



KHA's Current Report
June 21, 2024

President's Perspective – Kansas Leaders Attend AHA Regional Policy Board

The American Hospital Association convenes its Regional Policy Board meetings across the country several times per year. These meetings are an opportunity for hospital leaders to share their views on policy issues and provide a perspective representing their state. Kansas is very fortunate to have several thought leaders who attend the AHA RPB meetings. The Kansas representatives include Melissa Atkins, Graham County Hospital, Hill City; Larry Van Der Wege, Lindsborg Community Hospital; Dr. Sherri Vaughn, MD, The University of Kansas Health System; and Dr. Alan Verrill, MD, AdventHealth Shawnee Mission. Last week, the AHA Region 6 meeting had hospital leaders from Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota. The meeting agenda was filled with important and timely issues, such as cybersecurity, health plan accountability, drug shortages and maternity care in rural areas.

To start off the meeting, the AHA leadership team provided a legislative and regulatory update and offered insights into the current political environment and the upcoming national elections. Among the health care issues being advocated by AHA included protecting against site-neutral payment policies, providing Medicaid disproportionate share hospital cut relief, supporting the health care workforce, extending the Medicare Dependent Hospital and Low Volume Hospital targeted payments, and voicing concerns related to CMS' nursing home staffing requirements. While Congress only has a limited number of legislative days remaining, it is essential for Kansas hospital leaders and our colleagues across the nation to engage in political dialogue and discussion. AHA has been at the forefront of this process through several initiatives including the Coalition to Strengthen America's Healthcare. This coalition was formed more than 20 years ago to preserve access to the best quality health care for patients. It represents the interests of the community, children, teaching, public, religious, rehabilitation, behavioral health, rural and long-term care hospitals and their patients. The coalition educates policymakers and the public using advertising, grassroots engagement and social media. I have been impressed with many of the resources available through the coalition. You can learn more about the coalition by visiting the coalition's website, strengthenhealthcare.org.

A significant portion of the RPB meeting focused on discussing AHA's proposed health plan accountability advocacy agenda. While positive steps have been made on the national and state level to advance policy issues and raise awareness of the challenges patients and providers face with some commercial health insurance carriers, there is still much work to be done. Among the policy issues being considered include requiring health plan clinician reviewers to sign denial letters and ensuring cost-based reimbursement for Critical Access Hospitals. As it relates to the clinician reviewers, it is often challenging to identify who is responsible for a denial of care because health plan clinicians will not sign a denial. By requiring a clinician to do so, it will add a new level of accountability and help ensure the new Medicare Advantage regulations are being followed. These regulations require a clinician reviewer to have the expertise or training in the medical discipline for the service being requested. Regarding the cost-based reimbursement for CAHs, there are several pathways under consideration to accomplish this goal, including a blanket requirement for Medicare Advantage plans to cover 101 percent of CAH cost. The Kansas Hospital Association will continue to collaborate with AHA on these and other policy issues that benefit Kansas hospitals.

Like KHA, AHA is in the process of reviewing and updating its next three-year strategic plan (2025-2027). The RPB members provided valuable feedback and guidance to the AHA team regarding its current plan. Many of the priority issues highlighted during the RPB meeting focused on the same topics we have been hearing from the KHA membership: improving financial stability, cultivating a sustainable and qualified workforce, and advocating for public policies to ensure patients have access to the best care possible.

As always, the AHA team did a tremendous job developing the agenda and facilitating the discussion. I appreciate their leadership and the great input offered by our Kansas colleagues!
--Chad Austin

PAC Spotlight – Sign Up for 2024 KHA-PAC Events

Did you know that state and federal governments pay for more than half of Kansas hospital care and regulate 100 percent of Kansas Hospital Association activities? That's why your participation in the [KHA Political Action Committee](#) is so important. Elected individuals with a passion and understanding of hospitals' unique role in their communities are critical. Your individual contributions to the KHA-PAC are used to support those who champion our issues. We appreciate all of our PAC donors – we couldn't do it without you!

Summer and Fall KHA-PAC Events

KHA is excited to announce many ways for you to meet your KHA-PAC goals this year! Below are the ways we hope you will participate and contribute to the KHA-PAC.

