

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Grand Challenges

K-State Extension develops and delivers practical, research-based solutions to challenges faced by all Kansans, which includes the grand challenges:

- Global Food Systems
- Water
- Health
- Community Vitality
- Developing Tomorrow's Leaders

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Grand Challenge: Community Vitality and Health

Title: Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas (SHICK)

Why is this issue important?

Health insurance can be confusing, including Medicare, for those 65 years of age and older. Plans and benefits can change annually. Not understanding your plan and options can create financial and health burdens in our communities.

How did Extension address this issue?

By training Extension Agents as certified Medicare counselors, Extension can offer non-biased, trusted, and local assistance. Through the federally funded State Health Insurance Assistance Program, Extension agents help aging populations navigate complex healthcare options like prescription drug plans.

What was the impact?

From October 27-December 5, 2025, Shawnee County Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Agent, Atalie Tompkins, counseled **216** people.

◆ Approximately 61% of people changed their Part D prescription drug plan, which resulted in total savings of **\$63,782.05**

◆ 86% of participants surveyed reported that they strongly agree that they better understand the anticipated cost for drug plans.

◆ 83% of survey participants strongly agree that they better understand the things they should consider when choosing a health or drug plan.

“Please tell us why this assistance in comparing Medicare plans is important to you.” Responses included:

- * “I was overwhelmed by my current drug coverage. Atalie helped me immediately!”
- * “I’m not very competent in using computers, so with the help of the expert, it certainly was much easier for both myself and my husband. I learned much clearer comparison of various plans.”
- * “All people on Medicare should use this service so that they are treated fairly and well when they enroll in insurance programs.”
- * “This needed SN Co Extension program is so incredibly helpful. I saved money and didn’t know I would. I can’t see well and don’t have a computer to do this myself. Best program for senior citizens, we get very confused and Atalie explained options, helped me understand so I could choose to enroll (her help-she did enroll for me too) in better cost and prescription drug coverage.”

