



KHA's Current Report
April 21, 2023

President's Perspective – Engaging the Future Health Care Workforce

I hope many of you had the opportunity to join the first-ever Kansas Health Care Virtual Career Day earlier this week. The Kansas Hospital Association partnered with the Kansas Chamber of Commerce and the Kansas Department of Education to highlight the various health care professions, both clinical and non-clinical, that may be found in a hospital. During the event, we were able to reach more than 2,000 Kansas high school students from 102 schools throughout the state of Kansas! This could not have been possible without the collective effort of Kansas hospitals.

Kansas Governor Laura Kelly kicked off the virtual career day by stressing the importance of the health care industry on the state's economy. Most recently, it has been reported that more than 14 percent of the state's workforce is employed in health care. Besides Governor Kelly, Kansas high school students also heard from leaders in the business and education community echoing the importance of the health care sector and the vast career opportunities available.

The health care careers showcased during the virtual career day included medical assistants, radiology technologists, nursing, nutrition services, laboratory services, respiratory therapy, sterile processing, surgical technicians and environmental services. Throughout the event, Kansas high school students heard first-hand from Kansas health care professionals across the state who explained what training is required to perform their function, but also why they believe their career choice is rewarding.

Each year, KHA conducts the Kansas Workforce Survey to gather information regarding the vacancy and turnover rates for various health care positions employed by Kansas hospitals. This year, the results underscored the top in-demand roles in Kansas hospitals. The health care professions that reported the highest vacancy rates included licensed practical nurses (28 percent), sterile processing technicians (22 percent), staff nurses (21 percent), and respiratory therapists (21 percent). Other health care fields that reported a high need included medical laboratory technicians, nurse assistants and CT technologists. To learn more about the statewide results of the Kansas Workforce Survey, you can access it on the [KHA website](#).

KHA also leaned into the area of the health care workforce during the recent round of KHA District Meetings. Information was shared on the new health care apprenticeship opportunities made available throughout Kansas. The apprenticeship program is a terrific way to engage and assist interested individuals in developing a career in health care. As you are considering these opportunities in your community, don't forget to take advantage of the multiple scholarship opportunities available through the Kansas Promise Act, Kansas Nursing Service Scholarship and the Rural Opportunity Zone Programs.

To meet the health care workforce needs of our state, we will need to continue to explore creative approaches and ideas to promote and support our industry. If you weren't able to attend the Kansas Health Care Virtual Career Day, videos and resources will soon be posted on the KHA website at www.HappyInHealthCare.org. Thank you again to all of the hospitals that joined the event and partnered with local students to open the door to a rewarding career in health care!

--Chad Austin

Open Letter from Physicians on KanCare Expansion

The Kansas Hospital Association, along with more than 125 organizations and leaders across the state, form the Alliance for a Healthy Kansas. We are currently working to recruit signatures for an [open letter to policymakers](#) in support of KanCare expansion. The letter came about in response to the desire of several physician members of the Alliance network to use their unique voice to help break the logjam on KanCare policy progress.

As KHA members know, low-wage working Kansans are falling through the cracks when it comes to access to health care. This causes real harm to the individual, their family and the physicians and other providers who care for them. Fortunately, there is a solution to this problem: KanCare expansion. Expansion would extend eligibility for KanCare to adults earning up to 138 percent of the federal poverty level and the majority of the cost would be paid by the federal government. Expansion would close the coverage gap and provide coverage to an estimated 150,000 Kansans.

The Alliance for a Healthy Kansas will present an open letter from physicians to the legislature at the end of April. The letter is open to signatures from practicing physicians, medical students and retired physicians. Please [share or sign this letter from physicians](#) by Monday, April 24.

Thank you.

