



KHA's Capitol Comments
February 21, 2025

Bethell Committee Meets

Today, the Bob Bethell Joint Committee on Home and Community-Based Services and KanCare Oversight met.

The committee first had responses from the fourth quarter of 2024 meeting from the following:

- [Evan Dean, associate director, KU Center on Disabilities](#)
- [Natalie Daniel, policy director, Unite Us](#)
- [Sunflower Health Plan](#)
- [Kansas Department of Health and Environment](#)

The committee also had written-only testimony from KanCare stakeholders, including:

- [Kylee Childs](#), LeadingAge Kansas, highlighted managed care organization reconsideration delays and local pharmacy contracting issues.
- [Rachelle Colombo](#), Kansas Medical Society, asked the legislature to direct the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to take steps to develop a second Medicaid fee schedule for MCOs for services provided within the KanCare program.
- [Marissa Alcantar](#), Alliance for a Healthy Kansas, highlighted the need for Medicaid expansion.
- [Kim Cook](#), Numotion, highlighted the need to reform prior authorizations for wheelchair repair.
- [Tanya Dorf Brunner](#), Oral Health Kansas, highlighted the need for increases in Medicaid dental rates.
- [Matt Fletcher](#), InterHab, highlighted the additional need for stakeholder engagement and conflict of interest concerns.
- [JD Kemp](#), LifeStreams, highlighted Sunflower Health Plan's work on the Brian Injury Waiver services.
- [Scott Lopez](#), Alliance Rehab and Medical Equipment, highlighted the Kansas Medical Assistance Program as a secondary payer, difficulty accessing the federal program, problems with the appeals process following denials, and non-contracts with HealthyBlue.
- [Nicole McLain](#), Little Stars Therapy Services, emphasized audit practices with MCOs that create financial challenges.

- [Gabrielle Meadows](#), Thrive Therapy of Kansas, requested coverage for community support teams services.
- And several private citizens.

The committee next heard presentations by [Haely Ordoyne](#), long-term care ombudsman, [Steven Anderson](#), Medicaid inspector general and [Janet Williams](#), MindsMatter.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment, [Christine Osterlund](#), deputy secretary of Agency Integration and Kansas Medicaid director, gave a presentation on quarterly updates that highlighted the following topics:

- KanCare 3.0
- KDHE Medicaid Rate Study
- Performance Metrics
- MCO Financial Review
- Eligibility Updates

Next, the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services gave [presentations](#), including the following:

- Secretary Laura Howard reviewed the legislative agenda, Home and Community-Based Services Waivers, and grants.
- Scott Brunner gave an overview of the construction of the South Central Regional Mental Health Center, which is scheduled to start this month.
- Lacey Hunter gave an overview of staffing agency oversight and federal staffing mandates.
- Andy Brown gave an overview of Behavioral Health services.

Last, the committee heard from the managed care organizations, including the following:

- [Sunflower Health Plan](#)
- [UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Kansas](#)
- [Health Blue Kansas](#)

The committee will meet again next quarter.

Kansas Fights Addiction Grant Review Board Meeting

Today, the Kansas Fights Addiction Grant Review Board met. The committee heard from staff about updates on the Purdue Pharma case and more on annual reports and utilization.

Staff also highlighted [House Bill 2159](#), and if passed, could increase needs related to naloxone expenditures. Staff reported that 9,000 Naloxone kits per year have been previously approved.

The committee heard there will be a one-day conference for municipalities to educate them on utilizing Kansas Fights Addiction Grant Funds. The conference will be on April 18 in Overland Park with approximately 70-80 participants. The attorney general's office requested a grant to cover food expenditures for the conference, which was approved.

Staff informed the group that the needs assessment update would be presented to the board in April. Public comment plans are still in development.

For RFP 1, 16 were closed and have final payments.

For RFP 2, nine were approved and closed, and about \$433,000 remained in payments for those who had requested extensions.

For RFP 3, and four all grants have been initiated.

The committee discussed legislative requests and approved the annual report.

The committee heard updates from the following:

- Chad Harmon, Medical Detox
- Jennifer Wilson, director of Crisis Services Comcare of Sedgwick County

The committee will meet again on March 14.

Next Week's Schedule

Following the Friday turnaround deadline, the legislature will take Monday off but return to committee hearings on Tuesday. The turnaround deadline suggests that those bills, not exempt from legislative deadlines, must be passed by their chamber of origin.

There are many reasons a bill may be exempt from those legislative deadlines, including:

- The bill was introduced in an exempt committee
- The bill was re-referred to an exempt committee at some point ahead of the turnaround deadline.

Monday, Feb. 24

No Session

Tuesday, Feb. 25

Senate Ways and Means – 10:30 a.m. – Room 548S

Briefing by staff: [Substitute for House Bill 2007](#) – Making and concerning supplemental appropriations for fiscal year 2025 and appropriations for fiscal years 2026 and 2027 for various state agencies

House Education – 1:30 p.m. – Room 218N

Hearing: [Senate Bill 50](#) – Establishing uniform interest rate provisions for service scholarship programs administered by the Kansas Board of Regents that have repayment obligations as a part of the terms and conditions of such programs and authorizing the Kansas Board of Regents to recover the costs of collecting such repayment obligations and charge fees for the costs of administering such programs and requiring eligible students to enter into agreements with the Kansas Board of Regents instead of a postsecondary educational institution as a condition to receiving a grant under the Adult Learner Grant Act

Wednesday, Feb. 26

Senate Ways and Means – 10:30 a.m. – Room 548S

Budget Hearing: Higher Education

House Appropriations – 9:00 a.m. – Room 112N

Presentation on Kansas Universities:

- Emporia State University – Mr. Ken Hush, president
- Fort Hays State University – Dr. Tisa Mason, president
- Kansas State University – Dr. Richard Linton, president
- Pittsburg State University – Dr. Dan Shipp, president
- University of Kansas and University of Kansas Cancer Center – Dr. Douglas Girod, chancellor
- Washburn University – Dr. JuliAnn Mazachek, president and chief executive officer
- Wichita State University – Dr. Richard Muma, president

Thursday, Feb. 27

Senate Federal and State Affairs – 10:30 a.m. – Room 144S

Hearing: [Senate Bill 254](#) – Prohibiting aliens who are unlawfully present in the United States from receiving any state or local public benefit in accordance with applicable federal law

Senate Ways and Means – 10:30 a.m. – Room 548S

Budget Hearing and Recommendations: Higher Education

House Education – 1:30 p.m. – Room 218N

Discussion and Action: [Senate Bill 50](#) – Establishing uniform interest rate provisions for service scholarship programs administered by the Kansas Board of Regents that have repayment obligations as a part of the terms and conditions of such programs and authorizing the Kansas Board of Regents to recover the costs of collecting such repayment obligations and charge fees for the costs of administering such programs and requiring eligible students to enter into agreements with the Kansas Board of Regents instead of a postsecondary educational institution as a condition to receiving a grant under the Adult Learner Grant Act.

House Health and Human Services – 1:30 p.m. – Room 112N

Presentation: 988 Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Hotline Mental Health Intervention Team Program

House Social Services Budget – 3:30 p.m. – Room 152S

Presentation: Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities – InterHab and Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services

Friday, Feb. 28

KHA Bill Tracker

The [KHA Bill Tracker](#) keeps you up-to-date on current legislation. KHA will update and share this document daily while the legislators are in session.