

For immediate release:
November 1, 2007

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Health reform options presented to the Governor and Legislature today

The state agency charged with developing and maintaining a coordinated health policy agenda for the state has finalized its recommendations. The Kansas Health Policy Authority (KHPA) Board presented a long-awaited report of their 21 recommended health reform options to the Kansas Legislature at the Joint Committee on Health Policy Oversight meeting today. Governor Kathleen Sebelius also received the report.

“These Kansas health reform recommendations are the result of months of reviewing potential health reform options and meeting with over 1,000 Kansans,” Marci Nielsen, PhD, MPH, Executive Director of the Kansas Health Policy Authority, told the Joint Committee.

Nielsen says that these recommendations are intended to achieve three important health goals:

- Encourage the promotion of personal responsibility;
- Pay for prevention and promote medical homes;
- Provide and protect affordable health insurance.

“Enacting these recommendations will transform the Kansas health system, lower costs and make Kansas a healthier state.”

The report outlines each option, including description of policy, costs and who is impacted. With the completion of this report, the KHPA Board has made strategic recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor, and decisions about health reform are now in the hands of policymakers.

These options are expected to decrease the number of uninsured by 86,000 Kansans and result in greatly improved health status.

Nielsen continued, “It is now time for lawmakers to be engaged with us on this issue. We cannot passively sit by and watch the federal government not act. We need to take action now. I encourage all Kansans to voice their support for these options. Contact your legislator and let them know what you want in Kansas health care.”

The recommended policy options are as follows:

Promoting Personal Responsibility

- Transparency for consumers: Health care cost & quality transparency project
- Promote health literacy

Promoting Medical Homes and Paying for Prevention

- Define medical home
- Increase Medicaid provider reimbursement
- Implement statewide Community Health Record
- Promote insurance card standardization

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- Increase tobacco user fee
- Statewide ban on smoking in public places
- Partner with community organizations
- Include Commissioner of Education on KHPA Board
- Collect information on health/fitness of Kansas school children
- Promote healthy food choices in schools
- Increase Physical Education (PE)
- Wellness grant program for small businesses
- Healthier food options for state employees
- Provide dental care for pregnant women
- Improve tobacco cessation within Medicaid
- Expand cancer screenings

Provide and Protect Affordable Health Insurance

- Cover more kids through aggressive marketing and outreach to enroll already eligible children
- Expand premium assistance to include childless adults up to 100% FPL
- Assisting small businesses by establishing a health insurance clearinghouse and other strategies

The report is available at www.khpa.ks.gov.

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