

OPINION

Bluegrass Beacon

Commish Search II: The Sequel

Al Smith, longtime host of "Comment on Kentucky," is right in arguing the Kentucky Board of Education to wait and conduct a national search for a new education commissioner — like other states do.

But his plea falls on deaf ears. The board's haste — along with the inept candidates it has attracted — confirms Solomon's reckoning that "the thing that has been it is that which shall be." The board's most recent search process offered the same secretive proceedings that resulted in an embarrassing fiasco earlier this year that led to a superintendent from Illinois, Barbara Erwin, getting hired. She quit before working a single day because the media reported on her faculty resume, which led to an uproar.

But the board got a new chairman — and a rare second chance to get it right. I naively hoped the board's new chairman, Joe Brothers, an Elizabethtown plant manager, really meant what he said regarding the search process. I have no agenda other than the kids of Kentucky. In fact, Kentuckians have again been led large-

Instead of commissioning candidates with proven courage to fight for aggressive change, go-along, get-along legislators and other non-descript bureaucrats applied for the job. Bureaucratic Jim Westcott described Rep. Don Draud, one of the leading candidates, as "a collaborative person."

Another candidate, Kentucky-native-turned-Florida education bureaucrat Jim Warford, told reporters he would consider it a "professional honor" and that he wanted to "continue the education reforms under way in Kentucky." Warford apparently doesn't see the need to radically change a system that has served Kentucky's education system. We need someone willing to accept whatever collateral damage to the bureaucracy such an approach causes. I don't see any evidence of such commitment in the current crop of candidates.

Kentucky's taxpayers and parents should be outraged that the board spent \$50,000 on a search firm that gave us a commission that will lead us to a search firm to see how to use spell-check. But they should be even more outraged that the board entrusted with the leadership of our education system continues to place the self-interests of bureaucrats and politicians in Frankfort above the future of our children.



**Thank You**

I would like to thank everyone who helped me with my surgery and recovery. I'm 44kg and I will always remember your kindness.

**Chance Howard**

**Lordy, Lordy Look Who Is 50**

**Friends and family come to a party at the New Armory on Sat. Nov. 24 6 p.m. to ??**

**Happy Belated Birthday!**

Joe 7/9/91 and Holly 11/7/91

We Love You, Your Family

**Dustin, Happy 18th Birthday!!!**

We are very proud of you and all that you have achieved. We know you will be successful in life. Please remember we love you very much!!!

Love, Dad, Malinda, Carly, Monna and Poppaw

**Happy Sweet Sixteen Petrea**

You have gone from our little star to our basketball star. From playing with toys to chasing the boys. From tricycles, bicycles and now to cars.

We love you and wish you a Happy 16th Birthday on November 13.

Love, Mom, Dad, Shania and family

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**Happy 18th Birthday Dustin**

You have grown into a fine young man. We are very proud of you and your accomplishments.

**Love, Mom and Bob**

Medicare open enrollment: Understanding and taking charge of the options

(ARA) For retirees, there are many different activities that can occupy the free time they have now that they are out of the working world. Some of the top choices might include spending extra time with family (especially the grandkids), taking that dream vacation, volunteering in their local community or improving their skills in a favorite hobby.

However, from November 16th to December 31st, retirees ages 65 and older should take the time to do something that is probably just on the top of anybody's list of favorite things to do — sort through their Medicare benefit options. During this annual Open Enrollment period, the nearly 40 million individuals who are eligible for Medicare can select their health coverage options for the upcoming year.

Even though it might not be the most enjoyable time, it is an extremely important one. Unfortunately, with age usually comes an increased need for health care services, so it is important to choose a plan that will meet both current and future health care needs.

Part D provides coverage specifically for prescription drugs. Because they are new to the process, there are many questions to consider, it is essential that the best decision for their specific situation.

