

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State Submits Medicaid Waiver Request

TOPEKA – A concept paper submitted today by the State of Kansas seeks a waiver from the federal government so it may begin its efforts to reform the state’s Medicaid system.

“The Section 1115 Waiver will allow us to move forward with implementing some of the changes to the Medicaid system. This is the first step of many towards improving the health outcomes of Kansans while bending the cost curve of Medicaid down over time,” Lt. Governor Jeff Colyer, M.D. said.

Dr. Colyer said the State is asking the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for a two-track waiver approach. In the first track, the State will work with CMS to implement the State's integrated care system model, KanCare, by 2013. In the second, separate track, the State seeks to begin discussions with CMS to implement a future global waiver to maximize flexibility in administering an outcomes-based program. A copy of the concept paper is available online at http://www.kdheks.gov/hcf/medicaid_reform_forum/download/Kansas_1115_Waiver_Concept_Paper.pdf.

In 2011, the State facilitated a series of Medicaid public forums during which more than 1,000 participants engaged in discussions on how to reform the Kansas Medicaid program. Forum participants produced more than 1,500 comments, and a web-based tool received an additional 500 comments on recommendations for reform. A summary of the extensive public and stakeholder input process can be found at www.kdheks.gov/hcf/medicaid_reform_forum. The Administration announced the KanCare reform plan in November 2011.

“This 1115 waiver will allow Kansas to deinstitutionalize people, build capacity in home and community based settings and provide the same services customers are receiving now,” Secretary of Aging Shawn Sullivan said.

The concept paper flows directly from that public process and details a waiver that will be designed to meet the goals of Medicaid reform—person-centered care that will improve healthcare outcomes and bend the cost curve of Medicaid down over time without reducing eligibility or implementing provider cuts.

Waiver authority is being sought to move all Medicaid populations into a person-centered integrated care system (also known as managed care), to cover all services through this model, to establish safety net care pools, and to create and support alternatives to traditional Medicaid, including programs to aid the transition to private insurance and to increase opportunities for work, particularly among disabled Kansans. Generally, 1115 waivers are approved for a five-year period.

“The working group for Medicaid reform is grateful for the statewide collaboration and community interest displayed over the past year in this important work to find solutions that will sustain this essential health care program. The result is KanCare, and we look forward to delivering on the commitment we’ve made to improve outcomes in our state’s Medicaid program,” Robert Moser, M.D., Secretary of Health and Environment and State Health Officer said.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) is accepting comments on the concept paper over the next month. Comments can be submitted electronically by emailing KanCare@kdheks.gov.

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