

# Key MNsure info to be released

## Commerce Department Will Release Key MNsure Information on Sept. 6

BY COMMERCE STAFF REPORT

Minnesota Department of Commerce officials announced this week that all health plan companies that will offer policies through Minnesota’s online health insurance marketplace, MNsure, will publicly release policy rates and information on Sept. 6 – one month earlier than planned. The early release was agreed to by all health plan companies after the Commerce

and Health Departments sent a joint letter requesting greater transparency for consumers.

“Releasing rate and policy information on Sept. 6 is in the best interest of Minnesota consumers, it increases transparency and allows individuals, families, and small businesses more time to consider the options that will be available on MNsure,” said Commerce Commissioner Mike Rothman. “We appreciate the health plan companies’ agreement to release MNsure’s rate and policy information sooner.”

“Clear and accurate information makes decisions about health care easier, and we are committed to ensuring that Minnesotans have the best and most complete information about their health care options,” said Minnesota Department of Health Commissioner Ed Ehlinger. “We are thankful

that the plans agreed to help make that happen for Minnesotans in this case.”

This request was made on July 26, 2013, by Commerce Commissioner Mike Rothman and Health Commissioner Edward Ehlinger to ensure Minnesota consumers will have the time and opportunity to fully understand their options and make informed decisions on health insurance plans for themselves, their families, and businesses. Providing this information one month prior to open enrollment on Oct. 1, 2013, is in the public interest and will allow additional time for Minnesotans to compare plans, cost, and ask questions.

Minnesota law states that all forms, rates, and related information filed with the Commissioner are classified as nonpublic data until the filing becomes effective. Under the current filings,

consumers would have had to wait until October 1, 2013, to obtain all information regarding the type of plans that will be offered on MNsure, including the premiums that will be charged and the provider network/service area covered by each of the health plans.

By state law, the Minnesota Department of Commerce is charged with reviewing and approving any rate increases proposed by health insurance companies selling health plans in Minnesota. The Commerce Commissioner reserves the authority to reduce proposed rate increases. This protects consumers from any unreasonable or unnecessary rate increases. Minnesota has one of the best rate review systems in the country and has been recognized as a leader in health reform related to rates.

# DNR: ‘Are you doing your part to prevent spread of AIS on Minnesota’s waterways?’

DNR STAFF REPORT

A watercraft inspector with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources inspects a boat exiting a lake and finds aquatic invasive species attached. DNR officials say it’s a scenario they experience far too often in their efforts to curb the spread of AIS.

“DNR and its partner organizations are working hard this summer to prevent boaters and anglers from transporting invasive species, but we’re continuing to see new infestations and are still finding boats and trailers carrying AIS,” said Col. Ken Soring, DNR Enforcement director.

The latest incident occurred Aug. 2 as a boat usually operated on Lake Minnetonka was exiting Lake

Bemidji. Lake Minnetonka is among approximately 300 bodies of water in 53 Minnesota counties designated as infested with AIS. Lake Bemidji is not. The watercraft inspector found Eurasian watermilfoil and zebra mussels attached to the boat trailer. The DNR conservation officer cited the boat operator who now faces a \$500 fine.

Nearly 150 watercraft inspectors are stationed around the state this summer to help stop the spread of AIS. “Watercraft inspectors and conservation officers are doing their job in getting voluntary compliance with AIS laws, but the real success is going to be won when each and every boater takes personal responsibility,” Soring said.

A recent road check at

St. Croix Bluffs Regional Park in Washington County found 21 percent of the 62 vehicles with watercraft or water-related equipment checked were violating state AIS laws. A road check near South Long Lake in Crow Wing County found seven of 22 vehicles with watercraft or water-related equipment inspected resulted in an AIS violation rate of 31 percent.

According to the DNR, once zebra mussels are established in a body of water, they can multiply and impact both the ecology and the recreational experience of people using a lake or river. They are often transported from lake to lake by boaters. The mussels are only about the size of a finger nail, and their larvae microscopic, making them tough to find. They have been discovered in various lakes

across the state.

Soring said boaters and anglers need to continue to take extra precautions when using Minnesota waters to avoid spreading AIS to new waters. Boaters are required by law to:

- Clean boat by removing plants, zebra mussels and other prohibited invasive species from watercraft, trailer, anchor and all water-related equipment before leaving any water access or shoreland.

- Drain water-related equipment (boat, ballast tanks, portable bait container and motor) and drain bilge, livewell and baitwell by removing drain plugs before leaving water access. Keep drain plugs out and all water-draining devices open while transporting watercraft.

## KEDA

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and economic development agencies throughout Minnesota with the opportunity to participate in a development financing organization as a means of helping small businesses and nonprofits secure the capital they need to grow and prosper when they need it.

