



KHA's Current Report
May 22, 2026

President's Perspective – Honor the Service Members and Caregivers Who Have Kept Our Nation Strong and Safe

As we prepare to celebrate the Memorial Day weekend, which for many is the unofficial start to summer, I am reminded it is important to remember what this day is all about.

Memorial Day is to remember and honor those who have died in our nation's service. In total, more than 1.3 million U.S. military personnel have given their lives in service to their country since 1775. Caregivers, physicians, surgeons, nurses, medics, corpsmen and others — have stood with our armed forces, risking and sometimes losing their own lives in the process. The connection between hospitals, caregivers and Memorial Day underscores the enduring legacy of service and sacrifice in health care. Like members of the military, health care workers have often put themselves in harm's way to care for others, especially during times of crisis and conflict.

Did you know, throughout the years, Memorial Day has expanded to honor not only fallen soldiers but also military medical personnel who have sacrificed their lives in service to their country? Instead of weapons, their hands held bandages, syringes, medicine and the tools of healing, but their ultimate sacrifice was no less.

I hope you will join me in remembering and honoring the courageous and heroic men and women of our armed forces who gave their lives in the service of our country and what it stands for. Our respect and gratitude for their sacrifice are an appropriate way to ensure their loss is not forgotten and their spirit and patriotism live on in the hearts of their families and communities.

Today, our men and women in uniform stand ready, as they always have, to defend our freedoms and help safeguard our future. So, as you prepare for a Memorial Day weekend marked by barbeques, parades, family and community events, I encourage you to take a moment to also reflect on the devotion of the individuals Memorial Day honors. May we remember all those who have fallen.

--Chad Austin

Developing Responsible AI Practices: A Two-Part Webinar Series – Jun. 12 and 30

Having an AI policy is crucial because it provides a framework for managing risks, ensuring ethical deployment and fostering trust in rapidly evolving environments. Join Healthworks for two interactive webinars on AI policy development. The June 12 session will cover foundational

topics, including key AI concepts and terminology. The June 30 session will build on that information and provide a comprehensive overview of AI management and implementation. Both webinars will take place from noon to 1:30 p.m. and will be led by experts from the Kansas Health Institute.



Click to
Register



--Susan Holmes

KHA Wishes Tara Mays Well in New Opportunity

Kansas Hospital Association staffer Tara Mays has decided to take on a new professional opportunity and will be leaving her role with KHA, effective May 29. Tara has done a tremendous job in her role as vice president of state government relations. Over the past five plus years, Tara has brought creativity and passion to her position. We will definitely miss her outgoing, engaging and talented personality. As for her next endeavor, Tara has accepted a general management position for a nuclear energy company. This opportunity will reconnect her with her passion for the utilities sector. We wish Tara success with her next adventure. As for KHA, we will be implementing an interim transition plan as we work on permanently filling the position. In the meantime, please feel free to reach out to me or others on the KHA team for state advocacy questions or needs.

--Chad Austin

Upcoming Webinar Explores Long-Term Care Risk and Documentation Challenges

KAMMCO members are invited to join an upcoming Lunch-n-Learn webinar focused on risk management and medical malpractice defense in long-term care settings.

Scheduled for Wednesday, May 27, from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m., the webinar, [Defending Long Term Care Facility Pressure Injury Claims](#), will feature an expert-led panel discussion with experienced defense attorneys who have successfully defended long-term care facilities and organizations in medical malpractice litigation.

Expert Panel to Discuss Long-Term Care Liability Risks

Drawing on real-world cases, the panelists will examine some of the most common risk areas impacting long-term care organizations today, with a particular focus on the role documentation plays in defending claims.

The discussion will explore why clear, timely and consistent documentation is often one of the strongest defenses in medical malpractice cases and how proactive risk management practices can help protect organizations long before a claim reaches the courtroom.

Featured panelists include:

- Matthew Merrill, JD - Sandberg Phoenix
- Elizabeth Moeller, JD, MHA - Sandberg Phoenix

Practical Guidance for Health Care Teams

This webinar is designed for all members of the healthcare team and will provide practical, applied insights that participants can apply immediately within their organizations.

Topics will include:

- Long-term care risk trends
- Documentation best practices
- Strategies for strengthening defensibility in high-risk situations

Register Today

KAMMCO members can learn more and register online through the event page:

<https://www.kammco.com/events>.

Or [register directly via Zoom](#).

--*Jacqueline Grunau*

Countdown to Kickoff: 2026 FIFA World Cup HCID Preparedness

As we finalize preparations for the FIFA World Cup 2026™ along with everyday readiness for high-consequence infectious diseases, the National Emerging Special Pathogens Training and Education Center is providing an educational webinar at no cost. Go to [Webinar Registration](#) for more information and to sign up. This NETEC webinar, with practical strategies to enhance preparedness for the current emerging threats, will take place on Wednesday, May 27 at 11 a.m.

