



KHA's Capitol Comments
January 24, 2023

Senate Public Health and Welfare Hears from Local Health Departments Association

Today, the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee, chaired by Senator Beverly Gossage (R-Eudora), heard from Dennis Kriesel, executive director of the Kansas Association of Local Health Departments. Kriesel gave an overview of the 86 county health departments, discussed funding sources and explained what local health departments have jurisdiction over.

Committee members made the following inquiries:

- Mental health services and referral services for those in crisis
- Services dictated through the federal funds
- Traveling nurse fees and the impact on local health departments
- Previously passed state funding increases and how long that proviso language will be in place
- Total amount of funds counties received to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic
- How many counties have long-term care or hospice in their county, as well as how they shared funds and resources with those entities throughout the COVID pandemic
- Modernization of pre- and post-natal services
- What services are offered for family planning and public health preparedness
- Data on referral services for abortion or family planning crisis centers

The committee will meet again on Wednesday, Jan. 25 for a presentation on critical issues in Kansas Health and Child Welfare Systems.

House Energy & Senate Judiciary Committees Hear from 911 Dispatchers

Today, the House Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications Committee, chaired by Representative Leo Delperdang (R-Wichita), heard from Emily Nichols, Kansas Association of Public-Safety Communication, for an informative presentation. Nichols highlighted hardships in the industry and shared the example of a Ness County dispatch director who worked and lived in the dispatch center for 30-plus days because they didn't have additional staff members to cover shifts. Nichols indicated workers sometimes serve as corrections officers, cooks, transportation officers and babysitters for children that are brought in, along with serving in other roles. She highlighted the post-traumatic event toll on staff and asked legislators to stand in support of them.

Scott Ekberg, Next Generation Coordinator for the Kansas 911 Coordinating Council presented background on the historical modernization of the statewide 911 services and discussed the most recent network upgrades being completed with AT&T Switched Ethernet. Ekberg highlighted how the network upgrades provide increased bandwidth, offer a second level of redundant connectivity and allow for streaming video from 911 callers who opt-in. The conferee highlighted the following partnerships:

- KDOT bringing railroad crossing data and traffic-related event data to emergency command centers
- Kansas Board of Emergency Medical Services bringing data relating to the existence and location of automated external defibrillators to emergency command centers
- Kansas 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline assisting in establishing a protocol to ensure interoperability between 988 and 911 dialing codes

The committee asked conferees about previous 911 outages and qualification standards for those employed by 911 dispatch services.

The Senate Judiciary Committee, chaired by Senator Kellie Warren (R-Leawood), held a mirror informational hearing today as well.

KDHE and Office of Medicaid Presents to Legislative Committees

Today, the Senate Ways and Means Committee, chaired by Senator Rick Billinger (R-Goodland), heard from Christine Osterlund, Deputy Chief Operating Officer for the State Medicaid Office. Osterlund gave an overview of changes as a result of the federal Omnibus bill, Federal Participation Rates through the Unwinding Period, and the Timeline for Redeterminations.

Osterlund gave an overview of the step down of that Federal Medical Assistance Program funding highlighting that assuming April 1, 2023, ends the FMAP increases:

- Jan. 1 – March 31 Kansas will continue to receive the additional 6.2 percent
- April 1 – June 30, 5 percent for second quarter
- July 1- Sept. 30, 2.5 percent in third quarter
- Oct. 1 – Dec. 31, 1.5 percent for last quarter of this Federal Fiscal Year.

Osterlund highlighted current enrollment:

- February 2020 - 405,716 individuals enrolled
- Dec. 1, 2022 – 533,547 enrolled

Osterlund emphasized that it is anticipated 125,000 Kansans that will come off the Medicaid rolls once redetermination begins. She walked through the staffing process and indicated that by July or August, they may have a better sense of how many Kansans will fall off Medicaid. This afternoon, KDHE also gave an overview to the House Social Services Budget committee, chaired by Representative Les Mason (R-McPherson).

Senate Commerce Hears About Workforce Topics

Today, the Senate Commerce Committee, chaired by Senator Renee Erickson (R-Wichita), reviewed recommendations by the Special Interim Committee on Workforce Development.

The recommendations included:

- Providing assistance for adults who are online learners seeking a degree
- Providing financial assistance for people seeking a degree
- Ensuring increased scholarship funding
- Implementing statewide marketing
- Creating programs to address shortages: tax
- Advocating for reentry programs
- Utilizing applied research
- Supporting accountability for funding for need-based aid
- Supporting policies for childcare
- Investigating disability pay gaps
- Expanding the childcare tax credit
- Having the Kansas chamber present

Eric Stafford, vice president of government affairs, Kansas Chamber, reviewed a study performed by Ted Abernathy and highlighted recommendations designed to:

- Increase student work-based learning
- Appropriate funds for engineering and nursing initiatives
- Increase recruitment and retention of military personnel
- Create state apprenticeship tax credits
- Collaborate with local community colleges, technical colleges and the workforce board
- Create short-term training and retraining for adult workers and
- Modify statutes to deal with recidivism and items like suspended licenses

The chamber highlighted the workforce challenges are further complicated by counties that are losing more than 10 percent of the working-age population. Stafford noted the need for all policies to be considered, including comprehensive immigration reform on a federal level.

Introduction of Bills

[House Bill 2126](#) – By Representatives Fairchild, Barth, Droge, Goetz, Jacobs, Murphy, Poetter Parshall, Proctor, Rhiley, Roth and Schmoie

Concerning health and health care; relating to medications; authorizing the over-the-counter purchase of ivermectin tablets and hydroxychloroquine tablets

[House Bill 2153](#) – By Committee on Child Welfare and Foster Care

Concerning human trafficking; relating to the attorney general; authorizing the attorney general to coordinate training regarding a multidisciplinary team approach to intervention for law enforcement agencies; requiring training on human trafficking awareness and

identification for certain child welfare agencies, juvenile justice agencies, mental health professionals and school personnel

[House Bill 2161](#) – By Committee on Health and Human Services

Concerning health and health care; enacting the Patient Right to Visitation Act; relating to hospitals, adult care homes and hospice facilities; requiring in-person visitation in certain circumstances

[Senate Bill 82](#) – By Committee on Education

Concerning education; relating to the School Sports Head Injury Prevention Act; requiring schools to establish concussion management teams; standards of care protocols; biennial education

[Senate Bill 98](#) – By Committee on Education

Concerning postsecondary and postgraduate loan programs; relating to The University of Kansas School of Medicine; medical student loan program and residency bridging program; encouraging the practice of obstetrics and gynecology; establishing the OB-GYN Medical Loan Repayment Fund and the OB-GYN Medical Residency Bridging Fund