



KHA's Current Report
November 8, 2024

President's Perspective – KHA Board Convenes Last Meeting of 2024

Earlier this week, the Kansas Hospital Association Board of Directors met in person for the final time before the end of 2024. It's hard to believe we have reached November, and Thanksgiving is approaching!

The KHA Board meeting kicked off with a presentation from Kansas Department of Health and Environment Secretary Janet Stanek. Secretary Stanek highlighted the agency's priorities, which ranged from increasing the minimum state funding for local health departments to amending the Nuclear Energy Development and Radiation Control Act to ensuring an efficient and effective Medicaid program. The Board received information regarding the latest implementation of KanCare 3.0, which includes the unwinding of Aetna and the onboarding of Healthy Blue. Secretary Stanek touched upon the 2024 Medicaid provider rate increases, graduate medical education funding and hospital provider assessment program changes.

The KHA Board also recapped the latest state and federal election results and implications for Kansas hospitals and the health care industry. Several key federal policy issues are scheduled to be considered before the end of the year. KHA will encourage members to weigh in on these critical issues and participate in grassroots advocacy initiatives.

Additional highlights of the November board meeting are bulleted below:

- Recognized Bobby Olm-Shipman, Saint Luke's South Hospital, Overland Park, for his service as the KHA Board Chair for 2024. On behalf of the entire KHA membership and staff, we thank Bobby for his leadership and service.
- Appointed Dee Bohnenblust, Labette Health, Parsons, as a new KHA Board member, filling one of the two hospital trustee positions on the KHA Board.
- Selection of Debbie Bruner, Minneola District Hospital, Minneola, to serve as the at-large member of the KHA Executive Committee in 2025.
- Expressed appreciation to outgoing KHA Board members for their service and leadership. They include Carrie Lutz, Holton Community Hospital, Holton; Betty Greer, Kearny County Hospital, Lakin; Harold Courtois, Memorial Health System, Abilene; and Larry Van Der Wege, Lindsborg Community Hospital, Lindsborg.
- Reviewed and adopted the new 2025-2027 KHA Strategic Plan.

- Approved the Hospital Provider Assessment Working Group recommendations that enhance the provider assessment program to leverage funds to increase Medicaid provider rates for hospitals.
- Adopted the KHA finance and investment report and the 2025 budget.
- Recapped recent discussions at the American Hospital Association's Regional Policy Board meeting.
- Discussed the KHA advocacy efforts at both federal and state levels. KHA staff has been working on policy initiatives related to the upcoming 2025 Kansas legislative session, including several policies related to workforce and Medicaid. On the federal level, much attention has been given to Congress' end-of-year agenda concerning sequestration, extending the targeted payments on Low Volume Hospital and Medicare Dependent Hospital programs and advocating for the 340B Drug Discount Program.
- Highlighted the status of the 2023/2024 KHA-PAC goal of \$168,000.
- Heard updates from the KHA staff on hospital finance, public communication, advancing health, workforce and education.

Please don't hesitate to let us know if you have any questions or need assistance with any matters affecting your hospital. Your team at KHA is readily available to help you with any needs!

--Chad Austin

National Rural Health Day – Nov. 21

Since 2011, the National Organization of State Offices of Rural Health has set aside the third Thursday of November to celebrate the "Power of Rural" on National Rural Health Day. This day is an opportunity to bring attention to and honor the incredible efforts of rural health care providers, communities, organizations, State Offices of Rural Health and other stakeholders dedicated to addressing the unique health care needs of rural America.

NOSORH has developed a resource website: <https://powerofrural.org/>. It includes a promotional toolkit designed for rural communities, hospitals, clinics, first responders, public health, non-profits, civic organizations and others who serve and support the health needs of rural communities and rural health advocates. It also includes key messages and data points to educate various stakeholders on the realities of rural areas through stories and data. Though the statistics and facts do not tell the whole story, they are essential to understanding the development of policies and programs that affect the health of rural communities.