[KHA-PAC Golf Scramble – 8 a.m. shotgun start – Aug. 23 at the Salina Country Club](#)

[Click to Register](#)

- [Sponsor a Hole](#): \$750 Hole Sponsorship (Includes up to four players)
- [Register as an Individual Golfer](#): \$150 to register as an individual player
- [Cheering Section](#): Join us for lunch and drinks and cheer on the golfers when they return \$40
- Unable to attend but wish to donate a raffle item. [Email tmays@kha-net.org](mailto:tmays@kha-net.org)

Thank you to our luncheon and our refreshments sponsors:



Thank you, Event Chair George Stover, Hospital District #1 of Rice County.

KHA-PAC Behind the Scenes at K-STATE – 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. – July 25

Get a behind-the-scenes tour of the K-State University athletic facilities, including the football, volleyball and baseball areas. Afterward, join us for wine and food at a local eatery. Buy your tickets: [\\$100 per person](#) and [\\$175 per pair](#). All proceeds go to the KHA-PAC.

Thank you, Event Chair Nichole Chamley, Amberwell Hiawatha.

KHA-PAC at KHA's Annual Convention and Trade Show – Sept. 4 - Sept. 6, Sheraton Overland Park and Overland Park Convention Center – [Sign-Up Here](#)

- Wine/Bourbon Pull: KHA PAC will again be hosting a wine and bourbon pull for guests.
 - Buy a Bottle
 - Donate a Bottle
- Silent Auction: KHA PAC will again be holding a silent auction during the convention
 - Donate Auction Items
 - Bid on Auction Items

KHA-PAC Night at the Museum – 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. – Sept. 24 –Johnson County Museum

Enjoy happy hour and a tour of the Johnson County Museum. [Buy your tickets](#): \$50 per person. Thank you, Event Chairs Molly Haase of AdventHealth and Connor Stangler of Children's Mercy Kansas City.

[Become a Contributor Anytime](#)

Visit the [KHA-PAC website](#) for additional information, including suggested contribution levels.

If you have questions about the KHA-PAC or how to get involved, please contact [Tara Mays](#) at (785) 969-9270.

--Tara Mays

Candidate Meet and Greet in Northeast Kansas

The Kansas Hospital Association and other health care stakeholders are sponsoring an Area Candidate Meet and Greet from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 25, at Lakeview Village, Heritage Activity Center, 9100 Park St., Lenexa. KHA partners include:

- LeadingAge Kansas
- Kansas Healthcare Association
- Kansas Medical Society
- Kansas Academy of Family Physicians
- Kansas Dental Association
- Kansas Optometric Association
- Kansas Pharmacist Association
- Community Care Network of Kansas
- Kansas Association of Community Mental Health Centers

If you are a hospital employee interested in getting to know the candidates for the House of Representatives or State Senate in the Northeast Kansas part of the state, we invite you to RSVP with your name and organization to [Lorri Dean](mailto:LorriDean) at ldean@kha-net.org or (785) 276-3109.

--Tara Mays

Cassi Mick Provides Patient Care and Builds Services

The Kansas Hospital Association's [Heart of Health Care Worker Award](#) highlights hospital employees who have made a significant contribution to the betterment of their hospital. These individuals are nominated for this award because they routinely go above and beyond the call of duty.

At Smith County Memorial Hospital, Cassi Mick embodies the heart of health care through her unparalleled commitment to patient care, exceptional leadership and role-model behavior. For three years, during a staffing shortage, Mick was the only respiratory therapist on staff, covering a variety of critical services, from delivering newborn babies to ensuring airways in the emergency room.

Beyond her commitment, Mick cultivates a positive environment through her helpfulness, willingness to teach and kind and upbeat personality. In 2023, she served as the respiratory therapist for an astounding 78 births, providing expert care during these critical moments.

Mick has been instrumental in keeping SCMH current with technology and staffing. With her expertise, SCMH acquired heated high-flow equipment instrumental in treating COVID-19 patients. This equipment allowed staff to care for extremely ill patients and achieve positive outcomes. Patients were able to be treated in their hometown hospitals at the same level of care as tertiary centers during an uncertain time in health care when bed availability in larger institutions was scarce.

Mick also implemented pulmonary rehab as an outpatient therapy at SCM. Pulmonary rehab is an educational program, combined with supervised exercise sessions, for patients with chronic diseases such as COPD and pulmonary hypertension.

