President’s Perspective – The U.S. Census and the Role of Hospitals and Health Systems

The United States Constitution mandates that once every decade, our country must count its population. The census is incredibly important because the data collected by the census determines the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives and also is used to distribute billions in federal funds to local communities.

The 2020 census will require counting an increasingly diverse and growing population in more than 140 million housing units, including health care facilities. This month, Census Bureau workers will contact health care facilities to ensure that certain people living in hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, and psychiatric hospital or psychiatric units for long-term care are accounted for appropriately in the 2020 census.

While the majority of your patients will not be subjected to census taking at your facility, you will need to work with the Census Bureau to determine which individuals should be counted and how. The Kansas Hospital Association has made an advisory from the American Hospital Association available on our website. It provides an excellent overview of why the census is important overall, and specifically to hospitals and health care advocates. This advisory details who is counted where (at home or at the hospital). It also walks through the process, timing, confidentiality and the role of hospitals and health systems.

Key Takeaways

- This year the federal government will take a census of the U.S. population, including individuals living in health care facilities.
- Hospitals and health care facilities are required by federal law to cooperate with the census process.
- The Census Bureau will contact your facility in February to obtain identifying information about the facility, including a preferred enumeration method.
- Federal regulations prohibit hospitals from providing identifiable information about patients in federally assisted alcohol and substance use disorders treatment programs.

What You Can Do

- Share this information and the Census Advisory with your senior management team.
- Ask relevant staff to determine whether actions by local census workers are consistent. If there are discrepancies, contact local census officials to clarify any misunderstandings. If that does not resolve the problem, contact csamuelson@kha-net.org, and we will work to ensure that the Census Bureau provides better instructions to its local workers and supervisors.
• Determine what role your staff should play in obtaining information for census workers.

**Bottom Line:** The 2020 census is important, but at the same time, it needs to be conducted in a manner that minimizes burden, avoids disrupting patient care and adheres to adequate confidentiality protections. We hope that by providing this information in partnership with AHA, we can help with this process.

--Tom Bell

**Hotel Deadline Approaching for the 2020 Critical Issues Summit**

Register now and plan to attend the [Critical Issues Summit](#), Feb. 27-28, in Wichita. Hosted by the Kansas Hospital Association, the Critical Issues Summit brings together hospital leadership and trustees from across the state to promote the importance of good governance practices. This event provides top-notch speakers, educational sessions and discussions on the most critical topics facing hospitals today.

The summit will be at the [Wichita Marriott](#). A block of rooms has been reserved for the nights of Feb. 26 and 27 at the rate of $112, plus tax. The room block is available until Wednesday, Feb. 5. After that, reservations will be taken on a space-available basis. To make your reservation and receive the special rate, call (316) 651-0333 and ask for the KHA room block.

**Register Now**

Please contact the [KHA Education Department](#) at (785) 233-7436, if you have any questions.

--Hayley Finch-Genschorck

**KDHE Issues Statement Regarding Suspected Case of Coronavirus in Kansas**

This week, in response to the global spread of a respiratory illness caused by a novel coronavirus first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, Lee A. Norman, MD, Secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, issued a [statement](#) regarding the first suspected case of coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in Douglas County. More information on the coronavirus is available on [KDHE’s website](#). The Kansas Hospital Association continues to monitor this situation closely and will keep you notified as updates are released.

--Ron Marshall

**Hotel Deadline Extended for the Infection Prevention Conference – March 5-6**

Plan to attend the 2019 [Infection Prevention Conference](#), March 5-6 in Wichita. This conference will prepare infection preventionists by providing resources for assessing, reporting and providing stewardship in the realm of infection prevention in multiple settings. The course is designed for experienced professionals, as well as those new to the specialty.

This seminar will be at the [DoubleTree by Hilton Wichita Airport](#). A block of rooms has been reserved for the nights of March 4 and 5 at the rate of $124, plus tax. The hotel will hold the room block until Monday, Feb. 10. After that, reservations will be taken on a space-available basis. Call (316) 945-5272 and ask for the Kansas Hospital Association room block to receive the special rate.

