



KHA's Current Report
March 22, 2024

President's Perspective – AHA Hosts Regional Policy Board in Kansas City

Last week, I had the opportunity to attend the American Hospital Association's Regional Policy Board meeting for Region Six in Kansas City. RPB Six includes Kansas, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota. The hospital leaders from this region discussed many timely and significant issues confronting health care providers and hospitals across the country. As always, the AHA team did a fantastic job in preparing and facilitating the meeting agenda.

The meeting began with an update from AHA leadership on initiatives to enhance public trust and confidence. AHA has made a multi-faceted effort to preserve and enhance public perception of the value hospitals and health systems provide for their communities. The RPB members discussed the need to provide additional education and information to state and federal elected officials. In addition, a focus on sharing information with the media regarding patient stories and the challenges the insurance industry poses to hospitals nationwide was identified. Much of the work AHA is pursuing relates to the public perception campaign KHA is engaged in on the state level. If you missed last week's *President Perspective*, I encourage you to go back and read the work KHA is doing in this area.

The AHA team also provided an update on the latest advocacy efforts on the federal level, as well as the status of the Change Healthcare cyber-attack. AHA's priority issues include protecting hospital finances during the impending budget discussions, safeguarding the 340B Drug Discount Program and protecting health care workers from workplace violence through the SAFE Act. AHA's efforts would not be as successful if not for the thousands of hospitals, including those in Kansas, united in our advocacy efforts. We continue to encourage KHA members to join in our advocacy efforts and share personal stories regarding the effect public policies will have on your hospital and the patients you serve.

In addition to the advocacy update, the RPB meeting focused on several issues: 1) commercial health plan accountability; 2) impact of high-cost drugs and therapies; 3) engaging with employers on the local level; 4) current and emerging regulations of artificial intelligence and use in hospital and health systems; 5) hospital financial challenges; 6) AHA's strategic workforce initiatives; 7) unwinding the public health emergency; and 8) mitigating cybersecurity risks.

Kansas hospitals were well-represented at this week's RPB meeting by Melissa Atkins, Graham County Hospital, Hill City; Sherri Vaughn, MD, The University of Kansas Health System, Kansas City; and Larry Van Der Wege, Lindsborg Community Hospital, Lindsborg. Thanks to these hospital leaders for their representation of Kansas hospitals.

--Chad Austin

KHA Sends Letter to Delegates Urging Them to Help Hospitals Impacted by Change Healthcare Cyberattack

On Mar. 14, The Kansas Hospital Association sent [letters](#) to the Kansas Congressional Delegation encouraging them to support statutory changes that can adequately help hospitals impacted by the Change Healthcare cyberattack. In the letter, KHA highlighted the following:

- Direction for Medicare Administrative Contracts to prioritize and expedite review and approval of hospital requests for sufficient Medicare advanced payments for hospitals experiencing payment delays.
- Issuing guidance to all payers outlining expectations that payers will implement periodic interim payments; waive timely-filing requirements, extend timelines for appeals and not deny claims due to lack of authorization.
- Use powers to ensure that UnitedHealth Group takes all necessary steps to remedy the situation, including implementing a meaningful financial assistance program.

If you have any questions, please contact [Shannan Flach](#) or [Audrey Dunkel](#) at (785) 233-7436.

--Shannan Flach

careLearning Informational Webinar – May 1

The Kansas Hospital Association, along with 40 other state hospital associations, offers *careLearning*, a web-based, online, educational tool for member hospitals.

Hospitals nationwide utilize this cost-effective learning solution to ensure all employees have required regulatory training and access to hundreds of health care-related courses. Users can create an unlimited number of facility-specific courses, manage instructor-led meetings and automatically track and report with a few quick clicks in the system.

The Kansas Hospital Association invites your hospital to learn more about the *careLearning* education management solution at noon on May 1.



--Hayley Finch-Genschorck

Register Now for the Health Care Preceptor Academy – May 23

Register now and plan to attend the Health Care Preceptor Academy on May 23, in Hays. The health care preceptor academy is designed to engage and grow current and future preceptors with key education tools and strategies to foster a strong preceptor/orientee relationship. This interactive program provides information and practical tools to improve preceptor abilities.



