



***KHA's Current Report***  
**May 23, 2025**

**President's Perspective – Honoring Our Nation's Heroes on Memorial Day**

Memorial Day is marked by various activities, including visiting cemeteries and memorials, attending parades and participating in community events. It's also a time for personal reflection and remembering the fallen.

Memorial Day is observed on the last Monday of May; this year, it is on May 26. This federal holiday is dedicated to honoring and mourning the men and women who have died while serving in the U.S. military. The holiday, which was originally called Decoration Day, was first observed on May 30, 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery. According to the VA, May 30 was picked as flowers would be in full bloom nationwide at that time.

Memorial Day and Veterans Day honor the sacrifices of innumerable individuals who sacrificed themselves to preserve the freedoms all Americans enjoy. Memorial Day remembers those who gave their lives, and Veterans Day honors all who served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Did you know that Memorial Day is one of the few days flags are ordered to fly at half-staff and then full-staff? At sunrise, anyone flying a flag should raise the flag briskly to full-staff, then slowly lower the flag to half-staff. This honors the men and women who have fallen in the line of duty. At noon, the flag should be briskly raised to full-staff. This is to salute all of those who have served.

Another tradition is the national moment of silence. At 3:00 p.m. local time on Memorial Day, Americans are asked to pause for one minute to pay tribute to America's fallen soldiers. This became official after the passage of the National Moment of Remembrance Act in 2000.

Memorial Day is also seen as the unofficial start of the summer season, often marked by barbecues and outdoor gatherings. I hope you have a meaningful and memorable Memorial Day weekend, as we honor the courage, sacrifice and enduring legacy of the men and women who gave their lives in service to their country. May we remember all those who have fallen.

*--Chad Austin*

### **Provider Tax Update**

As of Wednesday, May 22, the state had not received approval of the waiver request to increase the provider tax to six percent, or the preprint to allow the expenditure of the funds generated by the increase. On Tuesday, May 20, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment sent a letter to all of the tax-paying hospitals indicating the May 31, 2025, tax due date is suspended until the state receives approval from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. They will send out a notification to hospitals when the approval is received.

The continued delay in approval reflects the backlog of requests at CMS. CMS continues to ask technical questions of KDHE to help them understand the landscape of Kansas hospitals, which means our request is currently under review. Unfortunately, this is likely to delay the 2025 Q1 Medicaid quarterly enhancement payment until after July 1, 2025.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions!

*--Audrey Dunkel*

### **Legislation Reintroduced that Streamlines Prior Authorizations and Improves Care for Seniors**

This week, the Kansas Hospital Association applauded U.S. Senator Roger Marshall, MD (R-Kansas) for reintroducing the Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act. This bipartisan legislation, at zero cost to taxpayers, takes long-overdue steps to modernize the broken prior authorization process in Medicare Advantage.

Nearly three out of four Medicare Advantage enrollees are subject to unnecessary delays because of prior authorization, resulting in multiple faxes or phone calls from hospitals and clinicians, which takes precious time away from delivering care. For Kansas hospitals, especially those already strained by workforce shortages and tight margins, these barriers have forced the hiring of additional administrative staff just to manage prior authorization-related paperwork.

This legislation would significantly reduce these burdens by establishing a standardized electronic prior authorization process, ensuring timely approvals and improving transparency. Most importantly, it enables hospitals and clinicians to focus their time and resources on patient care. In a press release this week, KHA shared this:

"We've long supported common-sense reforms to prior authorization, and this bill is a strong step in the right direction," said Chad Austin, KHA president and CEO. "Hospitals across Kansas have been forced to devote significant resources to deal with unnecessary delays and denials—resources that should be focused on patients. We're grateful to Senator Marshall for championing this effort to protect seniors' access to timely, high-quality care while easing avoidable burdens on hospitals and providers."

The bill will help hospitals and physicians better serve and improve care for the more than [196,000 Kansans](#) enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan. By reducing unnecessary wait times and denials, this legislation will help ensure patients receive care when needed, not after delays that can worsen outcomes.

The bill's strong bipartisan support, with more than 45 cosponsors in the Senate, underscores the broad agreement that the current prior authorization system needs reform. KHA encourages Congress to swiftly pass this legislation and provide meaningful relief for providers and patients.