**Register Now**
Please contact the KHA Education Department at (785) 233-7436, if you have any questions.
--Hayley Finch-Genschorck

**MFAR Puts Hospital Medicaid Reimbursement at Risk**
The American Hospital Association has provided a [model letter](#) for states and hospitals to provide comments on the proposed Medicaid Fiscal Accountability Rule. The proposed rule makes changes to Medicaid financing through provider assessments, intergovernmental transfers and certified public expenditures. These financing methods, which use provider funds to match federal Medicaid dollars, are used across the country to improve provider rates for Medicaid. In Kansas, our provider assessment provides an increase of 23.8 percent for inpatient rates and 25.6 percent for outpatient rates at hospitals. If this rule is enacted, hospitals could lose the current rate enhancements and the larger rate enhancements we are waiting for CMS to approve. We have provided both the [fact sheet](#) on the MFAR, as well the [nationwide impact analysis](#) for your information.

We are asking that if you have not yet done so, please personalize the model letter and submit it to CMS no later than **Saturday, Feb. 1, 2020**.

You can submit your own version of the letter [here](#).
--Audrey Dunkel

**Medicare Area Wage Index**

**FFY 2022 Wage Index**
The kickoff of the Federal Fiscal Year 2022 Area Wage Index Project for Kansas hospitals paid under the Medicare Prospective Payment System has begun. As in previous years, this project is being coordinated by Sue Brammer, BKD, and is for hospitals outside of the Kansas City area as there is a separate wage index project for that area.

Wage index is one of the factors used by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to determine PPS payment to hospitals. It's intended to account for regional differences in the cost of wages in the Medicare reimbursement formula. The methodology to determine wage index compares an annual national hospital wage level with that of hospitals located within a defined geographical region known as a core-based statistical area. To fully benefit from a wage index project, high participation from all of the hospitals is needed to ensure the CBSA wage index is accurate and hospitals are receiving the reimbursement entitled to them. Every three years, CMS conducts an occupational mix survey, which will be an optional addition to the wage index project for 2022. Data used from this survey is used to set the occupational mix adjustment factor for FFY 2022, 2023, and 2024.

[Click here](#) for additional information regarding the wage index project for FFY 2022.

**FFY 2021 Wage Index**
The Medicare Administrative Contractors must receive Federal Fiscal Year 2021 wage index revision requests and supporting documentation on or before Feb. 14, 2020. Visit the [Hospital Wage Index page](#) on the Wisconsin Physician Services website for further information.
--Tish Hollingsworth
Eight years ago, when Labette Health began its partnership with the Kansas Healthcare Collaborative, it wanted to reduce its avoidable readmissions rate to as near zero as possible. Working with KHC through the Hospital Improvement Innovation Network (and similar previous initiatives), the 99-bed hospital in southeast Kansas cut readmissions by nearly half. The Labette team used data to drive their efforts and said that transparency was the primary key to success. Read more about Labette's successful efforts at www.KHConline.org/labette.

KHC is currently recruiting success stories from HIIN hospitals to feature. Contact KHC Program Director Michele Clark for the easy-to-complete template at (785) 235-0763.

--Karen Braman

KHA and KSBN Clarify Use of Adverse Finding Report Form

Beginning in 2017, the Kansas Hospital Association, along with the Kansas State Board of Nursing, the State Board of Healing Arts and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, met for more than a year to work on developing a new risk management form to report adverse events. The goal was to create one form for hospitals to use when reporting level III and IV Standard of Care determinations to any regulatory agency licensing persons, or hospitals. The new Report of Adverse Finding form was approved by the various regulatory agencies and introduced at a KHA webinar on Aug.15, 2018. It became effective at that time.