--Hayley Finch-Genschorck

AHA Health Equity Conference – Registration Deadline March 31

The American Hospital Association 2024 Accelerating Health Equity Conference will be from May 7-9 in Kansas City. The Kansas Hospital Association is excited the meeting is in Kansas City, and we have the opportunity to partner with AHA, and our colleagues at the Missouri Hospital Association and Kansas City Metropolitan Healthcare Council, to make this the best Health Equity Conference yet. We hope to engage with many of our members at this event. This year's conference theme is "Driving Change Together," focusing on the work of health care and community organizations to close health equity gaps by building strategic hospital-community partnerships and developing and sustaining diversity and inclusion efforts. Each day will kick off with an inspiring keynote, which you can [learn about here](#).

To enhance your conference experience and delve deeper into the issues, [check out a pre-conference workshop and a community immersion experience](#). [Register during the early-bird period](#) to secure a discounted rate for this valuable conference, attended by more than 1,000 front-line leaders seeking to drive change together and build healthier communities.

Attendance is encouraged, but hurry because the [early-bird registration deadline](#) is Sunday, March 31.



Sheraton Kansas City Hotel at Crown Center
2345 McGee St
Kansas City MO, 64108

--Karen Braman

New Podcast Episode Tackles Federal Budget

Have you been listening to the Kansas Hospital Association's podcast [Plains Spoken](#)? If not, we encourage you to do so. We tackle timely issues with a variety of guests including hospital and industry representatives, legislators and health care experts.

The [latest Plains Spoken episode](#) dives into the federal budget process. The discussion includes thoughts on whether a government shutdown is looming and the effects of a delayed budget on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Audrey Dunkel and Landon Fulmer also break down the difference between Congressional budget planning and the budget priorities proposed by President Joe Biden. Lastly, they cover the state of recent hot-button challenges including site-neutral payments and the 340B Drug Program.

--Shelby Stacy

Kansas Society for Healthcare Central Professionals Seminar – April 6

The Kansas Society for Healthcare Central Service Professionals is an organization available to persons working in the central service and/or sterile processing field. Their mission is to advance the improvement of Central Service through the development of efficient, effective and economical education and training programs for Central Service. KSHCSP is hosting an educational workshop at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 6, at the Nichols Education Center, 1003 N. Brady St., Abilene, KS 67410. The registration fee is \$30, to be paid at the door. To register, email Joanna Berg at jberg@vet.k-state.edu. Workshop participants will receive continuing education credits. To learn more, visit the [KSHCPS web page](#) on the [KHA website](#).

--Dennis George

Health Equity Services Covered in the 2024 Physician Fee Schedule Final Rule

The [Medicare Learning Network guidance on health equity services](#), covered under the 2024 physician fee schedule, is now available. Services, such as caregiver training services and community health integration, are now covered under the physician fee schedule. The 2024 physician fee schedule final rule has four covered services related to health equity and social determinants of health. These include caregiver training services, social determinants of health risk assessment, community health integration and principal illness navigation. For detailed guidance on the covered services and codes, consult the [MLN guidance](#).

--Karen Braman

The Fund 101: A Complete Guide to the Kansas Health Care Stabilization Fund

Join KAMMCO staff from noon to 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 26, as they explore the Kansas Health Care Stabilization Fund and how it affects Kansas hospitals and the overall health care climate in Kansas. This education is perfect for hospital administrators, especially those who could use an easy refresher or those new to their positions.

The Fund 101: A Complete Guide to the Kansas Health Care Stabilization Fund

In Kansas, the Health Care Stabilization Fund, more commonly known as "the Fund," is a critical piece of the state's health care infrastructure. Not only does it provide an added layer of liability protection to the providers it covers, it also serves to maintain an environment of predictability that makes Kansas one of the best places in the country to practice medicine. During this webinar, the chief counsel for the Kansas Health Care Stabilization Fund, Rita Noll, JD, will share her expertise on all things related to the Fund.

Key Discussion Points

- **Origins and Function:** Explore why the Kansas Legislature established the Fund and how it functions.
- **Coverage Clarity:** Understand who designated health care providers are and who falls within the scope coverage for the Fund.
- **Caps on Damages:** Delve into the significance of damage caps and its impact on providers and the health care ecosystem in Kansas.