Since most people have never formal Medicare throughout their careers, they are somewhat familiar with the government program. However, they might not be aware of the different aspects of the program, or the fact that private insurers offer Medicare plans that offer benefits above and beyond Original Medicare. The various parts of the Medicare "alphabet" include:

**\* Part A** helps pay for inpatient hospital care, skilled nursing facilities, hospice care and some home health care. Because people usually pay for Part A coverage through a federal Medicare tax while working, most people pay a deductible or monthly premium after age 65.

**\* Part B** helps cover doctors' services, outpatient hospital care, physical and occupational therapy. This is optional and usually requires a monthly premium.

**\* Part C** includes Medicare Advantage plans such as Health Maintenance Organizations and Preferred Provider Organizations and provides Parts A and B benefits in a bundled, private prescription drug benefits in some cases. With these plans, Medicare contracts with private insurers to provide this coverage.



**Heart Healthy Tips for Cold and Flu Season**

(ARA) According to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, Common HBP is the only cold brand specifically made so it won't raise your blood pressure because it does not contain a decongestant. As we prepare for the upcoming cold and flu season, it's important to equip your home and your family with the makers of Coricidin HBP, a line of cold and flu medications specifically formulated for people with high blood pressure, shows that almost half (45 percent) of Americans complain that the cold and flu aisle is by far the hardest place in a store to find the products they need. This confusion may lead to health trouble for some of the 72 million Americans who suffer from hypertension, since the use of decongestants may raise blood pressure.

Over-the-counter remedies can help relieve the symptoms of the common cold, but it's important to read labels carefully. On average, most people (56 percent) say that they spend more than five minutes looking at the options in the cold and flu aisle before deciding which medication to buy. This might have something to do with the fact that many don't know about the ingredients in their medications. Only one in eight (12 percent) Americans say they can easily explain the difference between an antihistamine and a decongestant, compared to the 52 percent who say they can articulate the difference between regular and diet soda.

While many people may be likely to ask a doctor or pharmacist for advice about over-the-counter cold or flu medications, they need to ask the right questions and make it known if they have high blood pressure. The American Heart Association reminds people with hypertension to be aware that the use of de-

Courtesy of ARAಂತ

Do you suffer from an unwelcome side effect of your medications?

(ARA) It's a problem no one wants to talk about, much less admit they are dealing with, but according to the American Journal of Gastroenterology, constipation is a common gastrointestinal complaint affecting more than 65 million Americans. That's double the number of people who suffer from seasonal allergies.

Adults over the age of 50 are particularly susceptible since constipation is a side effect of many medications. According to the National Digestive Diseases Clearinghouse, constipation is defined as having a bowel movement fewer than three times per week with stools that are hard, dry, small in size and difficult to eliminate. "Many people assume they are constipated if they don't have a bowel movement every day," says Dr. Yoshida, "but bowel movement habits are personal and can vary greatly. What's important to look for is significant or prolonged change."

**1. What is constipation?**  
As food moves through the colon, the colon absorbs water from the food and what remains becomes "stool." Muscle contraction in the colon then pushes the stool toward the rectum. By the time the stool reaches the rectum, it is solid because most of the water has been absorbed.

**3. What medicines am I taking?**  
Dr. Yoshida acknowledges that talking about constipation can be uncomfortable, but she recommends asking your doctor or pharmacist, "Will you be able to tell them if constipation is a side effect of any of the medications you are taking. If this ends up being a side effect, can you give me alternatives?"

**4. How is constipation treated?**  
Although treatment depends on the severity and duration of the constipation, in most cases a mild laxative taken only when needed is preferred. MiraLAX, the number one doctor-prescribed laxative, which was also preferred by laxative users, is now only available over the counter. Dr. Yoshida acknowledges that talking about constipation can be uncomfortable, but she recommends asking your doctor or pharmacist, "Will you be able to tell them if constipation is a side effect of any of the medications you are taking. If this ends up being a side effect, can you give me alternatives?"

**2. What causes constipation?**  
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