 to 30 percent of people who have diabetes get regular eye exams, and up to 24,000 Americans go blind each

year from diabetic retinopathy.

**Q: What else can people do to protect their eyesight as they get older?**

**A:** Eat a well-balanced diet, and don’t smoke. We think that the loss of vision that accompanies some eye disease such as age-related macular degeneration may be related to oxidative damage to the eye. People who eat plenty of green, leafy vegetables and antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables like blueberries and tomatoes might be better off. Plus, when you’re out in the sun, you want to wear UV-absorbing sunglasses and a hat with a brim. Smoking doubles your risk of macular degeneration and cataracts, so if you smoke, quit.

**Q: Dry eye syndrome seems to be on the rise. Even Jennifer Aniston has been diagnosed with it. What’s going on?**

**A:** Dry eye happens when your eye doesn’t make enough tears, and it’s one of the most common eye problems affecting Americans. A lot of people convince themselves it’s normal to feel scratchiness or irritation in their eyes, or to think that it’s just part of getting older. But it’s not.

**Q: What is the treatment?**

**A:** We now have two FDA-approved drugs to treat dry eye: cyclosporine [Restasis] and lifitegrast [Xiidra]. Some people can benefit from corticosteroid eyedrops, but you only want to use those for a short period of time. We can also put a plug in your tear duct to make the tears that you do produce stay in your eye longer.

**Q: Can you envision a time when no one in America would become blind?**

**A:** I’m counting on it! We have scientists who are growing retinas from stem cells, and as best as I can tell, it’s just a matter of time before we can implant those in people. We’ve also made progress on an artificial optic nerve, so if you can grow the retina and grow the artificial optic nerve that connects the retina back to the brain, hopefully you’re there.

## You’ve Gotta See This!

Surprising facts about our eyes

75

Percentage of Americans with glasses or contacts

12

Number of times you blink per minute

8

Percentage of color-blind men; women affected: 0.5%

# MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLANS

## The Basics

by Daylene Linville, Senior Services Advisor, RCCA

During Open Enrollment, several clients asked about the Humana Advantage Plan they had seen on TV or mailings to their homes.

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE (MA) PLANS are health plan options approved by Medicare and run by private companies. MA is also called Part C. MA plans are part of the Medicare program; they are just another way to get Medicare coverage. Medicare pays the plan a certain amount for each member's care. If you join an MA plan, you may have to use a network of doctors and/or hospitals.

If you join a Medicare Advantage (MA) plan, you

- Are still in Medicare with all rights and protections;
- Still get Part A & Part B covered services;
- May have prescription drug coverage included;
- May get extra benefits like vision or dental included; and
- Pay different amounts and may have different benefits;
- May need a referral to see a specialist;
- You can **only join a plan** during your initial enrollment period or the annual election period, October 15th - December 7th;
- You can **only drop your MA plan** and switch to original Medicare from, January 1st - February 14th.

Other items to keep in mind, the monthly premiums may be very low or no costs at all. **However, the annual out of pocket maximums could run around \$6000 for medical services.** Remember, when you start shopping for Medicare insurance plans and don't know what type of insurance benefits and costs are involved, please seek out a Senior Health Insurance Counselor. They will give you the knowledge you may need to make wise decisions that will affect your health care into those retirement years.

# NO NEW MEDICARE ID CARD YET?

by Daylene Linville, Senior Services Advisor, RCCA

The new Medicare ID cards were mailed to Kansas residents during June 2018. However, during our Open Enrollment period for prescription drug insurance plans, a few of our clients had not yet received their new Medicare ID cards. The main problem is **the envelopes the ID cards arrive in are not from the Social Security Administration or Centers for Medicare and Medicaid.** The return address on the envelope is the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. If not aware, one might think this is another

piece of junk mail and dispose of it in file #13. I have run across this problem with individuals when they come in for their very first visit about Medicare. As an example, *those receiving any form of Social Security monthly benefits for early retirement or disability, prior to age 65, would have received their Medicare ID card about four months prior to their 65th birth month.*

The old ID card with your Social Security number on it has two potential forms of identity theft on it. First, your Social Security number, and second,

your signature. As part of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act (MACRA) of 2015 bill, signed in April 2015, Social Security numbers will be removed from the Medicare cards. Congress provided \$320 million over four years to pay for the change. Medicare then had up to four years to start issuing cards with new identifiers. The new ID card will have your name, a random combination of numbers and capital alphabet letters as your new ID Number, and the effective dates for Medicare Part A and Part B.

The original ID cards with the Social Security number are accepted through December 31, 2019. And only the new Medicare ID card will be accepted from January 1, 2020, forward.

**If you've had Medicare Healthcare Insurance for more than one year** and have not yet received your new ID card, please contact the Social Security office in Hutchinson at 811 E 30th Ave Suite A or call 877-846-8333.

# COMMODITIES

## 1. GENESEO

Geneseo will no longer have a distribution site. You will need to pick up your commodities in Lyons.

## 2. STERLING AND BUSHTON

Sterling and Bushton have changed the dynamics of their distribution. They are proxy-only locations now. If you want to pick up your commodities in Sterling or Bushton, you need to sign a proxy form and return it before commodity day so they know how many families they are picking up for.

## 3. LYONS

### COMMODITY DAY CHANGE

Distribution for Lyons has changed from Thursday to Tuesday. In 2019 commodities will be distributed in January, March, May, July, September and November. Generally, one of the last Tuesdays of the month. We do not have a set date of arrival.

## 4. COMMODITY GUIDELINES

Families of 1	\$1,316
Families of 2	\$1,784
Families of 3	\$2,252
Families of 4	\$2,720*

\*for each additional family member add \$468.

the chill  
can kill

your heart is at risk!

Heart attacks are more common in winter, and doctors have several theories why.

Cold weather can cause blood vessels to constrict. That can raise your blood pressure and increase your risk for a heart attack or stroke. Your body can lose heat quickly in winter, and your heart has to work harder to maintain a healthy body temperature.

Winter undertakings such as shoveling or walking through heavy snow also can impact your heart.

Then, there's the holiday season, which can trigger tense emotions and stress hormones that increase your risk for a heart attack or stroke.

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Wear layers and hats, gloves and heavy socks when it's cold.
- Take breaks indoors if you're spending time outdoors in extreme weather.
- Shovel snow and ice only for short periods of time. If you have any health conditions, ask your doctor whether it's even safe for you to shovel.
- Wash your hands frequently. Respiratory infections can increase heart attack risk.



If you have non-life-threatening symptoms of a cardiac condition, visit your doctor promptly. If you think you are having a heart attack or stroke, **call 911** and get to the nearest emergency room.

Arkansas BlueCross Blue Shield