The [HCID Preparedness Webinar](#) is designed for health care leaders, emergency managers, infection prevention professionals, clinicians and public health partners. Continuing education credit (CME/CNE) will be provided.

--*Larry Van Der Wege*

Symposium to Bring Regional Health Finance Leaders to Kansas City Region Aug. 3-4

The Kansas City region will host hospital finance, reimbursement and managed care leaders for the Midwest Managed Care Symposium on Monday, Aug. 3, and Tuesday, Aug. 4. The two-day gathering is designed to help hospital teams navigate a rapidly changing payer landscape and strengthen financial sustainability amid growing complexity.

This forum for collaboration and shared learning is supported by the state hospital associations in Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas. As payer dynamics shift because of regulatory changes, price transparency requirements and evolving reimbursement models, the symposium offers timely insights and practical tools for hospital leaders responsible for financial performance and payer relationships.

The agenda will feature sessions on payer strategies, price transparency, federal policy updates and financial experience in health care. To foster candid discussion and meaningful peer exchange, attendance is limited to hospital staff. Vendors and consultants may participate only as invited speakers.

Attendees are encouraged to [register early](#). A [room block](#) is available at the Hyatt Place Kansas City/Lenexa City Center. Reserve your room by Monday, July 13, using group code G-KSHA.
--Shannan Flach

Updated We CARE We VOTE Toolkit Available

The 2026 We CARE We VOTE [digital toolkit](#) is available for download. It includes social media messaging and graphics, template letters for employees and trustees, templates for press releases and internal newsletters, posters and more. We urge you to roll out these assets to encourage your employees to vote in the 2026 election.

For more voting resources for the 2026 Kansas Primary Election on Aug. 4 and the General Election on Nov. 3, go to WeCareWeVote.org.

The [We CARE We VOTE campaign](#) inspires hospital employees to get involved. By learning about the candidates' positions on issues that affect Kansas hospitals and the patients we serve, you can make informed decisions when casting your ballot – and help empower others to do the same.
--Shelby Stacy

Hantavirus and Ebola Outbreak Update

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment issued an [update](#) on May 20, to provide information to clinicians about testing recommendations for patients with suspected hantavirus infection. The HAN also provided an update on the current Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda.

Concern for the outbreak is heightened with the upcoming FIFA World Cup 2026™ set to begin in June. Obtaining a travel history early in the patient encounter is key. KDHE provides several resources on their [Travel and Health](#) website page. Also, the Center for Disease Control provides a [Guide for Clinicians Evaluating an Ill Person for a Special Pathogen](#) as a one-page resource. Make sure your care teams know to call the KDHE Epidemiology Hotline at (877) 427-7317, Option 5, if they have any suspicions or concerns.
--Larry Van Der Wege

KHA Award Nominations Due June 1

The time is now to submit your nominations for the six annual Kansas Hospital Association awards. Help us honor those who have gone above and beyond the call of duty. Make your nominations in our [online awards portal](#) by June 1. We encourage members to make nominations for the following awards that will be presented at the KHA Convention in September:

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.

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.

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.

(New) Board of the Year Award – The award recognizes and honors hospital boards of directors who are leaders, give back to the community and routinely go beyond the call of duty.

Heart of Health Care Award – The award recognizes and honors the excellence of health care workers statewide.

Workforce Strategies Award – The award recognizes a team of employees who work collaboratively to make a significant contribution to the wellbeing, retention or recruitment of health care workers.

Thank you for making your nominations by June 1 in our [online awards portal](#). Learn more about KHA awards and previous winners [online](#).

Updated eCQM Specifications and Implementation Resources for 2027 Reporting/Performance Period

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has posted the electronic clinical quality measure specifications for the 2027 reporting/performance period for the hospital-inpatient, hospital-outpatient and eligible clinician quality reporting programs. CMS updates the specifications annually to align with current clinical guidelines and code systems, ensuring they remain relevant and actionable in clinical care settings. Measures will not be eligible for 2027 reporting unless and until they are proposed and finalized through notice-and-comment rulemaking for each applicable program.

Where to Find the Updated eCQM Specifications and Implementation Resources

The updated eCQM specifications are available on the [Hospital - Inpatient](#), [Hospital - Outpatient](#) and [Eligible Clinician pages](#) of the [eCQI Resource Center](#) under the 2027 reporting/performance period. Other resources, including the Guide for Reading eCQMs, eCQM Logic and Implementation Guidance, tables of eCQMs and technical release notes, are also available on the eCQM Resources tabs on the Hospital - Inpatient, Hospital - Outpatient and Eligible Clinician pages. In addition, the [Telehealth Guidance for eCQMs for Eligible Clinician 2027 Quality Reporting](#) and the [Eligible Clinician Table of eCQMs](#), which address the allowance of telehealth encounters for eligible clinician eCQMs are posted. The [eCQM Data Element Repository](#), which provides all data elements associated with eCQMs in CMS quality reporting

programs to improve clarity for eCQM implementation, will be updated in June to reflect data element updates.

