

Coordinating health & health care
for a thriving Kansas



KHPA Legislative Pulse

2.8.08

Legislative Activity

Legislative updates
focused on KHPA
stakeholders.

KHPA Health Reform
Bills Introduced.

[Check out the section-
by-section bill guide!](#)

SB 540 is the KHPA Health Reform insurance pieces bill which includes: defining and establishing "very small employer" groups, defining and establishing "young adult policies," changing the age dependants can remain on parental insurance policies to 25, and creates a health insurance clearinghouse.*

SB 541 is the KHPA Health Reform bill that makes changes to KHPA duties and composition including: adding the Commissioner of Education to the KHPA Board, defining medical home,

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Avenues Joint Endeavor:

KHPA, SRS Propose Enrollment/Eligibility System

When it comes to serving their customers, Kansas Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) and the KHPA share a common goal: to serve citizens of the State of Kansas in the most efficient way through customer service, flexibility, and an agility to meet the demands of the stakeholders.

Central to that goal is the competency of the State's enrollment and eligibility system. The current system is ill-equipped to meet current or future demands, using outdated technology that does not support existing programs. Among its limitations, the current system is unable to meet the pace of mandated program changes and is unable to interface with its users efficiently or ensure an acceptable level of accuracy.

To address their mutual needs, SRS and KHPA have prudently agreed to collaborate on the purchasing, implementation, and operation of a new eligibility and enrollment system to be called *Avenues*, reflecting the vision of both agencies to facilitate the enrollment of eligible individuals coming from multiple channels into various public programs.

Procuring a new system will not only provide the ability to monitor enrollment processes as well as outcomes - significantly enhancing management, oversight and performance accountability - but it will also allow the KHPA the ability to experiment with potential changes. This improves policy decisions through a data-driven process just as the legislature envisioned, impacting the lives of hundreds of thousands of Kansas families and individuals.

The estimated cost for the new enrollment and eligibility system is \$45 million. Costs would be split among KHPA, SRS and the federal government and spread over three years beginning in FY 2009. The Governor's recommended budget for FY2009 includes \$4 million SGF (\$8 million all funds) for KHPA and \$4.2 million SGF (\$7 million all funds) for SRS.

KHPA will be testifying on its budget requests, including *Avenues*, next week. With the Legislature's funding approval, the agencies can move forward with the project.

NEW! Check out the KHPA Inspector General's new website. Click [here](#).

From previous

creating the small business wellness program, expanding premium assistance to include childless adults, and the creation of the Health Reform Fund.*

SB 542 is the KHPA Health Reform bill that increases the tax on cigarettes and smokeless tobacco. The bill raises the tax on cigarettes to \$1.29 and raises the tax on smokeless tobacco by 47%. The bill increases the cigarette tax annually to reflect an assumption of inflation and requires a deposit of \$61.57 million in the first year from the state general fund to the Health Reform fund that is created within the bill.* The bill is being worked in tandem with identical

HB 2367 which was introduced by the House Committee on Taxation on February 1, 2008.

*Introduced February 4, 2008 by the Joint Committee on Health Policy Oversight. SB 540 and 541 were assigned to the Senate Public Health & Welfare Committee. SB 542 was assigned to the Senate Assessment & Taxation Committee.

Farmer to Head State Employee Health Plan

KHPA is pleased to welcome Doug Farmer as the new director of the State Employee Health Benefits Plan. Farmer has resigned his current post as the Chief of Staff to the Attorney General of Kansas to accept the position with the KHPA.

Farmer will manage all aspects of the plan including operations, design and fiscal management, membership services, and the health and wellness program. In total, these programs provide benefits for 90,000 covered lives, including state employees, retirees, and non-state plan members, with total value exceeding \$400 million annually.

He will begin his duties in early March. Mike Michael, who has been serving as the deputy director of the plan, has now been appointed as deputy director. Read the complete announcement [here](#).

Dillmore: "KHPA health reforms worthy of support."

In an op-ed piece that appeared in the Wichita Eagle on Tuesday, Rep. Nile Dillmore, D-Wichita, wrote in favor the KHPA 21 health reform recommendations, characterizing them as "well-considered" and "worthy of support."

Dillmore penned the op-ed to highlight his support and make the case for the workability of the reforms. Dillmore wrote, "First of all, the plan approaches the problem from multiple strategies that improve health, expand and improve services, prevent disease, contain costs and expand coverage. Secondly, it is a plan that is doable from a practical point of view."

He goes on to say, "I believe that the authority's proposals are our best chance to make a significant impact on the health and well-being of our constituents right now. In addition, this plan serves as the basis for further reforms in future years." Read the full article [here](#).

UPCOMING TESTIMONY:

FEBRUARY 11-12

House Social Services Budget. 3:30 p.m. Re: KHPA Budget.

FEBRUARY 12-13

Senate Judiciary. 9:30 a.m. Re: SB 493.

KHPA Legislative Pulse is a publication by the KHPA Outreach Team distributed weekly during the legislative session. If you have questions or comments, contact Outreach Manager Mandy Cawby at 785.291.3627 or mandy.cawby@khp.ks.gov.



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