



***KHA's Capitol Comments***  
***January 11, 2023***

**Senate Public Health and Welfare Hears from KDHE Staff**

Today, the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee, chaired by Vice-Chair Renee Erickson (R-Wichita), heard an agency overview from the Secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment Janet Stanek. The overview highlighted the priorities of the agency including:

- Improving inequities in health and health outcomes
- Improving access to care
- Facilitating healthy behaviors/improving health literacy
- Improving public health funding and capacity

Stanek also highlighted focus areas that included:

- Workforce
- Rebuilding confidence in KDHE to optimally achieve the improvement of health and safety of all Kansans
- Adhering to and assuring KDHE is operating to meet legal, legislative and federal requirements
- Increasing partner and interagency collaboration

Deputy Secretary of the Division of Public Health Ashley Goss presented on the State Health Improvement Plan, Healthy Kansas 2030. Goss reviewed with the committee Kansas health rankings and reviewed the cost of diabetes, including \$647 million for KanCare. She highlighted that more than 72,000 Kansans with diabetes were discharged from hospital stays in 2021, with a median stay of four days. She noted that Kansas spends less on public health than the national average.

State Medicaid Director Sarah Fertig discussed how the Medicaid program works and highlighted the 2023 projects for Kansas Medicaid including:

- Umbrella 115 waiver transition to a small 1115 waiver
- Focusing on prenatal care and maternal/child health outcomes
- Rebidding the Medicaid managed care contracts and highlighting stakeholder input sessions will be held winter/late spring, with the request for proposal in late summer/early fall

The committee inquired into the following:

- The redetermination of individuals on Medicaid who have not been re-determined for the past three years
- COVID vaccines, Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System data, and patients being required to take COVID vaccines to receive services such as a kidney transplant
- Infectious disease emergency response plan
- Prenatal and post-natal mortality and causes, as well as related domestic violence
- Workforce grants going back to local health departments and the distribution methodology

The committee emphasized a need to expedite the redeterminations of Medicaid and asked for a copy of the official plan the agency will submit to the federal government in February.

### **Bill Protecting Health Care Workers Is Introduced**

Today, in the House Chambers Speaker Dan Hawkins (R-Wichita) and Representative Susan Concannon (R-Beloit) introduced [House Bill 2023](#). HB 2023 creates the crime of interference with the conduct of a hospital, provides criminal penalties for violation thereof and increases the criminal penalties for the battery of a health care provider employed by a hospital. The Kansas Hospital Association will keep you posted as the legislation makes it's way through the process.

### **House Judiciary Committee Hears about Human Trafficking in Kansas**

Today, the House Judiciary Committee, chaired by Representative Fred Patton (R-Topeka), received an informational briefing from Dr. Sharon Sullivan addressing human trafficking in Kansas. Dr. Sullivan highlighted today, Jan. 11, is National Human Trafficking Awareness Day. The committee members learned education is a key component in stopping the practice. Conferees highlighted national trends including:

- Eighty-nine percent of child victims in active cases in 2020 were between 14 and 17 years old
- Fifty-three percent of victims in federal cases were children
- Experts believe only one percent of human trafficking victims are identified in the United States

Dr. Sullivan asked the committee to further consider [Senate Bill 497](#) from the 2022 session.