--Cindy Samuelson

Professional Develop for Executive Assistants – May 5

Executive assistants can hone their professional skills at the Executive Assistant Conference on Friday, May 5, at [The DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Wichita Airport](#), in Wichita. Learn more on how you can improve your communication and interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, succeed against the odds, and what makes a great EA. Join the breakout sessions to receive answers to your specific questions from your peers. You will also receive resources, tools, networking and inspiration for efficiently and creatively keeping your facility organized.



or call (785) 233-7436

--Susan Pattie

HIMSS Kansas Chapter Cybersecurity Conference – May 11-12

The [2023 KSHIMSS Chapter](#) Conference will be held May 11 and 12, at the [Drury Broadview](#) in Wichita. This year's conference offers a unique opportunity for Kansas health care information technology professionals to connect with others facing similar challenges in securing our facilities against ongoing cyber threats.



--Sally Othmer

340B Regulatory Update Webinar – May 24

The regulatory environment for 340B pharmacy is in a constant state of change, requiring eligible entities to be nimble and disciplined in the management of their program. Navigating the current ecosystem of 340B pricing limitations created by Big Pharma requires an understanding of the current regulatory environment.

The Kansas Health Service Corporation, along with its 340B Partner SUNRx, is hosting a [free webinar](#) on Wednesday, May 24. This webinar will provide insights to support decisions that position your entity to maintain a compliant and optimized 340B pharmacy program. The main presenter will be Amanda Nagrotsky, senior legal counsel, at 340B Health. Nagrotsky will share insights on the current regulatory environment of 340B pharmacy program.



--Steve Poage

KAHCC Spring Conference and Emerald Awards Presentation – June 1-2

Registration for the 2023 Kansas Association of Health Care Communicators Spring Conference and Emerald Awards presentation is now open! Don't delay getting registered for the conference, June 1-2, at the [Bluemont Hotel](#) in Manhattan. The hotel room block ends Tuesday, May 2.

The KAHCC Board has assembled a captivating slate of guest speakers while providing you the opportunity to network with health care marketing and communications peers from across the state. Along with showcasing KAHCC member achievements over the past year through the Emerald Awards, the event includes an evening activity at the Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art at Kansas State University, followed by dinner at Union Station by JP's. Event and registration details are included in the attached conference brochure.

Not in your budget to attend the conference? Scholarships are available! The KAHCC scholarships will be awarded to up to four current KAHCC members and one new member based on a lottery drawing from those members who complete and return the [scholarship application](#).

Please share the [conference brochure](#) and [membership materials](#) with other marketing and communication professionals you might know. If you have any questions about the conference, you can contact KAHCC Board president and conference coordinator [Katie Wagner](#).

The KAHCC Board looks forward to seeing you in Manhattan!

--*Shelby Stacey*

Ambetter – an ACA Marketplace Option – Causes Confusion with Members and Providers

Ambetter released an ACA Marketplace option that required members to utilize a virtual provider. If they preferred to utilize an in-person provider, the member was required to submit paperwork for approval. The plan was very confusing to both members and providers. Many providers were left with a large number of denials and lost charges. After multiple inquiries and meetings, Ambetter acknowledged that the plan was not rolled out appropriately and has left many members and providers confused about the benefit.

Effective immediately, Ambetter will not reject any claims for a lack of a referral to an in-person provider. Ambetter plans to reprocess and accept all previously denied claims with this specific Marketplace product.

Ambetter apologizes for all issues this has caused. If you have other issues you specifically would like to address with Ambetter, they want to hear from you. Please email [Mark Hillix](#), Centene, and [Kathy Ripley-Hake](#), Sunflower Health Plan, as well as carbon copy [Shannan Flach](#) on any communication.

If you have any questions, please contact [Shannan Flach](#) at (785) 233-7436.

--Shannan Flach

Podcast Reveals How Dogs Can Create Safer Environment for Hospitals

Have you been listening to the Kansas Hospital Association's podcast [Plains Spoken](#)? If not, we encourage you to do so. We tackle timely issues with a variety of guests including hospital and industry representatives, legislators, and health care experts. New episodes go live each month.

