



KHA's Capitol Comments
September 22, 2021

Bob Bethell Committee Meets for Day One of Two-Day Meetings

Today, the Robert G. (Bob) Bethell Joint Committee on Home and Community-Based Services and KanCare Oversight Committee met for the first of a two-day meeting.

The Medicaid inspector general highlighted three reports produced by the office that identified \$1.6 million in improper payments, \$1.2 million in potential savings, and \$1.5 million in lost interest, followed by an overview of his recommendations.

Agency staff reviewed with the committees a list of outstanding items. Those providing updates included: Medicaid Director Sarah Fertig, Janis DeBoer from the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services, and Carrie Kimes of United Healthcare who spoke on behalf of KanCare's managed care organizations. The list of outstanding items before the committee and related updates is available [online](#).

The committees also received updates from conferees on maternal health support. MCO representatives from Aetna, Sunflower Health Plan and United Healthcare provided updates on the programs available through KanCare. In addition, the following providers, organizations and individuals testified to share with the committees the need for reform in the area of maternal health support:

- Terrah Stroda, coordinator, Fourth Trimester Initiative
- Elizabeth Lewis, director, maternal-infant health, March of Dimes
- Kendra Wyatt, CEO and co-founder, New Birth Company
- Carla Moralez, private citizen
- Roche Garcia, private citizen
- Rebecca Williams, account executive, HUB International Mid-America
- Dr. Elizabeth Wickstrom, Midwest Maternal-Fetal Medicine

The testimony highlighted the need for mental health services and a request for increased reimbursement for Medicaid/Medicare rates for certified nurse-midwives.

Appearing before the committee to discuss the hospital admissions process for behavioral health was Robyn Chadwick, hospital president, Ascension Via Christi Hospitals Wichita, Inc., and Dr. William Gabrielli and Lauren Lucht with the University of Kansas Medical Center. In

addition, Rennie Shuler-McKinney of AdventHealth Shawnee Mission provided written comments on the topic.

Conferees emphasized the need to treat mental health similarly to physical health. Those testifying highlighted some of the complications with inconsistencies between MCO coverage for behavioral health services transitioning to outpatient care, the need for assistance from MCO case managers to assist with the transition to outpatient care, and MCO authorization for discharge plans to long-term care facilities. Conferees asked the committee about the need for additional mental health care homes in Kansas, additional days approved for in-patient stays by MCOs, the need for additional regional mental health hospitals, and a clearinghouse approach to reimbursement processing.

The committee asked conferees about the juvenile services in the state and asked about workplace assault incidents and how those instances impact health care workforce challenges.

The agenda before the committee and discussions will continue tomorrow.

SPARK Funding Updates

This week, the State Office of Recovery released information about the next steps for qualifying hospitals having an interest in applying for the recently allocated Strengthening People and Revitalizing Kansas Frontline Retention Funds. At this time, the Office of Recovery has requested to receive a letter of intent from each eligible hospital by 5 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 24. Kansas Hospital Association staff has reached out to qualifying hospitals. For those who have any additional questions, please contact [Tara Mays](#) or [Shannan Flach](#) at KHA at (785) 233.7436.

In addition, the Office of Recovery is hosting a webinar at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 29. During the webinar, additional details will be shared about the application process, funding timeline and reporting requirements. More details on the webinar, including the link to register, will follow, but please mark your calendars.

Other Committee Meetings

- Sept. 23 – Joint Bob Bethell KanCare Oversight Committee
- Sept. 23 – Joint Committee on Special Claims Against the State
- Sept. 24 – SPARK Executive Committee
- Sept. 28 – Special Committee on Kansas Mental Health Modernization and Reform
- Sept. 30 – Kansas Criminal Justice Coordinating Council