Mick mentors work-study students and interns as a teacher, imparting invaluable wisdom. She loves guiding youth in learning how to provide excellent patient care, teaches advanced certification courses and mentors co-workers on building their clinical skills and competencies.

Mick and other Heart of Health Care Worker Award nominees will be recognized during the KHA Awards Luncheon at the [2024 KHA Annual Convention](#) on Sept. 5, 2024, at Sheraton Overland Park/Overland Park Convention Center, Overland Park.

--*Shelby Stacy*

Dr. Dane Ditto Makes Big Impact in Hometown Community

The Kansas Hospital Association's [Heart of Health Care Worker Award](#) highlights hospital employees who have made a significant contribution to the betterment of their hospital. These individuals are nominated for this award because they routinely go above and beyond the call of duty.

Dane Ditto, MD, serves as Wamego Family Clinic's chief staff. He oversees all the medical and administrative aspects of the practice, including credentialing, quality improvement, risk management, patient experience and specialty areas such as the cardiac rehab program and walk-in clinic.

Dr. Ditto is always willing to lend a hand, whether it is assisting with a challenging patient in the emergency department or providing guidance to younger providers with a differential diagnosis. He has helped oversee expansion projects in the hospital, including the creation of the new MRI suite. He is also extremely welcoming to new providers, understanding it is not an easy task to recruit and retain physicians in rural health care. Dr. Ditto frequently hosts welcoming gatherings for new providers and their families when they are new to Wamego.

Raised in Wamego, Dr. Ditto consistently strives to add and improve health care services in his community. He added pain management and orthopedic services. He serves as the medical director of the Pottawatomie County EMS. With his focus on safety, he helped improve quality measures in the clinic and assisted Wamego Health Center in winning the 2023 Kansas Healthcare Collaborative Award for Quality for small hospitals. Additionally, he has helped the emergency department earn accreditation from the American College of Emergency Physicians for a Geriatric Specialty E.D.

Dr. Ditto and other Heart of Health Care Worker Award nominees will be recognized during the KHA Awards Luncheon at the [2024 KHA Annual Convention](#) on Sept. 5, 2024, at Sheraton Overland Park/Overland Park Convention Center, Overland Park.

--*Shelby Stacy*

2024 Summit on Quality Aug. 8 – Register Today

Join us at the Kansas Healthcare Collaborative's Summit on Quality for a day full of learning, networking and innovation. The Summit is scheduled from 8:30 a.m. – 3:45 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 8, at the Rhatigan Student Center on the Wichita State University Campus. The target audience includes physicians (particularly residents), nurses, clinic managers, hospital CEOs and other senior management, quality improvement professionals, risk managers, infection preventionists, long-term care providers and other interested health care professionals — practicing in both urban and rural settings throughout our state. The registration fee is \$150 and includes lunch and continuing nursing education credits.



--Karen Braman

Microsoft and Google to Support Rural Hospitals Cybersecurity Needs

On June 10, the White House [announced](#) Microsoft and Google are offering free and low-cost resources to rural hospitals to help them boost their cyber defenses. Microsoft is extending independent Critical Access Hospitals and Rural Emergency Hospitals grants up to a 75 percent discount on security products. Larger rural hospitals already using eligible Microsoft solutions are offering its security suite at no additional cost for one year. Free cybersecurity assessments and free training for frontline and IT staff at eligible hospitals will be offered as well.

Google will offer endpoint security advice at no cost and discounted pricing for communication tools, security support and funding to support software migration. Additionally, Google is committing to launch a pilot program to develop a package of security capabilities to meet the unique needs of rural hospitals.

According to the White House, these efforts aim to enhance the security and resilience of the health care sector.

--Sally Othmer

Kansas Fights Addiction Grant Program Funding Opportunity

A third round of funding to support substance use disorder services across the state is now available through the [Kansas Fights Addiction](#) grant program. The funding comes from money the state recovers through opioid legal settlements and will be made available through a Request for Proposal grant application process. This third RFP, similar to the first round of KFA funding in 2023, prioritizes strategies related to treatment, recovery, harm reduction and linkages to care established by the Kansas Prescription Drug and Opioid Advisory Committee in its 2023-2027 state strategic plan. Eligible organizations include state agencies, local and county governments, and nonprofit organizations providing services in Kansas to prevent, reduce, treat or otherwise abate or remediate SUDs. To be eligible, applicants also must release all legal claims arising from covered conduct against each defendant named in the opioid settlement agreements. Organizations may apply for up to \$300,000 in grant funding through this third RFP, with each grant having a 12-month budget period. For more information and to download the RFP, [click here](#).

