KHA’s Capitol Comments
February 18, 2020

Legislation Directs KDADS to Operate Psychiatric Care Beds

Senate Bill 407 was introduced in the Senate Committee on Ways and Means earlier this month. The proposed legislation would require the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services to operate, under existing resources, no less than 12 acute inpatient psychiatric care beds for children in each of the cities of Hays and Garden City, or surrounding communities. The legislation was referred to the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee. No hearing has been scheduled.

Nursing Home Bed Tax Legislation Introduced

Senate Bill 409 was introduced in the Senate Ways and Means Committee on Feb. 11. The proposed legislation would permanently remove the sunset on the nursing home bed tax, also referred to as the quality care assessment. The existing quality care assessment program is scheduled to sunset on July 1, 2020, unless the legislature takes action to continue the program. Senate Bill 409 would not change the assessment amount, but would permanently eliminate the sunset of the program. The proposed legislation has been referred to the Senate Ways and Means Committee for consideration. A hearing has not yet been scheduled.

House Budget Committee Makes Recommendation on KDHE Budget

The House Social Services Budget Committee, chaired by Representative Will Carpenter (R-El Dorado), met late yesterday to make final recommendations on the Kansas Department of Health and Environment Division of Health budget. The committee added $3 million for primary health projects in 2021, $3 million for dental reimbursement rates, $1.9 million for local health departments and $2 million for the infant and toddler program. Language also was added to implement the recommended changes to the hospital provider assessment program and maintain rates for hospitals and physicians at the current level in 2020 and 2021 until the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services approves the changes to the program. The budget will now go before the House Appropriations Committee for approval.
House Subcommittee Continues Mental Health Discussion

Yesterday, Health Insurance Committee chairperson Jene Vickrey (R-Louisburg) invited interested parties, including the Kansas Hospital Association, to further discuss House Bill 2459 with a sub-committee of his larger Insurance Committee. House Bill 2459 mandates specific inpatient and outpatient coverage without prior authorization, or any utilization review, for persons who are actively suicidal, experiencing suicidal ideation, or have a substance use disorder. The health care provider and the patient, not the insurance carrier, would decide medical necessity. Although it is uncertain if House Bill 2459 will pass out of the Insurance Committee, Chair Vickrey wanted input from mental and behavioral health providers about this proposed legislation. His sub-committee is seeking information on several issues including the frequency that persons with mental and behavioral health conditions are denied insurance coverage when seeking treatment and the cost of providing emergency care when they are denied coverage. Additional information requested by the sub-committee included the definition of "actively suicidal" and utilization review; how often the 14-day inpatient stay would be permitted; and who is responsible for writing the regulations for adult crisis centers that could hold a person for up to 72-hours without a court order but have not opened due to the lack of regulations. The sub-committee will meet again this week to hear the answers to their questions.