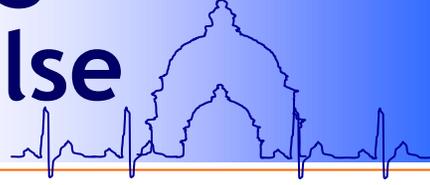


Coordinating health & health care  
for a thriving Kansas



5-1-09

# Legislative Pulse



## Legislative Activities

Tracking the Issues

### Clean Indoor Air

In March, the Senate inserted the contents of the Clean Indoor Air Law into H.B. 2221. It's now awaiting action in a House-Senate conference committee.

### FY 2010 Budget

The preliminary budget, H.B. 2354, was signed into law by Gov. Kathleen Sebelius. It would cut KHPA's operational budget by 10.6% compared to the original FY 2009 budget. In April, new revenue estimates showed that budget would leave the state with a negative ending balance. The House Appropriations Committee has recommended an additional 5% across the board cut in general fund spending. The Senate Ways and Means Committee has recommended a 2.5% cut.

## KHPA May Face Deeper Budget Cuts; Agency Warns of Service Disruptions

The Kansas Health Policy Authority warned legislators and the governor this week that as many as 50,000 Kansans could be denied timely access to medical care in the months ahead unless the state provides additional resources to deal with the growing backlog of applications.

That backlog is the result of a growing volume of applications for medical assistance, which KHPA attributes to the worsening economy, and budget cuts that will force KHPA to reduce staffing in critical areas of Medicaid operations.

"We simply cannot keep up with the rising volume of applications," said KHPA Executive Director Marcia Nielsen. "Thousands of Kansans have lost their jobs and their health care in the last year, and those people are naturally turning to us for help. But at the same time, we've taken one cut after another in our administrative budget, and right now lawmakers are considering even deeper cuts in their efforts to balance the budget."

Nielsen said the cuts would also affect customer and provider service operations. Those units help steer applicants through the eligibility process and answer billing questions from doctors, clinics, pharmacists and other providers.

Last week, in response to new revenue estimates that project a \$328 million deficit at the end of Fiscal Year 2010, the House and Senate budget committees recommended bills that would cut spending even further than the preliminary budget bill that passed in March.

The House bill recommends an additional 5-percent across the board cut in general fund spending while the Senate bill recommends an additional 2.5 percent cut. Both bills would exempt the direct cost of Medicaid services. But the cuts would apply to KHPA administrative expenses as well as the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

KHPA Deputy Director Andrew Allison, the state Medicaid director, said the backlog of unprocessed applications has been growing for months. Without additional resources, he said, the number of people whose applications have been pending 30 days or longer would reach at least 33,000, and could grow to as much as 50,000, by December 2009.

Federal Medicaid rules require applications be processed within 45 days. Failure to comply with that rule can result in financial penalties and loss of federal funding. The federal government currently provides more than two-thirds of funding for Kansas Medicaid.

**NEW:** If you have questions about the recent H1N1 “Swine Flu” outbreak, please visit: [www.swinefluks.org](http://www.swinefluks.org) or call 1-877-427-7317.

## Agency Activities

### KHPA Board Finance and Audit Committee Meeting

Date: May 11, 2009  
Time: 3:00–4:30  
Location: KHPA Office

### Pharmacy Drug Utili- zation Review Board

Date: May 13, 2009  
Time: 10:00 a.m.  
Location: EDS/Forbes  
Field, 6700 S.W.  
Topeka Blvd., Building  
283J; Capital/Cedar  
Crest Room

### KHPA Data Consor- tium Meeting

Date: May 28, 2009  
Time: 9:00am–noon  
Location: TBA

## Clean Indoor Air supporters rally for HB 221

On Wednesday, April 29 the American Cancer Society held a Clean Indoor Air rally at the Statehouse, that brought advocates, several legislators and stakeholders together to show support for HB 2221.

A volunteer for the American Cancer Society gave a personal testimony while Secretary Roderick Bremby and Senator Jim Barnett, R-Emporia, addressed the raising numbers of deaths and concern for smoking. Dr. Marcia Nielsen, Executive Director of the Kansas Health Policy Authority, and Graham Bailey, Vice President of Corporate Communications and Public Relations of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas offered their public support of HB 2221 by appearing at the event. The KHPA Board put passage of a statewide Clean Indoor Air law as the top of its legislative priority for this session.

## National Committee for Quality Assurance calls for submission of HIT quality of care initiatives

The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) is asking organizations that have used Health Information Technology to facilitate improvements in quality of care to submit their initiatives for possible inclusion and acknowledgement in the next edition of *Quality Profiles™: The Leadership Series*.

The due date for submissions is May 15. Detailed information, as well as the application form can be found on [www.qualityprofiles.org](http://www.qualityprofiles.org), or [www.ncqa.org](http://www.ncqa.org). Please share this information you're your network members, as well as anyone else that you feel would benefit from receiving this information.

## Nielsen Selected to NASHP Executive Committee

Kansas Health Policy Authority Executive Director Marcia Nielsen was selected recently to join the executive committee of the National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP).

Nielsen's selection means she will be among a select group of state health policy officials who guide the academy's work and priorities.

"I'm very excited because this recognizes that Kansas has been on the cutting edge of state-level health reform in the United States," Nielsen said. "Even though the debate over health reform is shifting to the national level, states still have an important role to play and they need to be involved in that debate. I look forward to working with the academy and making sure that the interests of states like Kansas are heard in Washington."

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@khpas.gov](mailto:peter.hancock@khpas.gov)