--Karen Braman

FDA Issues U.S. Drug Supply Chain Update on Waivers and Exemptions for Small Dispensers

On June 12, the Food and Drug Administration [announced](#) the FDA is issuing exemptions from certain requirements of section 582 of the FD&C Act to small dispensers (pharmacies) and, where applicable, to their trading partners until Nov. 27, 2026. The FDA stated this provides small dispensers additional time to stabilize their operations to fully implement the Drug Supply Chain Security Act enhanced drug distribution security requirements. A dispenser is considered a small dispenser for the purposes of these exemptions if, as of Nov. 27, 2024, the company that owns the dispenser has 25 or fewer full-time employees licensed as pharmacists or qualified as pharmacy technicians. Consult the [FDA announcement](#) for more information on requesting a waiver or exemption.

--Karen Braman

Moderna RSV Vaccine Approved by FDA

Moderna recently [announced](#) the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved mRESVIA (mRNA-1345), an mRNA respiratory syncytial virus vaccine, to protect adults aged 60 years and older from lower respiratory tract disease caused by RSV infection. The approval was granted under a breakthrough therapy designation and marks the second approved mRNA product from Moderna.

--Karen Braman

Health Care Careers Exploration Patch Program

If you work with youth aged 5-17, don't forget about the Health Careers Exploration Patch Program. This is a great activity for scout groups, summer camp programs, youth events and more. When youth complete the activities to earn a three-inch patch, they will increase their knowledge of the variety of health care career opportunities available. The program focuses on exploring the need for health care professionals, the many roles they play, education requirements, resources available for those pursuing careers in health care and general health and wellness information.

This program has [one curriculum for youth aged 5 to 8](#) and another for [youth aged 9 to 17](#). To earn the Health Careers Exploration Patch, youth select and complete designated activities related to career exploration, educational lessons, skill builders, service projects or technology. More information is available on the [Kansas Hospital Association website](#).

Thank you in advance for investing your time in the youth of our communities and expanding their career horizons. Once KHA receives the [order form](#), patches will be mailed within one to two weeks. Patches are only available for Kansas youth.

--Cindy Samuelson

KU Announces Fall Tobacco Treatment Specialist Training

The University of Kansas has announced the Fall 2024 Tobacco Treatment Specialist training will be Aug.19-Oct. 28. [This course](#) will give providers the knowledge and skills to integrate tobacco treatment into their current practices. The KU TTS training is an online training requiring about 14-18 hours to complete and concludes with eight hours of virtual skills training. The target audience for this training is RNs/LPNs, physicians, community health workers, health educators, social workers, respiratory therapists, substance use disorder counselors and other health service professionals. For more information, visit the [KU TTS website](#).

--Karen Braman

Temporary Registration Online Interruption at KHA

The Kansas Hospital Association has been implementing new infrastructure, which will temporarily interrupt online registration from 5:00 p.m. on Monday, June 24, until 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday, June 25. We apologize for this inconvenience.

--Cheryl Carson

Position Available

Clinical Nurse Coordinator - RN

Clay County Medical Center

P.O. Box 512, 617 Liberty

Clay Center, KS 67432-0512

Contact: [Cindy Rush, HR Director](#)

Phone:(785) 632-2144 ext. 3706

Email: crush@ccmcks.org

Website: www.ccmcks.org

Apply Online Today!
CLICK HERE

This is a full-time (M-F, working 36 hours per week) position responsible for organizing and overseeing the daily activities of five rural health clinics. The successful candidate will work from the Clay Center Family Physicians office but will be asked to travel to Glasco, Linn, Clyde and Riley regularly to observe clinic activity.

Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Managing and coaching team members
- Evaluations
- Scheduling of team members for clinic coverage, orientation and yearly competencies
- Review and updating of policies, procedures and workflows
- Communicating and working with various departments to ensure quality patient care
- Services as liaison to team members, patients and medical providers
- Other various duties needed to maintain clinic efficiencies and function

Requires:

- Current RN Licensure in good standings with the state of Kansas-BSN preferred but not required
- Two years of clinical RN experience required
- Supervisory experience preferred

If you have a management position available in your organization and would like it posted in *Current Report*, email the information to [Jan Fenwick](#). Also, don't forget to check out www.kshealthjobs.net for other health care openings in Kansas.