Kansas hospitals will celebrate [National Rural Health Day at our Rural Health Symposium](#). [Register now](#) and plan to attend on Nov. 21 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Wichita Airport in Wichita. Rural health care providers constantly face new challenges and fewer resources. This symposium aims to provide attendees with the skills, ideas and information necessary to survive in the rapidly changing world of rural health care.

--Jennifer Findley

KHA-PAC Highlights – The Race Is On!

The elections may be over, but the REAL race is ON! With just seven weeks left until the end of the year, the [Kansas Hospital Association Political Action Committee](#) has just \$2,135.06 left to meet the two-year goal of \$168,000! We are so close!

2024 hospitals at goal, and individual donors at the club level, will be recognized at KHA's Annual Advocacy Day and events throughout 2025. To become a contributor anytime, visit <https://kha-pac.square.site/>. Additional information, including suggested contribution levels, can be found [here](#).

State and federal governments pay for more than half of Kansas's hospital care and regulate 100 percent of hospital activities. Those are the main reasons why the work of the KHA and its political action committee, KHA-PAC, is so important. Elected individuals with a passion and understanding of hospitals' unique role in their communities are critical. Your contributions to the KHA-PAC are used to support those who champion our issues.

We appreciate all KHA-PAC donors – we couldn't do it without you! If you have questions about the PAC or how to get involved, please contact [Tara Mays](#) at (785) 969-9270.

--Tara Mays

It Is Not Too Late to Register for the Rural Health Symposium – Nov. 21

There is still time to register and attend the Rural Health Symposium on Nov. 21 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Wichita Airport in Wichita. Rural health care providers constantly face new challenges and fewer resources. The purpose of this symposium is to provide attendees with the skills, ideas, and information necessary to survive in the rapidly changing world of rural health care.

Target Audience: This symposium is designed for senior-level administrators, hospital trustees and others interested in rural health issues.



--Hayley Finch-Genschorck

HFMA and KHA All Payers Workshop – Dec. 12-13

The [Sunflower \(Kansas\) Chapter of the Healthcare Financial Management Association](#) and the Kansas Hospital Association invite you to attend the All Payers Workshop on Dec. 12-13 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Manhattan.

The workshop includes presentations from the Kansas Division of Workers' Compensation, Wisconsin Physician Services, Veterans Administration, Optum, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Regional Office, KHA, commercial and Medicare Advantage Insurers (Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas, Ambetter/Wellcare), the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, KanCare managed care organizations (Healthy Blue, Sunflower Health Plan and UnitedHealthcare) and the Great Plains Health Alliance.

This is an in-person-only event. The registration fee is \$100 per person for all attendees.



--Shannan Flach

Excellence in Workforce Strategies – A Shift to Healthy Employees, Healthy Community



Strategies that address workforce recruitment and retention are essential to providing optimal health in Kansas. Our series featuring workforce strategies will recognize teams of employees, providers and volunteers who have significantly contributed to the well-being, retention and recruitment of health care workers at their facilities.

The COVID-19 pandemic created immense challenges for health care organizations everywhere. It also spurred a reconsideration of workplace culture. Rice Community Healthcare in Lyons, took the challenges learned from the pandemic and turned them into motivation to create the Employee Wellness Committee.

In 2022, their main focus was simple: creating a workplace where everyone felt supported and valued, both physically and mentally. They secured a grant from WorkWellKS, a statewide initiative to improve Kansas workplaces' health. With this support, they built a first-of-its-kind committee for RCH. This committee is comprised of 13 members from different departments spanning nursing, maintenance, admissions and more, who serve a minimum one-year term. "From the very beginning, our committee has been purposefully structured to include the voices of those who might not serve on any other committees within our organization. We try to represent as many different departments and shifts as possible to bring a wide variety of opinions to the table," said George Stover, CEO.

