



KHA's Current Report
December 20, 2024

President's Perspective – Sharing Our Holiday Favorites

The Kansas Hospital Association team hopes you enjoy your holiday favorites this season. We are thankful for the opportunity to serve KHA members. Merry Christmas and have a healthy and happy New Year.



Fraud Alert Issued Regarding Suspect Payments in MA and Provider Marketing Arrangements

The Office of Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has issued a special fraud alert to warn health care and insurance-related entities about certain fraud and abuse risks associated with marketing arrangements between Medicare Advantage Organizations and health care professionals and arrangements between HCPs and agents and brokers for Medicare Advantage plans.

These marketing arrangements involve questionable payments and referrals between MAOs, HCPs and third-party marketers that can mislead Medicare enrollees into choosing specific health plans or health care providers that may not meet the enrollees' needs. The OIG is concerned that parties involved may skew the guidance they provide to MA enrollees based on the parties' respective self-interests.

A significant risk area cited in the alert involves MAOs paying remuneration to HCPs, such as gift cards, for HCPs referring to or recommending patients to enroll in a particular MA plan. Additionally, the OIG highlights payments of concern from HCPs to agents and brokers in exchange for agents/brokers recommending that HCP be sent to a particular MA enrollee or referring the enrollee to the HCP.

You can view the [fraud alert here](#), including reviewing suspect characteristics to be aware of to ensure fraud and abuse laws are upheld.

--Jaron Caffrey

KHC and KHA Release Issue Briefs on Emergency Department Visits for Asthma in Kansas

The Kansas Healthcare Collaborative and the Kansas Hospital Association partnered on a [series of issue briefs on Emergency Department visits](#) in Kansas, using the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Emergency Department Prevention Quality Indicators. This brief, Emergency Department Visits for Asthma in Kansas, FY23, is the fourth in the series. In September 2023, AHRQ released a new group of area-based quality measures called Emergency Department Prevention Quality Indicators. Five PQE measures reflect ED visit rates for potentially preventable ED visits. The PQEs are area-based measures, meaning they are evaluated and reported for geographic areas, usually counties. The PQEs are "avoidable use" measures in that they identify conditions sensitive to the health status of a county's population (or other area) and the availability and quality of health care services in the county. PQEs are not used to measure quality at the hospital level.

Emergency Department PQI Issue Briefs:

- [PQE 01 Visits for Non-Traumatic Dental Conditions, KS, FY23](#)
- [PQE 02 Visits for Chronic Ambulatory Care Sensitive Conditions, KS, FY23](#)
- [PQE 03 Visits for Acute Ambulatory Care Sensitive Conditions, Kansas, FY23](#)
- [PQE 04 Visits for Asthma, Kansas, FY23](#)

KHA and KHC hope the results of these issue briefs are useful to hospitals and other organizations planning population health improvement activities, community health needs assessments or other health improvement efforts.

--Karen Braman

Updates to the KHA Discharge Data Submission Program

The Kansas Hospital Associations Data Committee has approved the [expansion of payer codes](#) and the submission of language spoken within the discharge data reporting program. A list of the expanded payer codes is [available here](#). Language spoken will be included in Report Type G, new to the submission format. An updated data submission instruction, timeline and format is [available here](#). Hospitals are encouraged to begin reporting as soon as possible. We hope to have all facilities reporting by July discharges (due Sept. 15, 2025).

We understand that these changes will require modifications to established data submission processes and appreciate KHA hospital's commitment to advancing our hospital data collection and analytics. This new information will support our hospitals, KHA advocacy opportunities and population health initiatives. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact [Sally Othmer](#) or [Dee Lewis](#).