“It is a gap finance program created in conjunction with community reinvestment,” Nevanen said. “While the fund saw early success, in 2007 more restrictive guidelines made it difficult to sell loans into the secondary market...It really became less competitive.”

The board agreed that by opting out of a dissolving fund and putting the money back into KEDA’s operating budget, the money would be put to better use.

In related budget business, the board agreed to give a \$1 per hour raise to the KEDA’s administrative assistant, Kyra Briggs.

KEDA’s biggest expense is employee wages and while Nevanen said the wages of himself and Herman “could hold at the current level,” he recommended the raise for Briggs based on the results

of an annual performance review.

Board treasurer and Koochiching County Commissioner Rob Ecklund said he appreciates the help Briggs offers and noted she is deserving of the raise.

In other business Wednesday, Jenny Herman, business consultant for the Small Business Development Center, gave a quarterly update that included she has worked with 13 new clients since Jan. 1.

“Most often it’s business planning and business accounting,” she said of the services new clients are seeking. “We service satisfied clients.”

She added that she assists 33 long-term clients who have utilized SBDC services for more than five hours.

Herman also said SBDC serves as a satellite office of the University of Minnesota Center of Economic Development to provide services to existing businesses and entrepreneurs.

“There are nine other consultants in our region...we all work really well together,” Herman said. “We purposely make sure we’re not working against each other...Just because someone is in Koochiching County doesn’t mean they

can’t use SBDC services from someone in Hibbing or Duluth.”

She continued that Duluth is “very supportive” of International Falls and the surrounding communities in the county.

Herman plans to once again bring the junior achievement program into classrooms. Last year, the program that stresses the importance of staying in school reached 680 Koochiching County students in 27 classrooms.

“We had really good feedback on the program from volunteers, teachers and students,” Herman said.

This year, Herman plans to expand the program to more classrooms to reach even more students.

Also Wednesday, Debbie Bowman, who serves as an alternate board member, presented the board with a few questions and concerns regarding new ideas flowing through the organization.

“I’m concerned about the agenda,” she said. “I think the agenda very seldom changes and I think there is so much work to do and there are so many things to do here...We keep working on the same things over and over again.”

“We welcome new ideas,”

KEDA Board Chairman Allen Rasmussen said, “as long as they’re somewhat realistic.”

Board member and Koochiching County Commissioner Wayne Skoe said that while not all ideas and efforts make it to the board’s agenda, KEDA and other businesses and organizations are constantly working on economic development.

He said some projects, however, aren’t ready to go public and therefore, aren’t on the agendas of public meetings.

Bowman also said following Boise Inc.’s announcement to eliminate 265 jobs at the local paper mill, that “perhaps I would like to see KEDA play a bigger role in working with the people who are here.”

Rasmussen said that one of the main components of economic development is making local people successful and “Jenny does a great job doing that.”

“We do put efforts into that,” he said.

Nevanen said Herman and the organization work with other committees and organizations and caring for the local business community is a priority of KEDA and its ongoing efforts.

tourism and resources from Thunder Bay, Ontario to the northeast to Fort Frances and International Falls to the west. It also fits in well with the local Fort Frances-International Falls marketing effort.

“This is a change in how we used to do things,” Ecklund said. “We’ve figure out working together is better than going our separate ways. We are one of 10,000 lakes at the end of the road, so we can’t just say we have a lake here, we have to do something else. We’ve got to have some other efforts and collaboratively is a better way to go.”

