



KHA's Capitol Comments **January 17, 2024**

House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Meets

Yesterday, the House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development, chaired by Representative Sean Tarwater (R-Stillwell), met for the first time this session. The committee heard from Alan Cobb of the Kansas Chamber of Commerce on their CEO survey ([presentation](#)). The committee learned that workforce and tax are top concerns, with property tax being a large tax focus. The Chamber pointed out the number of states with a flat tax structure. Committee members asked about childcare, in addition to other business climate needs, in Kansas.

House Social Services Budget Committee Hears from KDHE

Yesterday, the House Social Services Budget Committee, chaired by Representative Les Mason (R-McPherson), heard from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment on their budget enhancements that are included in the governor's 2024 budget proposal. The proposal includes \$8.0 million cost adjustment factor for Critical Access Hospitals. The committee asked questions about the agency budget enhancement requests and will hear their overall budget presentations later this session.

Senate Public Health and Welfare Hears Palliative Care Presentation

Today, the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee, chaired by Sen. Beverly Gossage (R-Eudora), heard legislation introduced including:

- A bill related to childhood gender assignment procedures by Sen. Mike Thompson (R-Bonner Springs)
- A bill related to the Kansas Health Care Stabilization Fund by Sen. Mark Steffan (R-Hutchinson)
- A patient bill of rights bill by Sen. Mark Steffan (R-Hutchinson)

Next, the committee heard a presentation by Douglas Neal, MPH, Palliative Care; and Karin Porter-Williamson, MD; and Donna Yadrach, MPA, co-chair. The committee received background on the Palliative Care Council, the value of palliative care, the percentage of Medicaid expenditures related to palliative care and workforce shortages compared to increased needs, highlighting:

- There are less than 6,400 palliative medicine physicians in the U.S.
- One palliative care physician to 1,200 people living with serious illness
- One medical oncologist for every 141 people diagnosed with cancer
- rising aging population

Finally, the committee received an overview of 2024 legislative priorities including:

- Added requirements for education and training on palliative care for those working in the field today and those entering the field.
- Enhanced support for unpaid family caregivers
- Funding for a project ECHO Palliative Care Center of Excellence - similar to the Missouri and Texas model
- Create incentive for training by requiring a certain

Committee member Sen. Cindy Holscher (D-Overland Park) asked those presenting about a constituent who had issues with insurance approval for palliative care services and asked for services or guidance the commission might provide. The conferee highlighted a need for payers to see this service the same as they would any other health services.

Senate Financial Institutions

Today, the Senate Financial Institutions and Insurance committee, chaired by Sen. Jeff Longbine (R-Emporia), received a status update on insurance from Kansas Insurance Commissioner Vicki Schmidt. Schmidt highlighted lowering licensure fees and deciding not to charge assessment this year. The commissioner and staff discussed education provided to the public and insurance industry, as well as work the office provides to consumers. Schmidt highlighted:

- A record year in returning \$16 million to Kansas policy holders, along with more than \$35 million recovered for Kansas since 2019
- A public facing complaints process
- Legislation to stop scammers

Committee members inquired about market conditions and had the following questions on Medicare Advantage:

- Sen. Beverly Gossage (R-Eudora) suggested she sees Kansans who have reached out thinking their Medicare Advantage supplemental plans would automatically cancel if not used. Highlighting she sees those who have been paying a supplement plan that's never been used. The Senator asked what can be done to allow brokers to track the supplemental policies to ensure people aren't overpaying for a product they don't need. The commissioner committed to working with the Senator on the issue.

- Sen. Jeff Pittman (D-Leavenworth) asked if the attorney general's office could provide more education on Medicare Advantage plans. The commissioner reiterated she has no authority over Medicare Advantage advertisements; however, they work with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services on Medicare Advantage plan complaints. She also indicated it is the fastest growing complaint area for their office. The commissioner pointed her approval of federal bills to allow the state more oversight.

The insurance commissioner is slated to present to the House Insurance Committee this afternoon.

Medicaid Expansion Bills Introduced

Today, the governor's Medicaid expansion bills were introduced to the House Appropriations and Senate Ways and Means committees. The Appropriations Committee saw a request for a division vote on the introduction of the bill in the committee that passed on a vote of nine to eight to allow the introduction of the legislation. The introduction in these budget-related committees means these bills are exempt from committee-related deadlines. In the coming days, the bills will officially be assigned bill numbers and read into the chambers. We will continue to keep you posted.

Legislative Post Audit Committee Meets

Today, the Legislative Post Audit Committee elected new leadership including Chair Senator Caryn Tyson (R-Parker), and Vice-Chair representative Shannan Francis (R-Liberal) and Ranking Minority Leader Representative Jason Probst (D-Hutchinson).

The committee heard an overview of information systems for state agencies and school districts. This is the second of two audits related to this topic.

The committee will meet again Jan. 31, when the Kansas Department of Commerce will present. The committee also will review Community Colleges, 911 Tax Credit, and DEI at Colleges, in addition to all other future audits starting in February.