--Jan Fenwick

Federal and National News

CMS to Close Medicare Advance Payments Resulting from Change Health Care Cyberattack

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services [announced](#) Medicare will no longer accept new Medicare Accelerated and Advance Payment applications after Friday, July 12, to assist providers experiencing payment disruptions caused by the Change Healthcare cybersecurity attack. More than 4,200 Part A providers received advance payments, totaling more than \$2.55 billion. According to CMS, "providers of services and suppliers are now successfully billing Medicare, and to date, CMS has already recovered over 96 percent of the advance payments."

CMS Releases 2023-2032 National Health Expenditure Projections

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Office of the Actuary [released](#) updated [projections](#) of the National Health Expenditure and health insurance enrollment for 2023 through 2032. The agency projects the average NHE will [increase](#) by 5.6 percent during this time frame, outpacing the annual increases in the gross domestic product. The new NHE projections are lower than the previous results of 7.5 percent.

MedPAC Releases Report to Congress

The Medicare Payment Advisory Commission released the June 2024 [report](#) to Congress. The report includes [information](#) about updating the Medicare physician fee schedule, Medicare Advantage provider network adequacy, MA prior authorization practices and alternative approaches to lower Medicare's payment rates to inpatient rehabilitation facilities. The report also contains a summary of the current statutorily specified updates to the PFS payment rates, as well as potential bonuses and penalties tied to the Merit-based Incentive Payment System and Advanced Alternative Payment Model participants.

CMS Publishes Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit and Health IT Standards Final Rule

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services released a [final rule](#) revising the Medicare prescription drug benefit and implementing changes related to electronic prescribing. The rule also finalizes regulation regarding the adoption of health information technology standards.

CMS Directs State Medicaid Programs to Be More Diligent in Managed Care Oversight

State Medicaid agencies should effectively monitor managed care plans' performance to ensure individuals enrolled in these plans are provided access to care without undue delay, according to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' deputy administrator and director of Center for Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program Services Daniel Tsai in a June 12 [CMCS Informational Bulletin](#). The CMS directive identifies mental health care parity and managed care plan prior authorization practices as areas of particular concern.

CDC Issues Health Advisory Regarding Diamond Brand Shruumz Products

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a [health advisory](#), amidst reports of severe acute illnesses potentially associated with consuming Diamond Shruumz™ brand chocolate bars, cones and gummies. As of June 11, a total of 12 illnesses and 10 hospitalizations have been reported in eight U.S. states. The cause of the reported illnesses is not known at this time. Individuals should not eat, sell or serve any flavors of Diamond Shruumz™ brand chocolate bars, cones or gummies, and should discard products that have been purchased.

Clinicians Can Apply for Pediatric Specialty Loan Repayment Program

The Health Resources and Services Administration's 2024 Pediatric Specialty Loan Repayment Program is open to eligible clinicians who provide pediatric specialty care or mental health treatment and support to children and adolescents. Clinicians who commit to serving for three years at an approved site in a health professional shortage area or medically underserved area, or to providing care to a medically underserved population can receive up to \$100,000 in loan repayment support. [Applications](#) will be accepted through 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, July 9.

MLN Connects Provider eNews Available

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

- [The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Preparing to Close Program that Addressed Medicare Funding Issues Resulting from Change Health Care Cyber-Attack](#)
- [Federal Study Examines Care Following Nonfatal Overdose Among Medicare Beneficiaries; Identifies Effective Interventions and Gaps in Care](#)
- [CMS Roundup \(June 14, 2024\)](#)
- [Medical Records Request Scam: Watch Out for Phishing](#)
- [Provider and Supplier Enrollment Site Visits: CMS has Authority to Conduct](#)
- [Cognitive Health: Medicare Covers Services](#)

Before You Go ...

Applications are open through Wednesday, July 24, for the [American Hospital Association's 2025 Circle of Life Award](#). This award recognizes hospitals and health systems that advance safe, timely, efficient, effective and equitable end-of-life and hospice care. As many as three recipients will be given awards, and citations of honor may also be presented to other noteworthy programs. The awards will be presented at the 2025 AHA Leadership Summit in Nashville, TN.