Dogs can be a physical and psychological deterrent in many instances. In hospital settings, dogs are a protection measure that calms situations and helps de-escalate tensions. Mark Bosque, president and founder of K9 X-Factor, shares how they supply and train dogs for individual hospitals to create safer environments. We encourage you to listen to the [podcast](#).

--Shelby Stacey

KAFP Offers Education Opportunity – May 4-5

Join the Kansas Academy of Family Physicians for their [annual Fam Med Forward conference](#), happening May 4 and 5 at the [Wichita Marriott](#).

The KAFP's professional development committee has assembled a [list of timely topics](#) for the conference and 14.25 hours of high-quality CME is planned. [Topics](#) will provide essential training on some of the most pressing issues that family physicians face in their clinics like opioid response, pediatric mental health, community health trends and more. Participants will gain insights from colleagues' experiences while remaining current on the latest developments in their areas of expertise. Plus you can check out KAFP Foundation's annual social event – Luau on the Lanai, which calls for casual dress in tropical-inspired wear.

Early bird registration ends April 21.

[CLICK HERE
TO REGISTER](#)

--Cindy Samuelson

FDA Authorizes Additional COVID Booster Dose for People Over 65

The Food and Drug Administration [announced](#) this week that it has amended the emergency use authorizations of the [Moderna](#) and [Pfizer-BioNTech](#) COVID-19 bivalent mRNA vaccines to simplify the vaccination schedule for most individuals. The FDA action includes authorizing the current bivalent vaccines to be used for all doses administered to individuals 6 months of age and older, including for an additional dose or doses for certain populations. The monovalent Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines are no longer authorized for use in the United States. This change does not affect Novavax and Janssen COVID-19 vaccinations (both of which are monovalent). All remaining Janssen doses in the country expire May 6, 2023. Highlights of the FDA amendment include:

- Most individuals, depending on age, previously vaccinated with a monovalent COVID-19 vaccine who have not yet received a dose of a bivalent vaccine may receive a single dose of a bivalent vaccine.
- Most individuals who have already received a single dose of the bivalent vaccine are not currently eligible for another dose. The FDA has indicated the agency intends to make decisions about future vaccination after receiving recommendations on the fall strain composition at an FDA advisory committee in June.
- Individuals 65 years of age and older who have received a single dose of a bivalent vaccine may receive one additional dose at least four months following their initial bivalent dose.
- Most individuals with certain types of immunocompromise who have received a bivalent COVID-19 vaccine may receive a single additional dose of a bivalent COVID-19 vaccine at least two months following a dose of a bivalent COVID-19 vaccine, and additional doses may be administered at the discretion of, and at intervals determined by, their healthcare provider. However, for immunocompromised individuals six months through four years of age, eligibility for additional doses will depend on the vaccine previously received.
- Most unvaccinated individuals may receive a single dose of a bivalent vaccine, rather than multiple doses of the original monovalent mRNA vaccines.
- Children six months through five years of age who are unvaccinated may receive a two-dose series of the Moderna bivalent vaccine (six months through five years of age) OR a three-dose series of the Pfizer-BioNTech bivalent vaccine (six months through four years of age). Children who are five years of age may receive two doses of the Moderna bivalent vaccine or a single dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech bivalent vaccine.
- Children six months through five years of age who have received one, two or three doses of a monovalent COVID-19 vaccine may receive a bivalent vaccine, but the number of doses that they receive will depend on the vaccine and their vaccination history.

In June, the FDA is planning to hold a meeting of its Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee to discuss the strain composition of the COVID-19 vaccines for fall of 2023 (similar to the annual influenza vaccine) Once the specific strains are selected for the COVID-19 vaccines, the FDA expects manufacturers to make updated formulations of the vaccines for availability this fall.

