House Committee Reviews Raising Smoking Age to 21
The House Federal and State Affairs Committee, chaired by Representative John Barker (R-Abilene), met today to review House Bill 2563. The bill would increase the age to purchase tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, from 18 to 21. It also would prohibit cigarette vending machines and flavored vaping products with the exception of menthol. Among those providing testimony in support of the bill were the Kansas Association of Local Health Departments, the Kansas State Board of Education, and the Kansas Hospital Association. Opponents of the bill, which included vaping shops and convenience stores, were focused mainly on concerns about the elimination of flavored vaping products and increases in licensing fees. The biggest issue will be whether the committee amends the bill to remove all exceptions to the addition of flavorings, or whether the ban on flavorings will be completely removed. The committee met for two hours and is not expected to take up the bill in the near future.

House Budget Committee Concludes Budget Hearings
The House Social Services Budget Committee, chaired by Representative Will Carpenter (R-El Dorado), met yesterday and today to finish discussions on the Kansas Department of Health and Environment budget. There were a variety of requests for funding to increase services in the program that included benefit planners for those with disabilities, safety net clinics and dental care. The Kansas Hospital Association requested the committee include proviso language to implement the hospital provider assessment changes that have not yet been passed in Senate Bill 225, as well as funding to maintain payment rates for hospitals and physicians while the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services finalize their deliberations on approval of the program changes. The committee will meet again on Monday afternoon to complete its recommendations.

Introduction of Bills
House Bill 2638 – Concerning the University of Kansas School of Medicine; relating to the Medical Student Loan Program; Medical Residency Bridging Program; loan assistance; promoting the practice of obstetrics and gynecology in medically underserved areas. By Representatives Xu and Lynn.

House Bill 2645 – Concerning health and health care; relating to healing arts licensees; unprofessional conduct; pelvic, rectal or prostate exams. By Representative Xu.
House Bill 2658 – Concerning health and welfare; relating to prescription medication; establishing the Affordable Prescription Drug Importation Program. By Representative Ward.

House Bill 2660 – Concerning health and health care; relating to family planning; requiring the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to make long-acting, reversible contraceptives more accessible. By Representative Parker.

House Bill 2661 – Concerning health and health care; relating to pharmacies; requiring pharmacies to make contraceptives available to customers. By Representative Parker.

House Bill 2664 – Concerning health and health care; relating to sexual-assault survivors; requiring certain entities to provide information to sexual-assault survivors. By Representative Parker.

House Bill 2666 – Concerning employment practices; prohibiting employers from taking adverse employment action against an employee based on employee's reproductive medical history; medical decisions. By Representative Parker.

House Bill 2673 – Concerning the Supreme Court; relating to original jurisdiction; certain actions related to the Health Care Provider Insurance Availability Act, the Healthcare Stabilization Fund and claims for noneconomic loss in medical malpractice liability actions. By the Committee on Judiciary.

House Bill 2677 – Concerning health and health care; relating to hospitals and health care-related facilities; establishing primary health centers as a rural health care provider type and enacting the primary health center pilot program act contingent upon state acceptance into a demonstration program under the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation. By the Committee on Rural Revitalization.

House Bill 2681 – Concerning health and health care; relating to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment; establishing the advisory committee on harm reduction. By the Committee on Health and Human Services.

House Resolution 6032 – Disapproving Executive Reorganization Order No. 44, renaming the Kansas Department for Children and Families the Kansas Department of Human Services; abolishing the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services and transferring powers, duties and functions to the Kansas Department of Human Services; and transferring the powers, duties and functions of the Kansas Department of Corrections regarding the juvenile services program and certain juvenile facilities and institutions to the Kansas Department of Human Services. By the Committee on Appropriations.