The Improving Seniors' Timely Access to Care Act would:

- Establish an electronic prior authorization process for Medicare Advantage plans, including standardizing transactions and clinical attachments.
- Increase transparency around Medicare Advantage prior authorization requirements and their use.
- Clarify HHS's authority to establish timeframes for e-prior authorization requests, including expedited determinations, real-time decisions for routinely approved items and services, and other prior authorization requests.
- Expand beneficiary protections to improve enrollee experiences and outcomes.
- Require the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and other agencies, to report to Congress on program integrity efforts and other ways to improve the e-prior authorization process further.
- Result in zero cost to American taxpayers.

The full text of the legislation can be found [here](#).

--Jaron Caffrey

### **Rock Star Hospital Recognition**

The Kansas Hospital Association wishes to recognize the following hospitals that met their 2025 [KHA Political Action Committee](#) goals and answered the call to *Grow Your Giving* by meeting their 2025 Stretch goal.

Congratulations to the following hospitals:

- Caldwell Regional Medical Center, Caldwell
- Gove County Medical Center, Quinter
- Grisell Memorial Hospital District #1, Ransom
- Meade District Hospital/Artesian Valley Health System, Meade
- The University of Kansas Health System Great Bend Campus, Great Bend

The following hospitals have also met their 2025 initial goal and are working toward their Stretch goal through the rest of the year, including:

- Citizens Health, Colby
- Greenwood County Hospital, Eureka
- Holton Community Hospital, Holton
- Jewell County Hospital, Mankato
- Kingman Healthcare Center, Kingman
- Minneola Healthcare, Minneola

- Mitchell County Hospital Health Systems, Beloit
- Nemaha Valley Community Hospital, Seneca
- Rice Community Health, Lyons
- Smith County Memorial Hospital, Smith Center
- Wilson Medical Center, Neodesha

Your hospital can join these rock stars by donating to the KHA-PAC at any time by visiting: [Donate to the KHA-PAC](#).

Make plans now to join us for any of the upcoming KHA-PAC events in 2025, and share this information with your staff:

- Join us at the [Behind the Scenes Tour of Allen Fieldhouse and Fields and Ivy Brewery](#) on July 31 in Lawrence. ([Individual Ticket](#)) ([Pair of Tickets](#)).
- Participate as a hole sponsor and team, an individual golfer, or a fan that joins for lunch during our KHA [Golf Scramble](#) on Aug. 11 in Salina. ([Hole Sponsor](#)) ([Individual Golfer](#)) ([Fan](#)).
- Enjoy a [Poker Run at Boot Hill Museum](#) on Sept. 22 in Dodge City. ([Individual Ticket](#)) ([Pair of Tickets](#)).
- Participate in the KHA-PAC activities at the KHA Annual Convention, Sept. 3-5 in Wichita, by:
  - Bringing someone to join you at the KHA-PAC Breakfast on Sept. 4 to hear speaker Pete Davis, author and director of the documentary *Join or Die*.
  - Donating to the Wine and Bourbon Pull.
  - Donating a Silent Auction item.

Sign up today for the KHA-PAC at the KHA Annual Convention: [HERE](#).

For questions, please do not hesitate to contact Tara Mays at [tmays@kha-net.org](mailto:tmays@kha-net.org).

--Tara Mays

### **Financial Analysis Impact Reports Now Located in HIDI Analytic Advantage**

The Kansas Hospital Association provides member hospitals with financial impact reports on Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' legislative, regulatory, quality and wage index changes. In the past, these reports were individually emailed to hospital CEOs and CFOs. However, email systems are increasing the security of these attachments, which is blocking many of the reports sent. Because of this new development, analysis reports will be placed in the HIDI Analytics Advantage File Repository, requiring each individual to log in to retrieve their report. An email will be sent to all hospital CEOs and CFOs when a new report is available. Please [click this link](#) to access the HIDI Analytics Advantage website. If you need help logging in, don't hesitate to get in touch with Dee Lewis at [dlewis@kha-net.org](mailto:dlewis@kha-net.org).

--Shannan Flach

### **Last Call - Nominations Due June 1 for KHA Awards**

Kansas Hospital Association staff encourages hospitals to carve out a few minutes next week to nominate an individual for a KHA award. Nominate a health care employee or a board member who has made a significant contribution. Nominate a team that has impacted recruitment and/or retention. Nominate an individual who has provided a lifetime of service, or one who has made a visionary contribution or one who has advocated for the work we do every day. We need your nominations in our [online awards portal](#) by June 1.