Several hospital risk managers have contacted KHA stating that when they submit the "new" Report of Adverse Findings form to KSBN, they are instructed by staff to use KSBN's complaint form instead.
To better understand this issue, KHA recently met with KSBN staff including Executive Administrator Carole Moreland, New Practice Specialist Linda Davies and Disciplinary Counsel Bryce Benedict to discuss the steps leading up to the creation of the new form and its intended use. As a result of our meeting, KSBN has agreed to once again accept the universal Report of Adverse Finding form for Standard of Care III and IV determinations and will repost the form on its website. The KHA website lists the forms (in a fillable PDF and Microsoft Word formats) under regulatory resources.

--Deborah Stern

WPS Medicare Part A Training
WPS Medicare Part A Training provides a number of training opportunities for providers on a wide variety of topics. Below is a summary of some upcoming training opportunities:

- Feb. 11 – Teleconference: New to Medicare – Getting Started with the Medicare Program
- Feb. 25 – Teleconference: Medicare Advantage – How Does it Affect You?
- March 10 – Teleconference: New to Medicare – Understanding the Payment Basics
- March 24 – Teleconference: Ambulance Emergent or Non-Emergent
- April 23 – Teleconference: Care Management Services (Chronic Care Management, Transitional Care Management, and the New Principal Care Management Services)
- Sept. 15 – In-person event on A Medicare Day of Learning, scheduled in Topeka. To view the wide variety of session topics, visit the Medicare Day of Learning page on the WPS website.

Log into the WPS Learning Center to select the catalog link to view more information regarding the training programs and register for the educational events.

--Tish Hollingsworth

Health Care Facility Construction Approval Process By the Office of the State Fire Marshal
The Office of the State Marshal provided to local jurisdictions a memorandum on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' requirements for approval of health care facility construction plans. The OSFM also requested this information be shared with Kansas Hospital Association members.

--Ron Marshall

Every Mom Thrives: Supporting Perinatal Behavioral Health Regional Event on March 5
Registration is now open for the second Kansas Connecting Communities regional training event, March 5, at Neosho Regional Memorial Medical Center in Chanute. This event, Every Mom Thrives: Supporting Perinatal Behavioral Health Regional, will cover topics related to SBIRT, substance use and perinatal mood and anxiety disorders. The training will provide foundational knowledge on perinatal behavioral health and focus on action steps for implementing mental health and substance use screening, referral and treatment support with your perinatal clients. Additionally, the training will provide information on how to use KDHE recommended and reimbursable screening tools; hands on practice conducting a brief interventions; networking and discussion around locally available resources for perinatal clients; and a case study presentation to put your knowledge into practice.
This training is designed for any staff who work with perinatal women and is free of charge. Both CEs and travel stipends are available (see brochure).

---Karen Braman

**Immunize Kansas Coalition Preventing Flu Education Module**
The Immunize Kansas Coalition has created an informative online flu education module to educate health care staff about influenza and how to prevent it. The module details the burden of influenza disease, Kansas' current immunization rates, as well as provides recommended methods for increasing immunization rates in provider offices and clinics. Providers and staff also can practice giving patients succinct and accurate answers to some common flu vaccine questions. To provide feedback about the module, please contact IKC at (785) 587-0151. For questions on content, please contact the Kansas Immunization Program at (877) 296-0464.

---Karen Braman

**Update on U.S. Supreme Court Response to Review ACA Mandate**
Last week, the United States Supreme Court rejected a motion by the House of Representatives and Democratic-led states to expedite review of a 2019 decision in *Texas v. Azar*, in which a Texas District Court ruled the entire Affordable Care Act was unconstitutional. In December 2019, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit ruled the ACA's individual mandate to purchase health insurance is unconstitutional, but stopped short of saying the whole ACA law is invalid. Instead, the court of appeals sent back to the district court the question of whether the rest of the ACA can stand without the mandate. The Supreme Court’s response to not expedite its review did not rule out the possibility it will hear the case at a later date.

