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KHPA™ KANSAS HEALTH POLICY AUTHORITY

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KHPA
Legislative Pulse

Board Creates Health Information (E-Health) Advisory Council

Earlier this week at the request of Governor Kathleen Sebelius, the KHPA Board voted to create a Health Information (E-Health) Advisory Council to guide development of health information technology across the state.

The Kansas Health Policy Authority Board welcomed remarks by Governor Kathleen Sebelius at its meeting on Tuesday, February 19th, in Topeka. Sebelius acknowledged the work of the Board in taking the lead on comprehensive health reform recommendations, and then urged the Board to take on an additional challenge.

Sebelius called on the KHPA Board to take the lead in establishing an advisory council for a statewide health information technology exchange that would put electronic health information at the fingertips of providers and consumers.

"Kansans need timely access to their personal health records in order to make educated decisions, just as health care professionals need accurate and accessible records to avoid duplication of services," Sebelius said. "Today I'm requesting that the KHPA Board establish a Kansas Health Advisory Panel to provide guidance on policy issues related to health information technology and to be a resource for stakeholders."

Last year Governor Sebelius created the Kansas Health Information Exchange (HIE) Commission and asked them to advance the use of technology, decrease health care costs, and improve health care quality in Kansas. The commission recently issued a report identifying leadership and resource needs as the key issues to support and stimulate HIE on a statewide level. As the top agency for health care, Sebelius acknowledged the KHPA as best suited to provide this leadership and guide the development of a statewide health information technology and exchange.

The vote of the KHPA Board not only established the Health Information (E-Health) Advisory Council but also directed KHPA staff to begin planning logistics and securing staff resources. There will be 14 members of the advisory panel. Half will be appointed by the health policy authority board and half by the governor. More information on nominations to the council will be made available in the near future.

Legislative Activity

Legislative updates focused on KHPA stakeholders.

Committee Amends Smoking Ban Bill. On Friday, February 22nd, the Senate Judiciary Committee approved amendments to **SB 493** "The Non-Smokers Protection Act," a bill which would restrict smoking in public places and places of employment pending a county-by-county vote on November 4, 2008.

Originally introduced as a comprehensive measure, amendments approved by the committee on Friday included exemptions for bars, casinos, bingo facilities (admitting only patrons over 18 years of age), private clubs (Class A and B), cigar bars, tobacco shops, designated sections of adult-care

Continued

NEW! Check out the **Bill Guide for Health Reform Recommendations** online. See bill guide section-by-section as well as fast facts and FAQs on the issues.

From previous

homes, and charity events where cigars are part of a fundraiser.

The committee will take final action on Monday, February 25th.

Senate Passes SB 511. On Thursday, February 21st, the full Senate took final action on **SB 511**, passing it through to the House for consideration.

SB 511 requires the KHPA to conduct a study of bariatric surgery for the morbidly obese and its effect on medical expenses and health care insurance. The bill also requires the KHPA to work with the Commissioner of Insurance to study the impact of extending coverage of bariatric surgery to the Senate employee benefit plan, affordability of coverage to small businesses, high risk pool, and possibility of reinsurance of state subsidies for reinsurance.

The KHPA is to report its findings to the Health Policy Oversight Committee on November 1, 2008.

Community Health Record First Step to Care

One of the outgrowths of having statewide health information technology, is the ability to implement a Community Health Record (CHR). CHR is a cost-saving, care-enhancing, web-based health care coordination system where access to patients' records is put at providers' fingertips.

CHR differs from other electronic records in that it is a secure web-based system, not requiring the purchase of specific software to participate. CHR improves efficiency, enhances the process of health care delivery, and promotes patient safety.

Such access allows providers to avoid duplicative tests and procedures, lower emergency room expenditures and reduces inpatient admission and outpatient visits due to incomplete data. Providers get lab results more quickly and spend less time clarifying prescriptions or obtaining prior authorization. In addition, accurate and accessible immunization schedules and children's immunization records aid in the prevention of disease and the costs associated with those preventable diseases.

Nearly two years ago, the state of Kansas implemented a pilot project to use a CHR in Sedgwick County to help deliver timely and accurate health information for Medicaid beneficiaries. The CHR pilot project is built on administrative claims data (from health plans) and provides clinicians electronic access to claimed medical visits, procedures, diagnoses, medications, demographics, allergies and sensitivities, immunizations, vital signs, and lead screening and health maintenance data. The record also contains an e-Prescribing component that enhances the clinician's workflow, reduces the risk of medication error, and increases safety and health outcomes associated with prescription generation.

The outcomes from the pilot project are extremely positive. Eighty-six percent of users surveyed agreed or strongly agreed the CHR increases their access to relevant information outside of their four walls. Seventy-eight percent of users agreed that the CHR assisted them in providing improved care. Ninety-six percent would recommend the CHR to their colleagues.

Immediate implications of CHRs are for those involved with state health care programs such as Medicaid, the State Employee Health Benefit Program, HealthWave, and others. But ultimately, CHR has implications for everyone through its ability to be adopted by all providers and expected by all patients. In addition, CHR is a prudent step in collecting data that informs health reform recommendations that further improve health outcomes and coordinated care, recommended as one of three priorities .

KHPA is asking for funding from the legislature to expand the pilot project to 20 additional sites within Sedgwick County.

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@khpa.ks.gov.

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