[Click to Register](#)

--Hayley Finch-Genschorck

KHA HIDI Advantage Optics® Reports

This week, select hospital-specific reports, pulled from [HIDIs Advantage Optics](#), were distributed to participating Kansas Hospital Association hospitals. Containing inpatient and outpatient discharges from October 2018 through December 2023, fiscal year 2019 through the first quarter of FY 2024, the Executive Snapshot Dashboards provide inpatient market penetration by county and inpatient utilization and outpatient surgery utilization by county. All participating KHA hospitals have access to the HIDI Advantage User Portal.

For assistance with access to the [KHA HIDI Advantage Portal](#), please contact [Dee Lewis](#) at (785) 233-7436. Please contact [Sally Othmer](#) with questions or to request training for you or your staff.

--Sally Othmer

Rural Health & Prosperity Grants 101 Workshop – April 16-17

The Health Resources Service Administration Region 7, in collaboration with The Kansas Office of Rural Prosperity, state and other federal agencies, is hosting a free two-day Grants 101 Workshop on April 16 and 17 in McPherson. Attendees will learn about the federal grant application process, where to find diverse funding opportunities, strategies for creating a successful application and resources to support their grant-writing efforts. Additional information can be found on the [Kansas Department of Commerce website](#).

--Jennifer Findley

CDC Issues Health Alert on Increasing Measles Cases

This week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a [health advisory](#) informing clinicians and public health officials of an increase in global and U.S. measles cases and to provide guidance on measles prevention for all international travelers ages more than six months and all children aged more than 12 months who do not plan to travel internationally. Measles is highly contagious. One person infected with measles can infect nine out of ten unvaccinated individuals with whom they come in close contact. From Jan. 1 to Mar. 14, 2024, the CDC has been notified of 58 confirmed U.S. cases of measles across 17 jurisdictions, including seven outbreaks in seven jurisdictions compared to 58 total cases and four outbreaks reported the entire year in 2023. Among the 58 cases reported in 2024, 54 (93 percent) were linked to international travel. Most cases reported in 2024 have been among children ages 12 months and older who had not received the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine. For more information, see the CDC's [Measles Cases and Outbreaks report](#).

--Karen Braman

Federal Health Corp Scholarships Open

The National Health Service Corp Scholarship Program is now accepting applications. The NHSC Scholarship Program provides scholarships to students pursuing primary care health professions training in return for a commitment to provide primary health services in a [Health Professional Shortage Area](#). For more information, visit the [NHSC website](#). Applications are due Apr. 25.

The Nurse Corps Scholarship program is also now accepting applications. The Nurse Corps Scholarship Program is to provide scholarships to nursing students in exchange for a minimum two-year, full-time service commitment (or part-time equivalent), at an eligible health care facility with a critical shortage of nurses. For more information, visit the [Nurse Corp website](#). Applications are due May 2.

--Jennifer Findley

USDA Loans and Grants to Broadband Services Open

The Rural Utilities Service at the U.S. Department of Agriculture will begin accepting applications on Mar. 22 for the Reconnect Loan and Grant Program. The program provides loans and grants for constructing, improving or acquiring facilities and equipment needed for broadband service. Funding for qualified applicants, including Federally Recognized Tribes, varies depending on the percentage of households lacking sufficient access to broadband in a Proposed Funded Service Area.

More information can be found on the [USDA website](#). Applications are due on Apr. 22.

--Jennifer Findley

2024 County Health Profiles Released

This week, the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps Annual Data was released. This publication provides an updated snapshot of health for each county. The Kansas Health Institute serves as the state team for the 2024 CHR&R release in Kansas and offers county-specific profiles with data trends and comparisons to the rest of the state and nation. [View the county profiles here.](#)

--Karen Braman

PSU Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Grant Program – Spring Classes

The Pittsburg State University Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Grant Program is offering many free training classes this spring. PSU and the Kansas Coalition for Sexual and Domestic Violence have collaborated in providing didactic courses free of registration fees. Registered nurses, advanced practice registered nurses, advocates and law enforcement can choose between the Adult/Adolescent course (SANE-A) or the new 64-hour Adult, Adolescent, Pediatric Course (SANE-A/-P). There are additional training options for rural organizations, such as the eight-hour evidence collection in the emergency room. Once the RN or APRN finishes the didactic portion, they will be assisted to find a preceptor to continue the clinical portion. The clinical courses are offered through KU Med quarterly. HaysMed offers a yearly clinical course each spring, May 16-17. For a list of didactic and clinical trainings, visit <https://www.kcsdv.org/train/>. Here are upcoming classes this spring:

- April 3 – *The Powerful Control of Strangulation: The Role it Plays in Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault*, College Avenue Methodist Church, Manhattan – [Learn more](#)
- April 16-19 – 64-Hour Adult, Adolescent, Pediatric SANE/SART Course, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg – [Learn more](#)
- April 22-24 – 40-Hour Adult, Adolescent SANE Course, University of Kansas Medical Center, Kansas City – [Learn more](#)
- April 25-26 – SANE Clinical Course, University of Kansas Medical Center, Kansas City – [Learn more](#)
- May 14-15 – SANE Clinical Course, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg – [Learn more](#)
- May 16-17 – SANE Clinical Course, HaysMed, Hays – [Learn more](#)

--Karen Braman

Federal and National News

CMS Announces ACO Primary Care Flex Model

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Innovation Center [announced](#) a new payment model for primary care, the [Accountable Care Organizations Primary Care Flex Model](#). The model would be part of the Medicare Shared Savings Program and will [test](#) whether "improved payment for primary care will empower participating ACOs and their primary care providers to utilize more innovative, team-based, person-centered and proactive approaches to care and positively impact health outcomes, quality and cost of care." The ACO PC Flex Model application period opens May 2024, and the performance period begins Jan. 1, 2025.

KCMHC and Real World Learning to Host Career Fair Apr. 4

The Kansas City Metropolitan Healthcare Council, is partnering with Real World Learning, to connect high school juniors and graduating seniors with opportunities in health care. Join these organizations for a career fair from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Thursday, April 4, at the Kauffman Foundation Conference Center, in Kansas City, MO. The fair is free to attend, thanks to our sponsors.

- [Register](#) to have a booth at the fair.
- [Register](#) to bring students to the fair.

To learn more about the career fair, please contact [Molly Weaver](#).

Change Healthcare Cyberattack Updates Available – AHA Survey Results and Medicaid Advanced Payments

The American Hospital Association [released](#) results from a survey to gauge the effect of the recent Change Healthcare cybersecurity breach. According to AHA, 74 percent of hospitals report direct patient care impact, nearly 40 percent report delays in processing health plan utilization requirements, 94 percent report financial impact and 82 percent report impact on cash flow.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid S issued [guidance](#) outlining processes for an expedited state plan amendment for states to advance fee-for-service payments for providers affected by the Change Healthcare attack. The guidance also highlights the existing authority state agencies have to limit managed care plans' restrictive prior authorization and network practices.

MedPAC Releases March 2024 Report to Congress

The Medicare Payment Advisory Commission released a [report](#) to Congress that includes recommendations for fiscal year and calendar year 2024 Medicare payment rates. MedPAC commented that "given the worsened financial circumstances in 2022, and the approximately \$3 billion decline in existing Medicare disproportionate share hospital and uncompensated care payments from 2019 to 2024, the Commission contends that all hospitals – and in particular those serving large shares of low-income Medicare patients – warrant greater support than the Commission recommended last year. Thus, the Commission recommends that the Congress update the 2024 Medicare base rates for general ACHs by the amount reflected in current law plus 1.5 percent."

MACPAC Recommends More Transparency and Oversight of Medicaid Managed Care Denials

The Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program Payment and Access Commission released the 2024 [report](#) to Congress. In addition to the required [analysis on DSH](#), the MACPAC report includes an [analysis](#) of Medicaid managed care denial and appeal processes and recommendations for improving transparency and state oversight.

MLN Connects Provider eNews Available

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services issued the following [updates](#) to *MLN Connects Provider eNews*:

- [New Initiative to Increase Investments in Person-Centered Primary Care](#)
- [Marriage and Family Therapists & Mental Health Counselors: Get Information about Billing Medicare](#)
- [Electronic Funds Transfer: Revised CMS-588 Required on May 1](#)
- [Health-Related Social Needs FAQs](#)
- [Promote Kidney Health During National Kidney Month](#)

Before You Go...

- Because of the disruptions from the Change Healthcare cybersecurity attack, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services [released](#) a set of frequently asked questions for hospitals interested in obtaining a Medicare Accelerated and Advance Payment.