To drive their wellness agenda forward, committee members got to work by creating initiatives to promote healthy lifestyles by focusing on physical health and mental wellness. The programs have included fitness and weight loss challenges, revitalization of outdoor areas to encourage outdoor activities and breaks, the addition of massage chairs in the break room and the establishment of the Employee Incentive Program, which empowers employees with a diverse range of wellness activities and bonus incentives tailored to nurture their physical, mental and emotional health. In late 2023, members developed progressive policies prioritizing the health and happiness of RCH employees, including implementing a fully paid six-week paternity and maternity leave program and an expanded bereavement policy to better support employees during difficult times. Both these programs reflect the commitment to meeting the evolving needs of today's families.

The changes have been positive at RCH. "We've observed significant improvements in morale, job satisfaction and overall mental and physical health among our staff. This has reduced burnout and increased resilience in facing workplace challenges," said Stover.

This reconsideration of the culture led to RCH rewriting its vision statement. "Healthy Employees, Healthy Community" brings this new focus to the forefront.

"We're proud to be advocates for the health and wellness of our team members because we believe that when our team is at their best, they can provide the highest quality care to our community," said Stover.

--*Shelby Stacy*

Nondiscrimination in Health Programs and Activities, Section 1557, Implementation Requirements

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services published its final rules implementing the [anti-discrimination provisions under Section 1557](#) of the Affordable Care Act on May 6, 2024. The final rule applies to all health programs or activities that receive, directly or indirectly, federal financial assistance and to all health programs or activities administered by HHS or by a Title I entity. The final rule prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

Under the final rule, virtually all health care providers will need to do the following in addition to complying with other state or federal non-discrimination laws:

- For covered entities with 15 or more employees, appoint a [Section 1557 Coordinator](#) – Nov. 2, 2024, deadline
- Post and provide the Notice of Discrimination to all patients, participants, beneficiaries, enrollees, applicants of its health programs and activities and to members of the public – Nov. 2, 2024, deadline
- Train relevant employees on policies and procedures – May 1, 2025, deadline
- Ensure patient care decision support tools are used non-discriminatorily – May 1, 2025
- Post and provide the notice of availability of language assistance services and auxiliary aids and services – July 5, 2025
- Adopt and implement policies and procedures – July 5, 2025

Sample policies, notices and forms can be found in the [resources for covered entities](#) on the HHS website. Details about the requirements can be found [here](#). Link to the [frequently asked questions](#) on Section 1557 Non-discrimination.

--Shannan Flach

KDHE Launches Statewide Bio-surveillance Initiative

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment has launched a statewide bio-surveillance initiative requesting hospital/health system participation. The initiative involves the collection of urine samples in the emergency department from patients presenting to the emergency department with any suspected drug overdose. The Kansas Health and Environment Laboratory will analyze the de-identified specimens to detect a broader range of substances than those typically tested in hospital laboratories. KDHE will reimburse participating hospitals for each specimen collected to compensate staff time for sample collection and participation in the initiative. A courier will be provided to deliver the specimens to KHEL. There is no charge for the testing. The initiative is funded by KDHE with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Overdose Data to Action funding. For more information, see [KDHE's Kansas Bio-Surveillance Initiative Fact Sheet](#). For questions or more detailed information, please contact KDHE's OD2AS Program at kdhe.odprevention@ks.gov.

--Karen Braman

Federal and National News

CMS Releases CY 2025 Medicare Payment and Policy Updates for ASC, OPPTS, PFS, HH and ESRD

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services released the final calendar year 2025 hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System, Ambulatory Surgical Center payment system, Physician Fee Schedule, Home Health PPS and End-Stage Renal Disease PPS Medicare payment and policy updates.

- [Physician Fee Schedule CY 2025 Final Rule](#)
- [Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System & Ambulatory Surgical Center Payment System CY 2025 Final Rule](#)
- [ESRD Prospective Payment System CY 2025 Final Rule](#)
- [Home Health Prospective Payment System CY 2025 Final Rule](#)

MLN Connects Provider eNews Available

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

- [CMS Roundup \(Nov. 1, 2024\)](#)
- [Respiratory Viruses: Get Up to Date on Flu, COVID-19, & RSV Vaccines](#)
- [Diabetes: Recommend Preventive Services](#)