--Sally Othmer

Opportunity to Participate in Region 7 Infectious Disease Briefing

With continued and emerging infectious disease threats like avian flu, the University of Nebraska, which hosts the Global Center for Health Security and the Region VII Disaster Health Response Ecosystem, has hosted a bi-weekly briefing on infectious diseases since 2019. The GCHS and R7DHRE are expanding the reach of this briefing to have a more regional focus (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska). While the focus of the briefing will continue to be infectious diseases and the threats they pose, this briefing may also provide key updates on any urgent issues. The Region 7 Infectious Disease Briefing, hosted by GCHS and R7DHRE, will kick off the new year on Jan. 7, 2025, and be held every other Tuesday at 9:00 a.m.

[Click to Register](#)

For any questions, please reach out to R7DHRE@unmc.edu.

--Larry Van Der Wege

CMS Releases CY 2026 Medicare Advantage Proposed Rule

On Nov. 27, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services released the contract year 2026 Medicare Advantage and Part D Policy and technical changes [proposed rule](#). The proposed rule increases oversight and improves accountability of Medicare Advantage plans while also improving protections of Medicare beneficiaries.

KHA has prepared a summary of the significant provisions that can be [viewed here](#). Key highlights of the proposed rule include:

- Permit coverage of anti-obesity medications in the Medicare and Medicaid programs.
- Fortify existing limitations on insurer use of internal coverage criteria and requirements for MA plans to provide coverage for all reasonable and necessary Medicare Part A and B benefits.
- Update MA and Part D plan medical loss ratio reporting requirements to improve oversight.
- Require MA plans to make provider directory information more widely available through the Medicare Plan Finder tool.
- Improve transparency through increased oversight of agent and broker materials and marketing from MA plans.
- Limit enrollee cost sharing for behavioral health services to an amount that is no greater than Traditional Medicare.
- Apply additional guardrails of insurer use of artificial intelligence to ensure it does not result in inequitable treatment or access to care.

--Jaron Caffrey

Perinatal Substance Use Disorders 101 Webinar – Jan. 22

The [Policy Center for Maternal Mental Health](#) is hosting a free 1.5-hour [Perinatal Substance Use Disorders 101 webinar](#) on Jan. 22. This is an excellent opportunity for providers and administrators interested in learning how to recognize and effectively respond to substance use concerns during the perinatal period. For Kansas-specific policies and resources related to perinatal substance use, check out the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's [Perinatal Substance Use Toolkit](#) and review the [Pregnant Women Using Substances](#) workflow for providers.

--Karen Braman

Kansas Connecting Communities 2025 Training Scholarships Available

Kansas Connecting Communities has announced their 2025 training scholarships are available! Whether you have previously taken advantage of this funding or are new to the network, KCC highly encourages you to [apply](#). Funding can be used to access various live and on-demand training, including PSI's Perinatal Mood Disorders 2 Day Components of Care training on Jan. 29 and 30 (usually \$425). See the [complete list of eligible trainings](#). The [application](#) takes just a few minutes, and funding notifications generally happen within one week of submission.

Please get in touch with the Perinatal Provider Consultation Line for any support you may need related to caring for the perinatal family's behavioral health needs. The consultation line will be closed for the holidays from Dec. 23-25 and Jan.1 and closing early at 3:00 p.m. on Dec. 31. Calls made during these times will be returned on the next working business day. For interim non-crisis support, please contact the MMH Hotline (800) TLC-MAMA). For crisis support, please use 911 or 988.

--Karen Braman

KSHIMSS' Congratulates Shawn Weldin – HIMSS Changemaker in Health Award Recipient

The Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society is focused on advancing global health and driving innovation and excellence in health information and technology. The Kansas HIMSS chapter is an ally of the Kansas Hospital Association. HIMSS annually honors individuals recognized for driving positive change within the global health ecosystem. This year, Shawn Weldin, Director of Information Technology at Sabetha Community Hospital, was awarded the prestigious HIMSS Changemaker in Health Award. Shawn has served as President, Secretary and Education lead of the Kansas HIMSS chapter. This award acknowledges that Shawn demonstrates significant leadership and extraordinary contributions to the Kansas HIMSS chapter, the chapter's program and the Society. He is strongly committed to strengthening the health information and technology industry in their local region for the betterment of all members.