--Karen Braman

CEO Staffing Changes

The Kansas Hospital Association would like to inform you of the latest member hospital administrator changes since our last hospital list printout in March:

- Melissa Hall, interim chief executive officer | chief operating officer, Susan B. Allen Memorial Hospital, El Dorado
- James Blackwell, president and chief executive officer, Clara Barton Medical Center, Hoisington (leaving in June)

- Amber Williams, chief executive officer, Southwest Medical Center, Liberal
- Dawn Unruh, MSN-NE, PMC-HA, RN, chief executive officer, Meade District Hospital/Artesian Valley Health System, Meade
- Heidi Pickerell, chief executive officer, F.W. Huston Medical Center, Winchester

Our [Kansas Hospitals and Health-Related Facilities list](#) is available on the KHA website in PDF (Adobe Acrobat Reader format) at www.kha-net.org. A username and password are required. Click on Kansas Hospitals, CEO Directories, Kansas Hospital List and Kansas Hospitals and Health-Related Facilities List. Please contact [Cheryl Carson](#) at (785) 233-7436 if you have updates and provide the start date of the new administrator/chief executive officer, picture, birthday and press release/bio.

--Cheryl Carson

Federal and National News

PREP Act Amendments

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [announced](#) on April 14 the agency's intent to amend the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act related to vaccines, tests and treatments for COVID-19. Primarily, these amendments center around pharmacists retaining the ability to provide COVID-19 vaccines and testing, regardless of the emergency declaration, through December 2024. The PREP Act also contains liability protections for providers administering COVID-19 vaccines, tests and treatments.

Fentanyl Combined with Xylazine Designated as an Emerging Threat

The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy has [designated](#) fentanyl combined with xylazine as an emerging threat to the United States. Xylazine is a non-opioid tranquilizer approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for veterinary use but not human use. Xylazine combined with fentanyl is being sold illicitly across the country and is associated with fatal overdoses and severe morbidity. ONDCP announced it is convening an interagency working group to inform the development of a national response plan.

EUA Available for New COVID-19 Therapeutic

The Food and Drug Administration issued [emergency use authorization](#) for [Gohibic](#) (vilobelimab), which is an injection for the treatment of COVID-19. This therapeutic is for hospitalized adult patients with COVID-19 who are on a ventilator or receiving ECMO. Gohibic can be given as many as six times throughout the treatment period. Fact sheets for [health care providers](#), as well as [patients and caregivers](#), are available.

OCR Announces End to HIPAA Enforcement Discretion

The Office for Civil Rights [announced](#) it will cease exercising enforcement discretion for certain violations of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act when the COVID-19 PHE expires on Thursday, May 11. During the pandemic, OCR published four notifications describing how it would waive enforcement of HIPAA violations for community-based COVID-19 testing sites, telehealth communications, disclosures of PHI to business associates, and online or web-based scheduling applications for COVID-19 vaccinations.

OCR is allowing a 90-day transition period following the expiration of the waivers for providers to come into full compliance with HIPAA rules associated with these topics.

Before You Go ...

- HRSA is hosting a [webinar](#) at 1 p.m. Wednesday, May 10, to provide details on the following funding opportunities available to nurses, students and graduates.
 - [Nursing Training Grants](#)
 - [School-Administered Nursing Loans](#)
 - [Scholarship Programs](#)
 - [Loan Repayment Programs](#)
- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services [released](#) its Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program Beneficiary Profile for 2023. The [report](#) and [infographic](#) provide information on enrollment, expenditures, characteristics and health status of beneficiaries by state.
- According to a [study](#) released by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, the nursing shortage crisis will continue without concerted action. The study found that an estimated 97,000 RNs left the workforce during the past two years due to stress, burnout and retirements, and another 610,388 reported an intent to leave during the next five years.
- *MLN Connects Provider eNews* [updates](#):
 - [Billing Medicare Part B for Insulin with New Limits on Patient Monthly Coinsurance](#)
 - [Medical Review & Compliance: Respond to Additional Documentation Requests](#)
 - [Hospice: Comparative Billing Report in April](#)