



12.1.08



## Agency Activity

Agency updates focused on KHPA stakeholders.

### Provide Support for 2009 Health Reform

The KHPA is seeking letters of support for its [2009 Health Reform recommendations](#).

Agency representatives met with several hundred partners statewide during the Community Dialogue tour held in September and October. Collaboration around the issues of health reform continues with [Advisory Council](#) meetings and a recent Health Reform Partner meeting. The KHPA received over 60 [letters of support](#) for health reform in 2007. The agency is hoping to surpass that amount this year.

If you or your organization would like to send a letter of support for KHPA's 2009 Health Reform recommendations, please direct it to:

## Oversight Panel Reviews KHPA Agenda

The Kansas legislature's Joint Committee on Health Policy Oversight held its final meeting of the interim Nov. 20-21 to review KHPA's operations over the past year and the agency's legislative agenda for the 2009 session.

Board chairman Joe Tilghman presented an overview of the agency's accomplishments in 2008 in all of the major programs. Among those were securing increased federal funding for hospitals that treat indigent patients; expanding wellness programs within the State Employee Health Benefit Plan; launching a pilot Health Information Exchange project in the Kansas City area; and continued development of the medical home model of health care delivery.

Executive director Marcia Nielsen outlined [KHPA's agenda](#) for the upcoming session. That agenda includes a statewide clean indoor air for public establishments and an increase in the state tobacco excise tax to fund expansion of wellness initiatives and affordable quality health care coverage.

Medicaid director Dr. Andrew Allison briefed the committee on the agency's recommendation that bariatric surgery be covered for obesity treatment in the State Employee Health Benefit Plan. The Kansas Health Care Commission may consider that recommendation for the 2009 plan year.

The committee also heard a presentation on the "Asheville Project," which involves redesigning self-funded employee health benefits plans to focus on wellness and preventive care. Also known as "HealthMapRx," the program was developed by the American Pharmacists Association and focuses on using pharmacists as key providers for certain screening and wellness services.

Executive director Nielsen noted that the program has many elements similar to the medical home model that KHPA is promoting. She also noted that KHPA is using a multi-disciplinary approach that includes pharmacists and many other important partners.

**NEW!** All handouts from the KHPA November 18th Board Meeting are now [online!](#)

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\* It is equally important to send letters expressing your support for Health Reform to state policy-makers. Please consider copying your KHPA letter of support to your legislator(s).

### Save the Dates!

KHPA Advisory Councils:

#### At-Large Council:

*Date:* Tuesday, Dec. 2  
*Time:* 10 a.m.—12 p.m.  
*Location:* Curtis State Office Building, Room 530

#### Provider Council:

*Date:* Tuesday, Dec. 2  
*Time:* 1-3 p.m.  
*Location:* Landon State Office Building Room 9E/F

#### E-Health Council:

*Date:* Thursday, Dec. 11  
*Time:* 3-5 p.m.  
*Location:* 215 SE 8th Ave. Topeka, KS , Kansas Hospital Association

#### KHPA Board Meeting

*Date:* Tuesday, Jan. 20  
*Time:* 8:30 am—3:30 pm  
*Location:* Capitol Plaza, Emerald 3-5 Room, 17th and Topeka Blvd.

## KHPA Pledges Cooperation on Budget

The Kansas Health Policy Authority pledged to cooperate with Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, the Division of Budget and the Kansas legislature to find workable solutions to the state's current budget crisis.

At its regular meeting in Topeka Nov. 18, the KHPA Board of Directors received a report on the state's fiscal condition from Secretary of Administration Duane Goossen. For the current fiscal year (2009) the budget division is recommending \$11.6 million in State General Fund (SGF) cuts for KHPA. That represents about 2.3 percent of KHPA's total SGF budget, and about 6.5 percent of its "operating" budget.

For FY 2010, which begins July 1, DOB is recommending \$6.17 million in SGF cuts from what the agency had requested.

Discussions between the administration and state agencies will continue over the next several weeks as Gov. Sebelius prepares her budget proposals for the legislature to consider during the 2009 session.

"These are sobering numbers," said KHPA Board chairman Joe Tilghman. "But we cannot ignore the seriousness of the problem. All of the programs within KHPA need to do their part and we want to be a team player in helping the state find workable solutions."

KHPA executive director Marcia Nielsen said she hoped to meet the budget targets by implementing a hiring freeze, reducing some contractual expenses, and cutting travel and communication expenses. The cuts will also involve reducing expenditures in the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

"We plan to work very closely with the administration in crafting solutions that address the state's serious budget challenges while protecting the integrity of programs that serve the most vulnerable populations in Kansas," Nielsen said.

Nielsen added that KHPA has been working for several months on a comprehensive Medicaid Transformation program that includes administrative actions, budget and statutory proposals, and a review of optional revenue sources to support reform and guard against the impact of declining state revenues on critical health programs. KHPA plans to present that transformation package to the 2009 Legislature.