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for a thriving Kansas



## KHPA Legislative Pulse

3.7.08

### Legislative Activity

Legislative updates  
focused on KHPA  
stakeholders.

Advocates Host Health Day at the Capitol. Health advocates filled the statehouse rotunda for "Health Day at the Capitol" on Thursday, March 6th, hosted by the Alliance for Health Advocates-KS (AHA-KS).

KHPA Executive Director Marcia Nielsen addressed the advocates with opening remarks on the status of health reform efforts.

Comparing the Legislature to a football game, Nielsen said, "It's half time and the score is zero to zero. ... We were in a similar legislative situation last year, but we still saw some tremendous action on health reform, so we're still intent on achieving true health reform."

## House Subcommittee Charged with Developing Single Health Reform Bill

As a result of the strong interest in addressing health reform this year, the House Health and Human Services (HHS) Committee recently formed a seven-member subcommittee to take a comprehensive look at all of the health reform bills that have been introduced during this session. The goal of the subcommittee is to develop a single health reform bill for consideration by the full House HHS Committee and the House next week.

The subcommittee will not review the tobacco tax user fee [SB 542](#) or a [statewide smoking ban](#). Rather, the subcommittee will discuss the 10 health reform bills introduced thus far including [SB 540](#), [SB 564](#), [SB 443](#), [SB 511](#), [SB 637](#), [HB 2822](#), [HB 2889](#), [HB 2934](#), [HB 2710](#), and [HB 2888](#).

The subcommittee met for the first time on Wednesday, and on Thursday heard testimony from supporters of the KHPA's health reform package. More than a dozen advocate groups mobilized to meet a tight deadline and gave testimony expressing support for all or parts of the KHPA package, their presence representing broad sectors of health and health care.

KHPA Executive Director Marcia Nielsen also [testified](#) with an overview of the agency's 21-point health reform plan, specifically addressing [recommendations](#) that only require appropriations and those that do not require legislative action. Nielsen's testimony also included the [agency priorities](#) for 2008 and information on President Bush's budget proposals and the [impact on Kansas Medicaid](#).

The subcommittee also held hearings on KHPA-sponsored health insurance reform bill SB 540 and KHPA agency reform bill SB 541 on Friday.

Rep. [Jeff Colyer](#) (R-Overland Park) chairs the HHS subcommittee. Its members include Reps. [Peggy Mast](#) (R-Emporia), [Joe Patton](#) (R-Topeka), [David Crum](#) (R-Augusta), [Annie Tietze](#) (D-Topeka), [Cindy Neighbor](#) (D-Shawnee), and [Tom Holland](#) (D-Baldwin City).

If you have questions about KHPA policy or the legislative calendar, please contact Outreach Manager Mandy Cawby at 785.291.3627 or [mandy.cawby@khp.ks.gov](mailto:mandy.cawby@khp.ks.gov).

**REMINDER!** The March 14th deadline is approaching for nominations to the new E-Health Advisory Council. View information on the council and nominations [online](#).

Advocates also heard from Sen. Laura Kelly (D-Topeka).

"I believe you have an incredible amount of power, and I'm glad to see you all here. ... But your real power lies back home," said Kelly, validating the impact of advocacy and grassroots efforts.

"It really is possible for legislators to go back home and not quite tell you what it is they're doing here," she said. "Don't let us get away with spin. Don't let us get away with smoke and mirrors. And don't let us get away with telling you that we're working on health care reform when the truth of the matter is, we're not."

Event organizers noted a surge in attendance at this year's Health Day at the Capitol, crediting the interest surrounding health reform.

Watch legislative proceedings live on the web! Select "[Virtual Committee](#)" live audio to view House and Senate committee rooms.

## Community Health Record Pilot Expands: Sedgwick County Providers, Policymakers Discuss

Health care providers and policymakers from Sedgwick County will meet in Wichita on Friday, March 14 to learn more about the Community Health Record (CHR) and the opportunity to participate in its pilot program.

The CHR is a web-based health information technology tool used by health care providers to track patient medical histories. This privacy-secured health care coordination system gives providers ready access to such medical information as lab results, children's immunization records, and medical procedure histories.

CHR improves efficiency, enhances the process of health care delivery, and promotes patient safety. The record also offers an e-prescribing component that enhances clinician workflow, reduces the risk of medication error, and increases the accuracy of the prescription.

The Kansas Health Policy Authority launched the CHR pilot program in 2005 with 20 providers in Sedgwick County.

"The benefits of the program were readily apparent," said Executive Director Marcia Nielsen. "Almost immediately, we began hearing from providers about how the CHR helped them provide a higher level of service to their patients."

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### UPCOMING LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

#### March 10

House Health and Human Services (HHS) Subcommittee. 11:30a/1:30p.  
Re: Health Reform

#### March 11

House HHS Subcommittee. 11:30a/1:30p. Re: Health Reform  
Senate Ways & Means (SWAM) Subcommittee. On adjournment.  
Re: KHPA Budget

#### March 12

House HHS Subcommittee. 11:30 a.m./1:30 p.m. Re: Health Reform  
SWAM Subcommittee. Upon adjournment. Re: KHPA Budget

#### March 13

House HHS Committee. 1:30 p.m. Re: Health Reform  
SWAM Subcommittee. Upon adjournment. Re: KHPA Budget  
House Insurance & Financial Institutions. 3:30 p.m. Re: SB 511

#### March 14

Full House. 9:00 a.m. Re: Floor action on  
HB 2946 Mega Bill/HB 2947 Supplemental

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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 785.291.3827 or [mandy.cawby@khpas.gov](mailto:mandy.cawby@khpas.gov).



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