

Frequently Asked Questions

Topic: The Kansas Health Reform Process

1) Who is involved in health reform?

The Kansas health reform process is constructed to maximize participation of a wide variety of stakeholders. Health care reform in the state was initiated in January, 2007 by the Governor and received bipartisan support from the legislature. The Kansas Health Policy Authority (KHPA) Board, the Health for All Kansas Steering Committee, and four Advisory Councils are actively involved in the development of the health reform options package that will be presented to the Governor and the Kansas Legislature on November 1, 2007. The fifteen-member Provider Council, 15 member Purchaser Council, and 15 member Consumer Council have met monthly to provide input to the KHPA Board as they construct the components of the reform options package. The 120 member At-large Council is providing similar input using a list-serve.

2) How will stakeholders be involved in the health reform process?

The KHPA Board, the Health for All Kansans Steering Committee, and the 140 stakeholders serving on the Advisory Councils are working together to create health reform plan stipulated by the enacted Senate Bill 11. Overarching goals of this comprehensive plan are to: provide and protect affordable health insurance, pay for prevention and primary care, and promote personal responsibility. The input the four KHPA Advisory Councils are providing to the KHPA board on various elements of the emerging health care reform plan are resulting in a more insightful policy.

A dedicated program coordinator concentrates on the activities of the Advisory Councils to assure that the stakeholder advisement process is thoughtful, well organized, and reiterative. The active participation of Council members is shaping the evolving health reform plan. Additional stakeholder input will be garnered through a Kansas Health Reform Listening Tour, which is scheduled to take place during the months of July and August of 2007. The KHPA Executive Director and Deputy Director along with KHPA Board members, the Governor, the Insurance Commissioner and interested legislators will be attending forums in twenty communities across the state to discuss the health reform plan with insurers, providers, consumers, businesses, and others. The input gained during those forums will be used to further refine the developing Kansas health reform plan.

Agency Website: www.khpa.ks.gov
Address: Rm. 900-N, Landon Building, 900 SW Jackson Street, Topeka, KS 66612-1220

Medicaid and HealthWave:
Phone: 785-296-3981
Fax: 785-296-4813

State Employee Health
Benefits and Plan Purchasing:
Phone: 785-296-6280
Fax: 785-368-7180

State Self Insurance Fund:
Phone: 785-296-2364
Fax: 785-296-6995

3) Who is KHPA and why is this state agency leading health reform?

The Kansas Health Policy Authority (KHPA) was established on July 1, 2005, as a new independent state agency within the executive branch. A joint House and Senate committee provides legislative oversight to this agency. The KHPA is charged with developing a statewide health policy agenda including health care, health promotion components, and health indicators that include baseline and trend data on health care costs. Unlike other state agencies, the KHPA reports to a Board comprised of nine voting members who are appointed by the Governor and legislative leadership, and seven non-voting (ex-officio) members including Cabinet level Secretaries and the Insurance Commissioner. The ex-officio members serve as a resource and support for the voting members. In a concerted effort to embrace transparency, the Board meets monthly for full day public meetings and all Board and other KHPA materials are provided on-line at www.khpa.ks.gov. The Executive Director of the Authority has responsibility and statutory authority for the oversight of the Medicaid Program, the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), the State Employees Health Benefits Program, and the State Employees Self Insurance Fund (Workers' Compensation). In addition, the Executive Director assumed the health care data responsibilities of the former Health Care Data Governing Board.

In her January 2007 State of the State speech, Governor Kathleen Sebelius pledged her commitment to achieve universal health coverage and asked the legislature and the Kansas Health Policy Authority to partner with her to develop a plan for comprehensive reform. That same month, she charged the KHPA with leading a collaborative effort to develop a proposal that would meet the following goals: 1) ensure all Kansans had health insurance coverage, 2) use state resources to purchase health care as strategically as possible, and 3) elevate health and wellness as a focus across our state. KHPA accepted that challenge and created the Health for All Kansans Steering Committee, comprised of four voting KHPA Board members, two ex-officio KHPA Board members including the Insurance Commissioner, four legislators appointed by legislative leadership from both parties, the Governor's Chief of Staff, and two at-large community members.

During the 2007 legislative session, health reform was at the top of the policy agenda in both houses of the Kansas legislature. Five legislative committees focused on the topic and the Health for All Kansans Steering Committee provided a structure to negotiate a compromise between the various approaches under consideration by those groups. Both the chair of the Senate Health Reform Task Force, Senator Jim Barnett (a physician), and the Chair of the House Health Reform Task Force, Rep. Jeff Colyer (also a physician), sat on the Health for All Kansans Steering Committee. This coordination resulted in the development of legislation (SB 11), which unanimously passed both Houses and included a number of health related provisions, including an expansion in health insurance coverage and a directive for the development of a comprehensive health reform proposal to be delivered to the Governor and Legislature for enactment in 2008.

4) How can Kansans be involved in this process?

The Health Policy Authority seeks to have a comprehensive health reform plan that is responsive to the needs of Kansans and embraced by Kansas residents. KHPA encourages everyone to provide us with ideas, comments, and personal stories about the health care system in Kansas. In addition, we will be conducting a Listening Tour starting July 25, 2007. We want to hear your thoughts and what you have to say regarding comprehensive health reform and the problem of the health care system in Kansas. Share with us your comments, suggestions, and experiences regarding health care at our web-site, www.khpa.ks.gov. You can contact the Kansas Health Policy Authority at:

900 SW Jackson St., Ste. 900N
Topeka, KS 66612
(p) 785.296.3981
(f) 785.296.3468