--Sally Othmer

Kansas Moms in Mind Consultation Clinic Series

Kansas Connecting Communities is offering a Kansas Moms in Mind Consultation Clinic Series. The series allows physicians and other health care providers to connect with peers and gain knowledge on various topics related to the medical management of psychiatric disorders in the perinatal period. Each clinic features a brief didactic and collaborative case review. Register for information about the entire series and join individual clinics as you are available. Presenters are Erin Bider, MD, a perinatal psychiatrist, and Tara Chettiar, MD, FACOG, an OB/GYN and certified perinatal mental health (PMH-C) provider, both based at the University of Kansas Health System. The clinics occur at noon on Feb 11, Apr 8, Jun 10, Aug 12 and Oct 14.

Click to
Register

These clinics are intended to provide evidence-based education and support from trained professionals. Decisions around medication in the perinatal period should always involve an individual risk-benefit analysis and discussion with the pregnant person and their partner/family about treatment options, especially concerns for the fetus or baby. For on-demand consultation on a specific patient case, providers can contact the Perinatal Provider Consultation Line for Behavioral Health at (800) 322-6262 or visit bit.ly/MCHRNform for assistance 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday.

--Karen Braman

Join the Kansas Association of Risk and Quality Management for 2025

The Kansas Association of Risk and Quality Management was formed to promote the delivery of quality health care and the practice of risk management in the health care setting. The goals to accomplish this purpose include:

- Promote the professional development of individuals with responsibilities in the health care areas of risk, quality management and patient safety.
- Serve as a resource to our members regarding current legislative and legal matters that impact our roles in the facilities we serve while providing a voice to proposed legislation.
- Facilitate networking between our members and other health care professionals and disciplines.
- Provide educational opportunities for our members to enhance their professional growth.

KARQM invites your health care team members to join in its efforts to educate, advocate, mentor and learn. They strive to create environments that promote patient and staff safety and quality of care.

Join on the new website: www.karqm.org. For more information about KARQM, contact [Tereasa DeMeritt](#), 2025 KARQM president, at (620) 421-4880, Ext. 5554, or [Larry Van Der Wege](#), KHA liaison, (785) 233-7436.

--Melissa Willey

CEO Staffing Changes

The Kansas Hospital Association would like to inform you of the latest member hospital administrator changes since our last hospital list printout in November.

- Wendy J. Brazil, JD, chief executive officer, Neosho Memorial Regional Medical Center, Chanute
- Alisha Herrman, interim chief executive officer, Edwards County Medical Center, Kinsley
- Laraine Gengler, chief financial officer (receiving CEO mailings), Lindsborg Community Hospital, Lindsborg
- Richard Q. Bergling, administrator, Ness County Hospital District #2, Ness City
- Brendan Johnson, president and chief executive officer, AdventHealth Ottawa, Ottawa (starts Jan. 20)
- Alejandro Quiroga, MD, MBA, president and chief executive officer, Children's Mercy Hospital Kansas, Overland Park (starts Jan. 2)
- Sean Kamber, chief executive officer, Menorah Medical Center, Overland Park
- Laurie Labarca, interim hospital president, Ascension Via Christi Hospitals Wichita, Inc. (St. Francis), Wichita (also hospital president, Ascension Via Christi St. Teresa, Wichita)

Our [Kansas Hospitals and Health-Related Facilities list](#) is available on the KHA website in PDF (Adobe Acrobat Reader format) at www.kha-net.org. A username and password are required. Click on Kansas Hospitals, CEO Directories, Kansas Hospital List and Kansas Hospitals and Health-Related Facilities List. Please contact [Cheryl Carson](#) at (785) 233-7436 if you have updates and provide the start date of the new administrator/chief executive officer, picture, birthday and press release/bio.

