



***KHA's Capitol Comments***  
**February 20, 2024**

**Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee Hears and Works Bills**

Today, the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee, chaired by Senator Beverly Gossage (R-Eudora), met today. The committee held a hearing on [Senate Bill 490](#), changing the optometry scope of practice.

The committee heard from the following conferees:

**Proponents:**

- Todd Fleischer, Kansas Optometric Association
- Shane Kannarr OD, Kannarr Eye Care
- Derek Bryant, American Optometric Student Association
- Kathleen Holthaus, OD
- Jason Rogers, OD
- William Wilk, Kansas Chamber of Commerce

**Opponents:**

- Representative Bill Clifford (R-Garden City)
- Mary Champion, KSEPS
- Dr. Zack Unruh, OD MD

The committee met again in the afternoon to work the following bills:

- [Senate Bill 352](#), enacting the John D. Springer patient's bill of rights to require hospitals to allow in-person visitation, adopt visitation policies and procedures and creating a civil cause of action for violation of such rights. The committee added language clarifying that parents shall be allowed to be with those under eighteen at all times. The committee further struck lines 6-12 and 17-25 to stop hospitals from creating policies that restrict patient visitation. Senator Kristen O'Shea (R-Topeka) attempted to add

language to backfill any federal funding lost due to state law change compliance, the amendment didn't pass when a 4-4 tie committee vote was broken by Chair Gossage (R-Eudora). The committee recommended the bill favorably as amended.

- [Senate Bill 391](#), an act concerning public health, relating to infectious or contagious diseases; changing the authority of the secretary of health and environment and local health officers; naming the constitutional right to health freedom act; revoking the authority of the secretary to order individuals to isolate or quarantine and impose penalties for violations thereof. The committee amended the bill to specify that the bill doesn't impact the tuberculosis section of the statute, and also to allow the board of county commissioners to make orders to quarantine upon local health officer recommendations.
- [Senate Bill 433](#), Clarifying practice privileges of institutional license holders.

### **House Takes Up Tax Bill Veto and Debates Bills**

Today, the Kansas House of Representatives took up the veto of [House Bill 2284](#). The body voted 81 to 42 to override the Governor's previous veto of the bill. Not receiving the constitutionally required number of votes, the veto is sustained. The legislature has made tax reform a top priority and is likely to continue to negotiate on taxes as well as other priority items.

### **Senate Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services Works KDHE Health Budget**

Today, the Senate Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services met to finalize their recommendations to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Division of Health with the following areas seeing additional investments:

- \$8 million in investments for mental health beds
- An 8% increase for Medicaid rates for physicians
- \$730,000 for Midland Care
- \$1.9 million for Oral Health Kansas
- Infant Toddler Services of Johnson County
- \$5 million for Community Care Network of Kansas
- \$834,000 for Local Health Departments
- Rainbows United
- \$550,000 for Project Access
- American Cancer Society
- \$2 million for Tiny-K Alliance

The committee left the funding in for Medicaid expansion. The budget and subcommittee recommendations for the agency will now go before the full Senate Ways and Means committee.