



KHA's Capitol Comments
August 23, 2022

Interims Starting

Legislative Interim Committees are beginning to meet. Upcoming interim committees include the following:

- Aug. 24-25 – Senior Care Task Force
- Aug. 25 – Legislative Budget Committee
- Aug. 29 – Executive Committee of Legislative Post Audit Meeting
- Aug. 29-30 – Special Committee on Water
- Aug. 30 – Legislative Task Force on Community and Technical College State Funding
- Sept. 6 – Senate Confirmation Oversight
- Sept. 7 – Unemployment Compensation Modernization and Improvement Council

Mental Health Beds Committee Meets

Today, the Special Interim Committee on Mental Health Beds, chaired by Senator Carolyn McGinn (R-Sedgwick), met for their first of three meetings. The committee received an overview from the Office of the Revisor and the Kansas Legislative Research Department regarding the history of mental health hospitals and services in Kansas, the timeline of previous recommendations concerning mental health beds, and the other states inpatient psychiatric bed numbers and funding.

The committee heard from Robyn Chadwick, hospital president, Ascension Via Christi Hospitals Wichita, Inc., regarding the mental health needs of South Central Kansas. She highlighted:

- The work Sedgwick County Mental Health and Substance Abuse Coalition has been doing
- Average length of stay and capacity strains on the overall system
- Current patient volumes
- Staffing concerns related to patient care needs

- Legislative priorities to include:
 - Addressing workforce challenges
 - Increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates by 10 percent
 - Approving Medicaid Expansion
 - Increasing inpatient beds for substance abuse treatment
 - Fully funding established crisis stabilization centers
 - Fully funding the 988 hotline
 - Supporting access to care via telemedicine

Ted Lutterman, senior director of Government and Commercial Research, NRI and Dr. Brian Hepburn, executive director of the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors presented on national trends and other state experiences when dealing with bed capacity needs for behavioral health services.

The afternoon session included discussions from Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services Secretary Laura Howard and Deputy Director Scott Brunner regarding the Kansas mental health system and Psychiatric Beds and State Institutional Alternatives Reimbursement Program, as well as Amy Campbell, Kansas Mental Health Coalition regarding prior 2018 and 2019 Mental Health Task Force recommendations.

The committee will meet again to discuss possible additional bed capacity build-out and other programs to address behavioral health needs in Kansas.