Senate Committee Amends Expansion Bill
The Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee, chaired by Senator Gene Suellentrop (R-Wichita), met this morning for further discussion and amendment of Senate Bill 252. The committee had requested an update from staff on state only funded abortion services as a follow-up to their discussion last week. The Medicaid director explained that since pregnant women are already eligible for Medicaid coverage at 171% of the federal poverty level, expansion would not increase the number of pregnant women eligible for Medicaid. The committee then proceeded with amendments to the bill. The amendments included:

1. Language to make state fund expenditures subject to the same limitations as federal funds related to Medicaid funded abortions services, which limit use of funds to only cases of rape, incest and danger to the life of the mother;
2. The Medicaid Workforce Act of 2020 requiring that all Medicaid participants work or volunteer at least 20 hours a week, or be in school at least part time. The amendment included exceptions for caretaker, the disabled and those receiving drug or alcohol addiction treatment;
3. A conscience protection amendment allowing providers to refuse to provide services that go against their conscience except in instances where EMTALA applies;
4. Language delaying Medicaid expansion until the resolution of the current lawsuit to determine if the Affordable Care Act is constitutional and approval of a constitutional amendment by the voters regarding the regulation of abortion in Kansas;
5. Language making implementation of expansion contingent on the approval of the four previous amendments by CMS.

The committee attempted to pass the bill out of committee to the full Senate without a recommendation, which failed. They then attempted to pass the bill to the full Senate favorably, which also failed. Procedurally, this means that if the bill is not passed out of committee and voted on by the Senate by Feb. 27, which is the last day for bills to be considered in their house of origin, it can no longer be discussed this session and will be considered dead. However, this does not suggest the issue of expansion is dead for the 2020 session. The actions taken by the Senate committee were not unexpected. KHA will continue to keep you updated on the latest statehouse activity going forward.
The House Rural Revitalization Committee, chaired by Rep. Adam Smith (R-Weskan), discussed and took favorable action on House Bill 2766. The Kansas Hospital Association-supported legislation would enact the Primary Health Center Pilot Program Act, which is based upon KHA’s efforts to develop an alternative rural health care delivery model for Kansas communities. The goal, as outlined in House Bill 2677, suggests that the Kansas Legislature is seeking to improve the health of Kansas' rural population, preserve access to health care, encourage collaboration among rural health care providers, promote delivery of quality rural health care, promote efficiency and efficacy of rural health care, and promote fair reimbursement for rural health care services. KHA requested the introduction of House Bill 2677 as the state prepares to respond to the Rural Healthcare Delivery Demonstration Project, which is expected to be released by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation later this year. During the committee deliberation, committee members discussed a proposed amendment that would require the Primary Health Center to have policies and systems in place to treat uninsured and the underinsured. The amendment, sponsored by Representative Monica Murnan (D-Pittsburg) and Representative Jason Probst (D-Hutchinson), was not adopted by the committee. House Bill 2766 now moves forward to be considered by the full House.