OCI offers health insurance update.

LEXINGTON—On average, Dawson County employees are overweight.

A health insurance update presented to county commissioners on Friday shows a majority of employees who participated in a wellness check this fall have a body mass index higher than the recommended number.

Mark Schlange of OCI Insurance, the county's third-party health insurance administrator, told commissioners 160 of the 187 county employees took the company's wellness evaluation.

Results not only showed a high number are over weight but it also indicates 70% have high cholesterol, 35% have high blood pressure, 27% smoke and 21% have abnormal glucose levels.

Commissioners receive only general reports which include no employee names.

"These numbers give us a starting point when we're considering where you want to go with your health insurance policy," Schlange said. "When you have a self-funded policy, you have to understand where your risks are to help evaluate the program and services."

Cozad commissioner P.J. Jacobson said he is concerned about the issues brought out by the wellness check as well as the 27 employees who chose not to participate in the wellness evaluation, asking if there is a way to get more people to help themselves.

Schlange said offering incentives to employees to work toward health improvement is the best option, suggesting lower deductibles to entice people to change behaviors.

Another insurance representative, Joe Wellington, presented commissioners with information about value-added benefits with no cost to the county such as life or disability insurance.

OCI took over the third-party administration of the county health insurance in July. Changes cannot be made to the policy at this time, Schlange said, but information will help commissioners make those decision next spring.

In other action, county board members approved placement of a stop sign at the intersection of Roads 418 and 763 just north of Cozad.

An accident involving an empty school bus at that intersection prompted the action.

Jacobson called the intersection open, having no obstruction of view in either direction, but he said it is the only intersection on the north-south 418 which does not stop east-west traffic.

Commissioners unanimously approved the stop sign.

In other business, commissioners:

- accepted a bid of $179,554 from Murphy Tractor Supply for a 2010 John Deere motor grader for the roads department with the trade-in of a similar 1997 machine. The other bid received was from Nebraska Machinery for a CAT model for $203,045.
- referred a request for a conservation easement agreement between Spencer and Dona Knauss and Central Platte Natural Resources District to the planning and zoning commission.
- conducted individual workshops with the nine elected county officials to gather information for a more informed decision when the board sets salaries for those positions in January.