



KHA's Capitol Comments

January 10, 2023

KHA Presents to House Health and Human Services Committee

Today, the House Health and Human Services Committee heard an in-depth presentation and overview of the Kansas Hospital Association's membership and services. KHA staff shared background information on major items of priority we hope to work with the legislature on during the 2023 session. The committee heard from staff regarding some of the issues hospitals are facing such as workforce shortages and overall financial viability. KHA staff members presenting and answering questions included Chad Austin, president and CEO, Audrey Dunkel, vice president government relations, Tara Mays, vice president state legislative relations, Shannan Flach, vice president health care finance and reimbursement, and Jaron Caffrey, project manager workforce strategies.

Session Begins, Committees Kick Off

Yesterday, on the steps on the south side of the Kansas Statehouse, Kansans and state officials celebrated Inauguration Day in the Capital City. Today, legislative committees met to kick off the 2023 legislative session.

Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee, chaired in person by vice chair Renee Erickson (R-Wichita), announced new chair Beverly Gossage (R-Eudora) will be unable to be at the capitol following an injury resulting in a triple break to her pelvis. Gossage is expected back at the capitol on Jan. 23.

Today, the committee heard a presentation on behavioral health by Andy Brown, commissioner of the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services. Brown gave an overview of the teams and services provided by the department and highlighted significant achievements since 2018. He also highlighted objectives for 2023-2027 including:

- Increasing access to services across the state, especially in rural and frontier counties.
- Expanding the provision of medicine-assisted treatment, harm reduction and contingency management among substance use disorder treatment programs.
- Investing further in social determinants of health, especially housing and employment programs.
- Improving integration of behavioral health services with other forms of health care.
- Working on addressing frontline workforce shortages to increase capacity within the provider network.

- Investing in ways to create additional specialty court programs across the state.
- Expanding problem gambling prevention and treatment programs across the state.
- Continuing to expand mobile crisis and crisis stabilization services for statewide coverage 24/7.
- Continuing to enlarge a suicide prevention infrastructure, to reduce suicide death rates.
- Continuing the development of opioid use disorder treatment and prevention programs to reduce overdose death rates.

[Brown's presentation](#) may be viewed online.

During the presentation, the committee heard Kansas is 51st in access to care. Committee members asked about the expense to counties for caring for these state patients as they wait and emphasized some of the work to expand mental health beds in south-central Kansas.

Tomorrow, the committee will hear from Kansas Department of Health and Environment Secretary Janet Stanek and her agency staff.

Today, the Senate Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee, chaired by Senator Jeff Longbine (R-Emporia), heard a presentation from Kansas Insurance Department Commissioner Vicki Schmidt. Schmidt gave an overview of the services her office provides. Schmidt shared her biggest priority is customer service and follow-up, citing examples of assisting Kansans in getting the services insurance companies should cover. She highlighted they have recovered more than \$26 million for Kansans with a milestone year in 2022. [Schmidt's testimony](#) is available online.

Governor Signs Executive Order on Childhood Transition Task Force

Today, Governor Laura Kelly held a press conference to sign Executive Order 23-01, establishing the Early Childhood Transition Task Force. The mission of the task force is to coordinate the early childhood care and education efforts of four state agencies: the Kansas Department for Children and Families, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Kansas State Department of Education, and the Kansas Children's Cabinet.

Senate and House Republicans Announce Agenda

Today, the House and Senate Republicans announced their 2023 legislative agenda. The agenda included commitments in the following policy areas:

- Taxes
- Health care
- Students
- Economy
- Workforce
- Safety net
- Others

Highlighted topics include:

- Expanding consumer health care choice and Kansans' ability to access health care.
- Stopping costly mandates that increase health care rates.
- Promoting health care savings accounts.
- Instituting reforms that support health care freedom while preserving quality.
- Making college more affordable.
- Supporting apprenticeship to licensure programs.
- Stopping fraud and abuse of the safety net system by regularly checking eligibility.
- Rejecting expansion of Medicaid to able-bodied adults until waiver waiting lists are eliminated.
- Strengthening Kansas statutes that protect Kansans from violent and repeat offenders.