



MEDIA RELEASE

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Two-Thirds of Kansas Resident Support Medicaid Expansion

Recent public opinion poll finds nearly 3 in 4 Kansans feel Kansas should maximize federal funds and prevent Kansas tax dollars going to other states

(Topeka, Kan. – Feb. 25, 2013) – A statewide public opinion poll conducted by the Kansas Hospital Association in December, gauged Kansans’ attitudes toward Medicaid expansion and health care access. The majority of Kansans surveyed were supportive of Medicaid expansion for one of three reasons: 1) covering individuals with an income up to 138% of the federal poverty level, 2) bringing additional federal funds to Kansas, or 3) preventing Kansas tax dollars from going to other states. The survey was administered by ETC Institute to a stratified random sample of 610 Kansans.

“Most people know someone who is uninsured in our state, so we're not surprised that people are supportive of expanding health coverage,” said Tom Bell, president and chief executive officer of the KHA. “Community hospitals feel Kansas should thoughtfully consider using Medicaid expansion as an opportunity to build upon and improve our current Medicaid program, KanCare.”

Sixty percent of residents surveyed supported the expansion of Medicaid coverage in Kansas to cover individuals who have an income level of up to \$15,420 annually or 138% of the federal poverty level; 24% were not supportive and 16% were not sure. After learning that Medicaid expansion would bring more than \$800 million in federal dollars to Kansas over three years, there was a slight increase in the level of support for Medicaid expansion in Kansas. Sixty-two percent of residents were supportive, 23% were not supportive and 15% were not sure. But the largest majority, 72% of the residents, surveyed felt that Kansas should expand Medicaid to maximize funds and prevent Kansas tax dollars from going to other states; 19% disagreed and 9% were not sure.

“A decision to forego Medicaid expansion is more than just a decision to refuse the federal funding associated with Medicaid expansion,” said Bell. “In fact, it amounts to real cuts to hospitals that are

currently serving as the primary safety net for many uninsured individuals, and it comes at a time when the uncompensated care burden on those hospitals continues to grow at an alarming rate.”

Unfortunately, 12% of Kansas residents surveyed reported that during the last year, someone in their household needed medical care and did not get it. The reason most often cited (87%) for not getting medical help was that it cost too much or it was not covered by insurance.

This survey was administered by ETC Institute of Olathe, Kansas, and funded by the American Hospital Association. The complete survey results can be found on the KHA Web site at www.kha-net.org. The 3-page survey was administered by phone to a stratified random sample of 610 Kansans – with at least 100 households surveyed in each of KHA’s six districts. The overall results of the survey have a precision of at least +/- 4.0% at the 95% level of confidence.

The Kansas Hospital Association is a not-for-profit association of health care provider organizations and individuals that are committed to the health improvement of their communities. KHA membership includes 217 member facilities, of which 126 are full-service community hospitals. Founded in 1910, KHA maintains its vision of “an organization of hospitals working together to improve access, quality and the affordability of health care for all Kansans.”

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