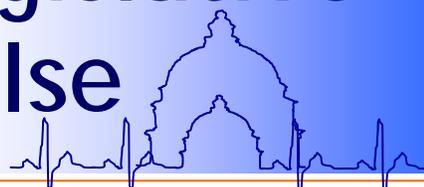


Coordinating health & health care
for a thriving Kansas



Legislative Pulse



2-06-09

KHPA Activity

Agency updates
focused on KHPA
stakeholders.

Save the Dates:

KHPA Advisory Councils:

Provider Council:

Date: Thursday, Feb. 12

Time: 10-noon

Location: Landon State
Office Building Room
9E/F

Consumer Council:

Date: Friday, Feb. 13

Time: 10-noon

Location: Landon State
Office Building Room
9E/F

At-Large Council:

Date: Monday, Feb. 16

Time: 3–5 pm

Location: Curtis State
Office Building, Room
530

Purchaser Council:

Date: Friday, Feb. 20

Time: 10-noon

Location: Landon State
Office Building Room
9E/F

Federal Stimulus Package Could Benefit Kansas

An economic stimulus package now pending before Congress could bring millions of new federal dollars to the Kansas Medicaid program, assuring the state can continue providing medical coverage to needy citizens during difficult economic times.

Both versions of the bill would add about \$87 billion nationwide to help states fund their Medicaid programs. The House version, which passed Jan. 28, would increase the federal matching rate by 4.9 percentage points. The Senate is now considering a version that would increase the federal matching rate by 7.6 percentage points.

Both versions also contain provisions that would increase the matching rate even further for states with rapidly rising unemployment rates.

The Kansas Health Policy Authority estimates that under the House version, the Kansas Medicaid program would receive \$95-\$105 million in additional federal funding during the current fiscal year, plus \$195-\$205 million in additional funding in Fiscal Year 2010, which begins July 1.

Under the Senate version, KHPA estimates the Kansas program would receive an additional \$145-\$155 million in the current year, followed by \$220-\$230 million in new funding for FY 2010.

In January, Kansas Medicaid Director Dr. Andrew Allison wrote a [letter to the Kansas congressional delegation](#) urging them to support a uniform, across-the-board increase in the federal matching rate rather than tying the increase to unemployment rates.

NEW! To view KHPA testimony, please visit our website. Testimony is typically posted on the same day hearings are held.

Legislative Activities

Things to Watch:

House-Senate Conference Committee on 2009 Budget (S.B. 23): Meeting on call. Statehouse, Room 545-N.

Wed., Feb. 11. House Vision 2020 Committee. Briefings, demonstrations and discussions on health care delivery: telemedicine and telehealth monitoring. Time: 1:30 p.m. Docking, Room 711.

Thurs., Feb. 12. Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee. Hearing and possible action on S.B. 166, Medicaid: repealing statute prohibiting prior authorization for certain mental illness medications. Time: 1:30 p.m. Statehouse, Room 136-N.

Congress OK's SCHIP Renewal, Expansion

More than 39,000 Kansas children will continue receiving health care coverage under the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), thanks to passage Wednesday, Feb. 4, of federal legislation reauthorizing the program. Another 8,000 Kansas children could eventually receive coverage by Fiscal Year 2015, because of provisions authorizing states to expand their programs.

Currently in Kansas, SCHIP covers children up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level (\$35,200 per year for a family of three). The federal government pays 72 percent of the cost in Kansas, up to a defined limit. The state pays the remaining 28 percent, plus any amount above the federal allotment. Before this week's action, SCHIP was set to expire in March.

In 2008, Kansas lawmakers approved expanding SCHIP eligibility up to 225 percent of FPL starting Jan. 1, and then to 250 percent of FPL beginning Jan. 1, 2010, subject to increased federal funding and appropriation of additional state funds. This week's action now makes it possible to implement that expansion, if the governor and legislature decide to do so.

The Kansas Health Policy Authority estimates that expanding SCHIP to 250 percent of FPL would bring 2,125 children into the program in State Fiscal Year 2010. That would grow to 5,390 additional children in SFY 2011, and about 8,000 children by SFY 2015. KHPA estimates that would cost about \$1 million in additional state general fund money in SFY 2010, and \$2 million in SFY 2011.

Clean Indoor Air Bill Clears Hurdle

A bill that would enact a statewide clean indoor air law passed out of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee this week and is now headed to the full Senate. Senate leaders have not scheduled a time for debate and a vote, but media reports have indicated it could come as early as next week.

S.B. 25 would prohibit smoking in virtually all indoor workplaces and public establishments, including bars and restaurants. The committee made a few minor amendments to the original bill that was introduced by Sen. David Wysong (R-Shawnee Mission).

The Kansas Health Policy Authority has expressed strong support for the bill, but it faces opposition from groups who argue it would have a negative economic impact on businesses.

In response, KHPA compiled a list of peer-reviewed studies that indicate clean indoor air laws have no negative effect on restaurant and tavern businesses, and in some cases lead to higher sales tax collections, increased employment and growth in real estate values for restaurants and taverns.

Those studies are included in a new [Statewide Clean Indoor Air Fact Sheet](#) that is available on the KHPA website.