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Sample Questions for Candidates to the Kansas Legislature

General:

- Why do you want to be elected/re-elected to the Kansas Legislature?
- What are the three issues that are the most important to you?

General Health Care in Kansas:

- What is your vision for health care in Kansas and how will you pursue it? What is your view of the role hospitals and health systems play in Kansas?
- What is the single greatest health care challenge facing Kansas today and how do you plan to address it?
- What are the regulatory barriers to transforming health care in Kansas, and how do you plan to address those issues?

KanCare/Medicaid:

- What is your impression of the KanCare program? Are there areas that you would like to see improved under the KanCare program?
- Did you know that Kansas hospitals are required by law to provide emergency and stabilization care to any individual who presents to a hospital emergency room? In addition, Medicaid does not pay Kansas hospitals adequate reimbursement to cover the cost of providing care. Knowing this information, what do you believe the State of Kansas should do to address this issue?
- If Kansas hospitals and health systems continue to be reimbursed for Medicaid at rates significantly below actual cost, how should health care providers make up the difference in order to balance their budgets?
- Kansas businesses are growing increasingly concerned that inadequate payment from public health care programs like Medicaid, combined with other economic pressures, force hospitals to shift costs by charging higher rates to private health plans. This amounts to a “hidden health care tax” on businesses and other private health care consumers. Medicaid payments currently cover approximately 73 percent of hospitals’ total costs and are vulnerable to additional cuts as state revenues fluctuate. What are your ideas for eliminating this cost shift to businesses and other Kansans who purchase private health insurance?

340B:

- Do you believe the savings from the Federal 340B program, that has allowed hospitals, and local health care providers to stretch scarce federal resources should go to pharmaceutical manufacturers or to the hospitals, federally qualified health centers and local pharmacies?

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Expand KanCare:

- If your local community and health care providers urged your support in expanding the KanCare program, would you be willing to advocate for this initiative in the Kansas legislature?

Workforce:

- Kansas is already experiencing a shortage of health care practitioners, especially primary care physicians, physician assistants and advanced practice registered nurses. In the foreseeable future, as the population of Kansas continues to age, even more Kansans will seek health care services. What do you see as the state's role in ensuring an adequate and increasing supply of health care providers?
- Assault and battery of healthcare workers is a continued problem that has a great impact on the industry's ability to attract and retain professionals in the field. Do you support reform that would provide protections for those working on the frontlines in our Kansas hospitals?

Behavioral Health Care:

- Behavioral health services administered by the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services have been significantly challenged the last several years due to overcrowding at state hospitals and a lack of psychiatrists across the state. Treatment is limited because of a severe shortage in psychiatrists and other behavioral health providers. Without expanded KanCare coverage in the state, adults and children with behavioral health and substance abuse problems will have very limited health care resources and treatment options. Due to a severe shortage of inpatient beds for voluntary and involuntary patients, behavioral health patients must seek care in hospital emergency departments. What recommendations would you offer to make Kansas' behavioral health system more effective and efficient (funding, accountability, access, providing insurance coverage, etc.)?

Telemedicine:

- Do you support the use of telemedicine to be able to expand access to care for those that may live in rural areas or have workforce demands that don't allow them to easily attend in-person health care appointments?
- Do you support payment parity to ensure that insurance carriers are adequately reimbursing Kansas health care providers for services performed via telemedicine?

Reducing the Cost of Care:

- In an industry with burdensome regulations, do you believe that we should reform time-consuming processes that provide limited value to overall patient outcomes but increase the overall administrative costs, such as prior authorizations, or insurance demands on how access to medications are obtained?

Health Care Transparency:

- The issue of health care transparency continues to be discussed on a state and federal level. As consumers take more control of their health care needs, the demand for transparency will grow. Do you believe that the state should duplicate federal guidance and levy their own fines for the same compliance standards set and implemented by the federal government?

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