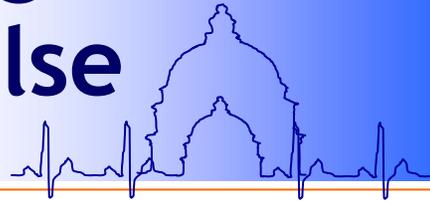


Coordinating health & health care
for a thriving Kansas



Legislative Pulse

1-09-09



KHPA Prepares for Start of 2009 Session

Kansas lawmakers will return to the statehouse Monday, Jan. 12, for the start of the 2009 session. Gov. Kathleen Sebelius will deliver the annual State of the State address at 7 p.m. that night and then the session will kick into high gear the following day.

The state of the economy and budget issues are certain to be overriding issues during the session, and they will continue to be major issues for the Kansas Health Policy Authority throughout the year. As the economy declines we can expect an increase in demand for public insurance programs like Medicaid and SCHIP just as revenues decline and the state has fewer resources to pay for them.

We at KHPA will be doing our part to trim costs and manage those programs more efficiently. In fact, KHPA is already poised to present lawmakers with a detailed report on our Medicaid Transformation process, which involves a top-to-bottom review of Medicaid programs and detailed recommendations on how to make them more cost-efficient for the state, and more beneficial for consumers. (See related article in this issue.)

KHPA will also present lawmakers with a health reform agenda that focuses on promoting public health and expanding health coverage in Kansas. Those reform proposals include:

- Passage of a statewide clean indoor air law;
- Expanding Medicaid to cover all parents and caregivers with incomes below the federal poverty level;
- And levying a “tobacco user fee” to pay for that expansion, as well as other reform measures aimed at making insurance more affordable to small businesses and young adults, expanding access to cancer screening for low-income Kansans and providing tobacco cessation programs for Medicaid recipients.

KHPA believes this agenda will not only make health care available to more Kansans but also improve the overall health of Kansans and thus help control the growth of health care costs in the future.

Helpful Links:

[Kansas Health Online](#)

[Kansas Legislature](#)

[Gov. Kathleen Sebelius](#)

[Division of Budget](#)

[Kansas Dept. of Health and Environment](#)

[Kansas Dept. of Social and Rehabilitation Services](#)

[Kansas Dept. on Aging](#)

Health-Related News Services

[Kansas Health Institute](#)

[Kaiser Family Foundation](#)

[Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#)

Medicaid/SCHIP At-A-Glance

- In FY 2008, KHPA directly spent over \$1.328 billion purchasing health care for more than 360,000 persons through the Medicaid and HealthWave programs.
- It is the third largest purchaser of health care services and the largest purchaser of children's health care services in Kansas.
- About 64% of the people served were low income children and families.
- Medicaid pays for about 40% of the births in Kansas.

Medicaid Transformation

Since assuming responsibility for the Kansas Medicaid system on July 1, 2006, KHPA has engaged in a sweeping process of reviewing 14 programs within Medicaid to improve their efficiency and effectiveness. This ongoing process, which we call "Medicaid Transformation," seeks to make sure that every dollar is spent wisely and produces the best possible result for Medicaid recipients.

The first 14 of those program reviews will be presented to the 2009 legislature. The next 12 are scheduled for completion by early 2010.

Dr. Andrew Allison, Medicaid Director at KHPA, will be discussing Medicaid Transformation with various legislative committees throughout the session, starting with the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 13.

KHPA hopes that this report, and the recommendations included in it, will form the basis of discussion about how to control the cost of public health insurance programs while simultaneously making them more effective and beneficial for consumers.

More information about Medicaid Transformation can be found on the [KHPA website](#).

New KHPA advisory committee to be formed

At the November 2008 Board meeting, Board members endorsed the appointment of the Mental Health Prescription Drug Advisory Committee, which would be created to provide guidelines and establish safety criteria for the prescribing of mental health drugs in the Medicaid, MediKan and State Children's Health Insurance programs. KHPA is now seeking nominations to this Advisory Committee, and we invite Kansans to either self-nominate or nominate an additional individual who would add an important perspective to the issue of mental health prescription drugs.

The Committee will consist of 12 to 15 members and will include mental health professionals as well as consumers of mental health services. **The nominations period began Wednesday, December 24, 2008, and will conclude at 5:00 pm Friday, January 23, 2009.** This process will be outlined on the KHPA website as well at www.khpa.ks.gov. We invite Kansans to submit nominations within the timeframe as outlined above, to the attention of LeAnn Bell, Medicaid Pharmacy Program Manager, KHPA Office, 900 SW Jackson, Suite 900-North, Topeka KS 66612; or email nominations to LeAnn.Bell@khpa.ks.gov.

KHPA Pulse is a publication by the KHPA Communications Team distributed weekly during the legislative session. If you have questions or comments, contact the Public Information Officer Peter Hancock at 785/296.5603 or peter.hancock@khpa.ks.gov