---Deborah Stern

**Health Observances and Recognition Days for February**

**Month-Long Observances**

- Children's Dental Health Month (National)
- Heart Month (American)
- Wise Health Care Consumer Month (National)

**Week-Long Observances**

- Feb. 3-9 – PeriAnesthesia Nurse Awareness Week
- Feb. 9-15 – Cardiac Rehabilitation Week (National); Cardiovascular Professionals Week; and Sepsis Survivor Week
- Feb. 14-21 – NCCDP Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Care Staff Education Week

**Recognition Days | Events**

- Feb. 7 – Wear Red Day (National)
- Feb. 11 – Day of the Sick (World)
The Kansas Hospital Association is pleased to present our members with the 2020 Health Observances Calendar. This publication is intended to provide our members with accurate and authoritative information about health care related events. The calendar is published and copyrighted in cooperation with the Society for Healthcare Strategy and Market Development of the American Hospital Association. All rights are reserved. Special thanks to the Kansas Health Service Corporation for their sponsorship of the Health Observances Calendar. In an effort to go green and reduce paper waste, the calendar is only available on the KHA website; login is required. If you have questions, please contact Jan Fenwick at (785) 233-7436.

--Jan Fenwick

Federal Focus

GAO Releases Report on 340B Program
The Government Accounting Office released a report on the 340B Drug Pricing Program and the Medicaid Drug Rebate Program. The GAO reviewed the programs to identify and prevent future duplicate discounts. Duplicate discounting occurs when drugs provided to Medicaid beneficiaries are subject to both 340B discounted prices and Medicaid rebates. The GAO found that audits by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, as well as the Health Resources and Services Administration, were not sufficient and both lacked reviews of states' policies and procedures for the use and identification of 340B drugs. The GAO is recommending both CMS and HRSA strengthen their oversight efforts.

TJC Offers Complimentary Certification Webinars
The Joint Commission announced a complimentary webinar regarding understanding the clinical practice guidelines and performance measures for certification. The webinar is offered at noon Tuesday, Feb. 11. Registration is required.

HRSA Announces Funding for Opioid-Impacted Family Support
The Health Resources and Services Administration is accepting applications for the fiscal year 2020 Opioid-Impacted Family Support Program. The application cycle closes on Monday, April 13. The purpose of this program is to support training programs to expand the number of peer support specialists and other behavioral health-related paraprofessionals who are trained to work in integrated, interprofessional teams providing services to children whose parents are impacted by opioid use disorders and other substance use disorders, and their family members who are in guardianship roles.

HRSA Announces Funding Opportunity for AMF Program
The Health Resources and Services Administration is accepting applications through Tuesday, Feb. 25 for the fiscal year 2020 Addiction Medicine Fellowship Program. Addiction medicine and addiction psychiatric fellowship programs can apply to receive funding to expand the number of fellows they can train. The AMF Program aims to foster robust community-based clinical training of addiction medicine and addiction psychiatry physicians.
Medicare to Cover Acupuncture for Lower Back Pain
The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services issued a National Coverage Determination allowing Medicare coverage of acupuncture as a treatment for chronic low back pain. A CMS media statement says that "over-reliance on opioids for people with chronic pain is one of the factors that led to the [opioid] crisis, so it is vital that we offer a range of treatment options for our beneficiaries." Coverage is limited to 20 sessions per year with up to 12 sessions in 90 days, and 8 additional sessions if the treatment improves the pain.

MLN Connects Provider eNews Available
Updates to MLN Connects Provider eNews were issued by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. eNews includes information about national provider calls, meetings, events, announcements and other MLN educational product updates. The latest issue provides updates and summaries of the following:

- Medicare Diabetes Prevention Program: valid claims
- CMS updates open payments data
- Open payments search tool: new features
- CMS Quality Conference – Feb. 25-27

HRSA Announces Notice of Funding for Nurse Anesthetist Traineeships
The Health Resources and Services Administration is accepting applications for the fiscal year 2020 Nurse Anesthetist Traineeships program. The application cycle closes on Friday, March 6.

This funding opportunity will allow eligible institutions to cover the costs of nurse anesthesia programs for individuals. The NAT program will increase the number of certified registered nurse anesthetists to provide care to underserved populations.