

KHPA: Kansas Healthy Choices (Premium Assistance)

Summary: Premium assistance is the use of public, employer, and potentially individual contributions to purchase private health insurance for Kansas families living in poverty who cannot otherwise afford coverage.

Since passage of SB 11 in May 2007, KHPA has engaged in an extended, open, and participatory process to complete the program design and implementation of the premium assistance program **Kansas Healthy Choices**. The program will be implemented in January 2009.

Kansas Healthy Choices:

- **Saves money.** The purchase of private insurance through Kansas Healthy Choices helps control state health care spending for the poverty level population by providing broader access to preventive care, and strengthens and expands private markets, rather than replacing or eliminating them.
- **Prudently partners with other funding resources.** This program ensures state access to 60% Federal matching funds. In addition, this wrap-around assistance strategically relies on employer contributions when available.
- **Unites families in health care.** Kansas Healthy Choices provides coverage for each member of the family under one plan, strengthening a family culture of prevention, health literacy, and care.
- **Breaks a vicious cycle.** Those without insurance use fewer preventive and screening services, are sicker when diagnosed, receive fewer therapeutic services and have poorer health outcomes in terms of mortality and disability rates. In addition, this group has lower earnings due to poor health.
- **Makes an impact.** Over the next three years, Kansas Healthy Choices is expected to provide about 20,000 existing and 24,500 newly eligible caretaker adults and their children with the choice of private insurance options and a “medical home” model of health care services.

Premium Assistance. Kansas Healthy Choices—previously known as premium assistance—was authorized by the Legislature and Governor in May 2007 with the signing of Senate Bill 11. It targets health insurance assistance to low-income families.

Premium Assistance Expansion. The 21 reform recommendations currently being proposed include *expanding* premium assistance to include health insurance assistance to low income adults without children.

Recap: Kansas Healthy Choices is an effective, prudent use of public funds to save public dollars in the long-term, strengthen private insurance markets, and improve the quality of life and access to health care for thousands of Kansas families. Supporting Kansas Healthy Choices means providing a smart path to private insurance for those who would otherwise be unable to attain coverage by themselves.

Additional information and fact sheets on Kansas Healthy Choices are available at www.khpa.ks.gov.