August 17, 2013   A7	
<b>Independent School District #361</b>	
Koochiching County	International Falls, MN
<b>Mission</b> <i>To prepare all learners for a changing world by developing their potential within a climate of mutual respect and trust.</i>	
AGENDA	
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION	
Monday August 19, 2013	
Falls High Cafeteria	
<b>PRELIMINARIES:</b>	
<b>1.0 CALL TO ORDER: 5:00 p.m.</b>	
<b>2.0 ROLL CALL</b>	
Gordon Dault _____	Darrell Wagner _____
Michelle Hebner _____	Dena Wenberg _____
Michael Holden _____	Nordy Nelson _____
Will Kostiuk _____	
<b>3.0 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE</b>	
<b>4.0 PREVIEW &amp; APPROVAL OF AGENDA:</b> Moved _____ Second _____ carried/failed	
<b>5.0 OPEN FORUM</b>	
5.1 Presentation on CEO’s in the Classroom & Junior Achievement Program	
5.2 Recognition of Tina Besch – Pay Equity Report	
5.3 Public Open Forum	
<b>6.0</b> Approve the minutes from the regular meeting of July 15, 2013. Moved _____ Second _____ Carried/failed	
<b>7.0</b> Approve the bills due and payable amounting to \$740,821.07. Moved _____ Second _____ Carried/failed	
<b>OLD BUSINESS:</b>	
<b>8.0</b> Discuss Coaching Policy draft.	
<b>9.0</b> Discuss and action on Head Boys/Girls golf position	
<b>NEW BUSINESS:</b>	
<b>10.0</b> Blue Ribbon Panel Comments	
<b>11.0 <u>Program Consent:</u></b> Moved __ Second __ Carried/failed	
11.1 Accept donations in the amount of \$3830.00.	
7/11/13 Cedulie Photography; School Calendar	250.00
7/11/13 Super One; School Calendar	500.00
7/11/13 Trustar Federal Credit Union; School Calendar	250.00
7/11/13 Coca Cola Bottling; School Calendar	500.00
7/11/13 Bremer Bank; School Calendar	250.00
7/11/13 North Star Publishing; School Calendar	250.00
8/1/13 Int’l Falls Birthday Club in honor of Helen Smerika	80.00
8/1/13 County Market; School Calendar	250.00
8/1/13 Cine 5; School Calendar	250.00
8/1/13 Dominos Pizza; School Calendar	250.00
8/5/13 Football Boosters; paint sprayer for field	<u>1000.00</u>
	\$3830.00
	TOTAL \$6300.00
11.2 Approve extension through June 30, 2014 of the Recreation Commission Joint Powers Agreement between ISD 361 and the City of International Falls.	
<b>12.0 <u>Personnel Consent:</u></b> Moved __ Second __ Carried/failed	
12.1 Accept the resignation of Jamie Lorenson as a non-union regular route school bus driver effective immediately.	
12.2 Accept the resignation of Bruce Englund as a non-union regular route school bus driver effective immediately.	
12.3 Approve the hire of Mike Christianson as a non-union regular route school bus driver effective August 28, 2013.	
12.4 Approve the hire of Tawnya Porter as a non-union regular route school bus driver effective August 28, 2013.	
12.5 Approve the hire of Keith Porter as a non-union regular route school bus driver effective August 28, 2013.	
12.6 Approve the hire of Ryan Puncochar as a 1.0 FTE secondary social studies teacher for the 2013-14 school year and in accord with the Master Agreement between ISD 361 and Local 331.	
12.7 Accept the resignation of Tracey Trask as an Educational Support Professional effective immediately.	
12.8 Accept the resignation of Sandra Johnson as an Educational Support Professional effective immediately.	
12.9 Accept the resignation of Jamie Hell as an Educational Support Professional effective immediately.	
12.10 Approve the request from Rachel Miles, Educational Support Professional, for a one year leave of absence in accord with Article 9, Section 2 of the Master Agreement between ISD 361 and Local 4798.	
12.11 Accept the resignation of Timm Ringhofer as Assistant Football Coach effective immediately.	
12.12 Accept the resignation due to retirement of Peggy Johnson, Administrative Assistant with last day of employment September 27, 2013.	
12.13 Approve the hire of Ross Johnson as Head Boys’ Hockey Coach for the 2013-14 season and in accord with Schedule “C” of the Master Agreement between ISD 361 and Local 331.	
12.14 Approve volunteer coaches as follows:	
Chris Wade – Football	
Timm Ringhofer – Football	
Nathan Nelson – Football	
Ryan Puncochar – Football	
Nathan Nelson – Football	
Angie Schwartz – Girls’ Swim	
<b>13.0 <u>Other New Business:</u></b>	
13.1 Approve a request from Bruce Elson, secondary teacher, for leave without pay or benefits for up to five years beginning the 2013-14 school year in accord with Article X, Section 9, Subd. 1 of the Master Agreement between ISD 361 and Local 331 and pursuant to MS 122A.46. Moved _____ Second _____ carried/failed	
13.2 Approve the hire of Tom Vollom as coordinator for the 2013-14 Indian Education program for three hours per day in accord with the Title VII Indian Education Grant. Moved _____ Second _____ carried/failed	
<b>REPORTS AND INFORMATION:</b>	
<b>14.0 <u>Administrative Reports:</u></b>	
14.1 Melissa Tate, FES/WEE Principal	
14.2 Nordy Nelson, Superintendent	
14.2.1 School safety update	
14.2.2 Superintendent Performance Appraisal	
14.2.3 MSHSL clay target league	
14.2.4 Bronco Stadium scoreboard	
<b>15.0 <u>Committee Reports:</u></b>	
<b>ADJOURNMENT:</b> Adjourn the meeting at _____ p.m. Moved _____ Second _____ carried/failed	