--Terry Siek

Health Care Stabilization Fund Board Recap

The Health Care Stabilization Fund Board of Governors met for their quarterly meeting on Thursday, May 14. One of the agenda items was to act on setting the CY2027 surcharge rates. The board received actuarial information to review year-over-year claims activity compared to the surcharge rates and revenue generated. The information is also broken down by each of the thirty provider classes in the fund. Overall, hospitals have made gains over the last two years in reducing the gap between the surcharge rate and claims activity, but a gap remains. The HCSF Board approved CY2027 rate changes that includes a 12 percent increase for Class 17 (Medical Care Facilities), which will take the hospital surcharge percentage from 21.2 percent to 23.7 percent.

As a reminder, the [Kansas Health Care Stabilization Fund](#) provides excess professional liability coverage for health care providers. The 11-member Board of Governors has statutory oversight of the fund. Hospitals are represented on the Board by Carrie Lutz, CEO from Holton Community Hospital, Bruce Witt, Kansas Chief Advocacy Officer from Ascension Via Christi Health, Inc. and Larry Van Der Wege with KHA.

--Larry Van Der Wege

Share Your Expertise at KHIC 2026

Do you have insights, innovations, or experiences that can help shape a stronger, healthier Kansas? The Kansas Health Opportunities Coalition invites you to submit a speaking proposal for the 2026 Kansas Health Impact Conference on Oct. 29 in Topeka. They are seeking speakers who can lead meaningful conversations focused on advancing access, strengthening connections and improving health outcomes for all Kansans. The deadline to submit a speaker proposal is May 22, 2026. Submit your proposal online at kfmc.org/khic-call-for-speakers.

The Kansas Hospital Association is a member of the Kansas Health Opportunities Coalition. The coalition is a group of organizations working together to provide tools and resources to help Kansans lead a healthy life.

--Jennifer Findley

HRSA Funding Opportunities

The Health Resources and Services Administration has several open notices of funding opportunities, including:

- HRSA-26-036 Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) Planning: [Opportunity Listing - Rural Communities Opioid Response Program \(RCORP\)-Planning](#)
- HRSA-26-037 Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) Impact: [Opportunity Listing - Rural Communities Opioid Response Program \(RCORP\)-Impact](#)
- HRSA-26-047 Rural Residency Planning and Development (RRPD) Program: [Opportunity Listing - Rural Residency Planning and Development Program](#)

--Karen Braman

Kratom in Clinical Practice: Preparing for Emerging Kansas Schedule I Legislation

In preparation for recent Kansas legislation that will classify Kratom and its derivative 7-OH as Schedule I controlled substances, the University of Kansas School of Medicine, Wichita Family and Community Medicine is offering a webinar *Kratom in Clinical Practice: Preparing for Emerging Kansas Schedule I Legislation* on Tuesday, June 23, 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. The session is intended to meet 1.5 hours toward the Kansas Board of Healing Arts Category 3 Requirement for licensure. Registration for this virtual course is \$45. REGISTER ONLINE at eeds.com/live/229943

--Karen Braman

A Million Moments for Maternal Mortality Prevention

Registration is open for *A Million Moments for Maternal Mortality Prevention*, a conference hosted by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and partners. Join July 29 and 30 at Sporting Park in Kansas City to explore key drivers of maternal mortality in Kansas, including physical and mental health, substance use and intimate partner violence. Tailored for physicians, clinicians and perinatal professionals, the conference is free to attend and will offer continuing education credits. Visit the [registration page](#) to register and for more information.

--Karen Braman

AHA Toolkit to Improve Community Health

Explore the American Hospital Association's updated [Community Health Assessment Toolkit](#) — a nine-step guide empowering hospitals and health systems to collaborate with communities and strategic partners for effective CHAs and community health needs assessment compliance.

This toolkit reflects the understanding that while CHNA reporting is mandatory for nonprofit hospitals and health systems, the CHA process can benefit all hospitals working to address disparities in health outcomes.

--Karen Braman

Federal and National News

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services [issued](#) the 2027 [notice of benefit and payment parameters](#) for the health insurance exchanges as well as for health insurance issuers, agents, brokers and web-brokers, who represent Affordable Care Act coverage insurance products. The [notice](#) is intended to help strengthen program integrity, improve access to coverage, encourage plan innovation, reduce improper enrollments, help improve consumer income eligibility and verification and expand issuer accountability.