House Health and Human Services Hear from EMS

Today, the House Health and Human Services committee, chaired by Representative Brenda Landwehr (R-Wichita), heard an update on EMS. Presenting before the committee was Jason White, Mid America Regional Council, and Carl Olson, Kansas EMS Association.

White discussed what a community paramedic does to serve the public for patients in underserved communities, as well as the educational and certification processes. He emphasized the service is only reimbursable if the patient is taken to the hospital. He discussed the referral process between pre-hospital services, emergency department, transitional care management, clinic, chronic care management, social services and community partners. White shared a case study from another state, highlighting how a particular patient benefitted from a community emergency services program. He highlighted the services available from Johnson and Douglas Counties with an aim to expand those services to rural areas following a community meeting in November. White highlighted the partnership with the Kansas Hospital Association and the Kansas Community Care Network. He emphasized how telehealth is an important component allowing people to avoid the emergency room. White highlighted there are no training or regulatory requirements that prevent this service model in Kansas.

The committee members inquired into the amount of uncompensated care provided through EMS and if it is billed to local government. They also asked if Missouri has experienced a reduction in uncompensated care. White highlighted that after expanding Medicaid in Arkansas, they did see an improvement. He indicated he would provide additional information.

The committee also heard from the following local departments:

- Chief Mark Heath, Kansas City Kansas Emergency Medical Services
- Adiel Garcia, Johnson County Emergency Medical Services
- Kevin Joels, Douglas County Emergency Medical Services

Alice Weingartner, with the Community Care Health Network, appeared before the committee to highlight how several of its federally qualified health centers brought mobile units into their communities for the residents to see. In May, they received a grant to become more engaged in community paramedicine. This interaction is a great way to get Kansans care. The service is funded by grants, and the hope is to continue these conversations.

The committee next heard from Chuck Schmidt from the Kansas Silver Haired Legislature. Schmidt highlighted the advocacy agenda for 2024:

- Support for Medicaid expansion
- Expand the Grandparents as Caregivers Act
- Establish a committee to explore expanded use of medical cannabis
- Eliminate tax cliff to qualify for an exemption of social security benefits from state income tax
- Oppose efforts restricting or preventing seniors from exercising their voting rights

The committee will meet again next week on Tuesday for a presentation on the Mental Health Intervention Team Program.

Introduction of Bills

[Senate Bill 338](#) – Concerning insurance; relating to group-funded liability and group-funded workers' compensation pools; changing certain reporting requirements – By Committee on Financial Institutions and Insurance

[Senate Bill 346](#) – Concerning planning and zoning; relating to proposing amendments to city or county zoning regulations; restricting who can propose rezoning amendments – By Committee on Federal and State Affairs

[Senate Bill 350](#) – Concerning the Kansas Fights Addiction Act; adding for-profit private entity to the definition of "qualified applicant;" authorizing members of the Kansas Fights Addiction Grant Review Board to be paid subsistence allowances, mileage and other expenses when attending meetings of the board after Jan. 8, 2024 – By Committee on Ways and Means

[House Bill 2487](#) – Concerning crimes, punishment and criminal procedure; relating to controlled substances; providing immunity from prosecution for certain drug crimes when persons seek or provide medical assistance related to the use of a controlled substance – By Representatives Hoheisel, Alcalá, Probst and Proctor

[House Bill 2488](#) – Concerning crimes, punishment and criminal procedure; relating to assisting suicide; providing criminal penalties for intentionally advising or encouraging another person to commit or attempt to commit suicide – By Representative Hoheisel

[House Bill 2494](#) – Concerning school districts; relating to school security and emergency response policies; establishing requirements for school safety and security plans and cardiac emergency response plans; creating the School Safety and Security Grant Fund and the School Cardiac Emergency Response Grant Fund – By Committee on Education, Requested by Rep. Thomas

[House Bill 2478](#) – Concerning insurance; relating to the Healthcare Provider Insurance Availability Act; adding maternity center to the definition of "healthcare provider" contained therein – By Representative Proctor

[House Bill 2484](#) – Concerning the behavioral sciences; relating to social work; enacting the Social Work Licensure Compact to provide interstate practice privileges; authorizing the Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board to establish a fee for a license with compact practice privileges – By Representative S. Ruiz

[House Bill 2508](#) – Concerning taxation; relating to the local Ad Valorem Tax Reduction Fund; authorizing a transfer of state general fund moneys to such fund in fiscal year 2025 and all fiscal years thereafter; requiring that all moneys received from such fund by political subdivisions be credited to residential property taxpayers in the form of a rebate; providing a formula for such rebate amount – By Representatives V. Miller, Alcala, Amyx, Ballard, Carlin, Carmichael, Carr, Clifford, Curtis, Dodson, Featherston, Goddard, Haskins, Haswood, Highberger, Houglan, Hoyer, Martinez, McDonald, Melton, Meyer, D. Miller, S. Miller, Neighbor, Ohaebosim, Oropeza, Osman, Ousley, Poskin, Probst, L. Ruiz, S. Ruiz, Sawyer, Sawyer Clayton, Schlingensiepen, Seiwert, Stogsdill, Vaughn, Weigel, Winn, Woodard and Xu