[Heart of Health Care Award](#) – The award recognizes and honors the excellence of health care workers statewide. Previously, this award was called the Health Care Worker of the Year Award. All nominated employees (one employee from every hospital) will be recognized by KHA for making a significant contribution to the betterment of their hospital.

[Trustee of the Year Award](#) – The award recognizes and honors a hospital board member from each facility who is a leader, gives back to the community and routinely goes beyond the call of duty. KHA members are encouraged to recognize a trustee who has served with distinction and made significant contributions to the betterment of their hospital and community.

[Workforce Strategies Award](#) – The award recognizes a team of employees, providers or volunteers who worked collaboratively to make a significant contribution to the well-being, retention, or recruitment of health care workers at their facility(s) or in Kansas.

[Charles S. Billings Award](#) – The award recognizes a hospital leader for his or her lifetime of service and continuing contribution to the health care of Kansas. This is the top honor given by KHA. This award was established in 1971 to honor KHA's first president, Charles. S. Billings' dedication and years of service to Kansans.

[Donald A. Wilson Visionary Award](#) – The award recognizes hospital-related individuals who have made outstanding, innovative contributions to health care delivery, health care financing or initiatives that improve the health and clinical outcomes of their community. This award was established in 2007 to honor long-time KHA president and CEO Donald A. Wilson's dedication and years of service to Kansans.

[Distinguished Health Care Advocate Award](#) – The award honors individuals, organizations or groups that have demonstrated their commitment to health care through participation in the public domain. This award allows members of KHA to recognize those who work on our behalf from outside our ranks.

Nominations are due June 1 in our [online awards portal](#). Learn more about KHA awards [online](#).

--Cindy Samuelson

### **Digital Version of the 2025 KHA Membership Directory Is Now Available**

The printed version of the *2025 KHA Membership Directory* is in the printing process and will be distributed to members soon. Until then, we are happy to provide members with a link to the digital version of this publication for your use. To access the digital version, click on the link and enter the password KHAMember. The [digital version of the KHA Membership Directory](#) is an exact replica of the hard copy directory. Both the hard copy version and the digital version are current as of May 12, 2025.

As a reminder, the [online membership directory](#) is updated in real-time, so you always have the latest member organization executive staff information at your fingertips. The KHA Membership Directory is a member-only benefit, so both the digital and online membership directories are password-protected. For the online KHA Membership Directory, in addition to entering your KHA website personal username and password, you will need to enter the username KHAMember and @KHA2021 for the password.

If you haven't registered for your personal username and password, just [complete the requested information](#). Your information will have to be verified by KHA staff (a confirmation email will be sent to you) before you will be able to access members-only portions of the website. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at (785) 233-7436.

--Jan Fenwick

### **Federal and National News**

#### **FDA Approves Novavax COVID-19 Vaccine**

The Food and Drug Administration recently [approved](#) Novavax's COVID-19 vaccine for adults ages 65 and older and individuals 12 through 64 years old with at least one of the underlying health condition putting them at [high risk](#) for severe illness.

The Novavax COVID-19 vaccine uses a more traditional protein-based technology, which differentiates it from the mRNA vaccines from Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna. [Comirnaty](#) (Pfizer-BioNTech) and [SPIKEVAX](#) (Moderna) remain available under emergency use authorization for children as young as six months.

#### **CMS Issues Proposed Rule to Close Health Care-Related Tax Loophole**

On May 15, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services released a [proposed rule](#) to address a loophole in a regulatory statistical test applied to state proposals for Medicaid tax waivers. The test is designed to ensure, as required by statute, that non-uniform or non-broad-based health care-related taxes, authorized under a waiver, are generally redistributive.

The proposed provisions would better implement the statutory requirements by adding additional safeguards to ensure that tax waivers that exploit the loophole — because they pass the current statistical test but are not generally redistributive — are not approvable.

The rule has a 60-day comment period.

**CMS Issues CY 2025 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule Correction Notice**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services issued a calendar year 2025 Medicare Physician Fee Schedule [correction notice](#). The corrections are mainly typographical errors.

***MLN Connects Provider eNews Available***

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services issued the following [updates](#) to *MLN Connects Provider eNews*:

- [Discarded Drugs: Get Updated Lists](#)
- [Medicare Provider Payment & Utilization Public Use Files: Annual Update](#)
- [Medicare Fee-for-Service Geographic Variation Public Use Files & Interactive Dashboard: Annual Update](#)
- [CMS Fast Facts: Annual Update](#)