--Cheryl Carson

Health Observances and Recognition Days for January Month-Long Observances

- Birth Defects Prevention Month (National)
- Blood Donor Month (National)
- Cervical Cancer Screening Month
- Cervical Health Awareness Month
- Glaucoma Awareness Month (National)
- Human Trafficking Prevention Month (National)
- Integrated Health Month
- Medical Travel Month
- Medical Payment Integrity Month
- Quality of Life Month (International)
- Radon Awareness Month
- Stalking Awareness Month
- Thyroid Awareness Month
- Winter Sports Traumatic Brain Injury Awareness Month (National)

Recognition Days | Events

- Jan. 3 – Mind Body Wellness Day (International)
- Jan. 4 – Braille Day (World)
- Jan. 11 – Human Trafficking Awareness Day (Wear Blue Day) (National) and Paget's Awareness Day
- Jan. 22 – Celebration of Life Day
- Jan. 23 – Maternal Health Awareness Day
- Jan. 24 – Compliment Day (National)
- Jan. 25 – IV Nurse Day
- Jan. 26 – Leprosy Day (World)
- Jan. 30 – Neglected Tropical Diseases Day (World)

The Kansas Hospital Association and Society for Healthcare Strategy and Market Development are pleased to bring you the [2025 Calendar of Health Observances & Recognition Days](#). Yet another example of our commitment to providing health care strategists with practical, timely resources, this calendar is designed to help you plan your community health events, internal and external communications, social media campaigns and more. The calendar is easy to navigate, interactive and features more than 230 health observances and recognition days. Don't miss out on receiving calendar updates from SHSMD sponsor Baldwin Publishing. Not only do they provide you with a Health Observance Guide with ALL the content you need to post every day for the following month, they also give access to healthy recipes, cooking videos, branded cookbooks, recipe calendars, wellness content and solutions.

--Jan Fenwick

Federal and National News

PREP Act Extended Allowing Pharmacists to Administer COVID-19 and Flu Vaccines to Children Ages Three and Up

On Dec. 11, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on Dec. 11 [extended the PREP Act](#), allowing pharmacies to continue administering COVID-19 tests, as well as administering COVID-19 and influenza vaccinations to ages three years and older. The extension is valid through Dec. 31, 2029. The age limit for vaccines other than COVID-19 and flu administered in Kansas pharmacies is still subject to state statute, which is 12 years and older.

HRSA Announces Funding Opportunity for Behavioral Health Workforce

The Health Resources and Services Administration released a new Notice of Funding Opportunity to increase the number of highly trained behavioral health providers nationwide. HRSA will award one cooperative agreement of approximately \$2.5 million annually over four years.

The [Behavioral Health Workforce Development Technical Assistance Program](#) aims to provide tailored technical assistance to current and future HRSA-funded programs. View the [funding opportunity](#) for complete eligibility information. Applications are due Monday, March 3, 2025.

MACPAC Releases 2024 Edition of MACStats

The Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Plan Payment and Access Commission [published](#) the [2024 MACStats Databook](#). The databook compiles updated data on national and state Medicaid and CHIP enrollment, spending, benefits, beneficiaries' health, service use and access to care.

MLN Connects Provider eNews Available

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

- [MBI Lookup Tools: CMS Seeks Input by Feb. 17](#)
- [CMS Roundup \(Dec. 13, 2024\)](#)
- [Long-Term Care Hospital Provider Preview Reports: Review by Jan. 15](#)
- [Inpatient Rehabilitation Facility Provider Preview Reports: Review by Jan. 15](#)
- [Medicare Advantage Organizations & Prescription Drug Plans: Comment on Draft Medicare Transaction Facilitator Agreements by Jan. 31](#)
- [Health Professional Shortage Area: CY 2025 Bonus Payments](#)
- [Home Health Quality Reporting Program: Final OASIS-E1 Instruments & Manual](#)
- [Quarterly Credit Balance Reports No Longer Required](#)