

Legislative Update
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Legislature hits turnaround

The Legislature has hit the midpoint of the session, called “turnaround,” when most bills must have passed their chamber of origin to move forward in 2015. Certain committees, such as Appropriations, Ways and Means, Federal and State Affairs, and Taxation, are exempted. Any bills introduced or referred there are not subject to turnaround and other calendar deadlines.

House to hold Medicaid expansion hearing

It started with a motion by Rep. Jim Ward (D-Wichita) to amend a donor breast milk bill in House floor debate. Because the bill had to do with Medicaid, the motion was determined to be germane. House leadership was on a schedule to wrap up for turnaround and quickly realized Medicaid expansion would significantly lengthen their debate schedule.

House Speaker Ray Merrick (R-Stilwell) and House Health and Human Service Committee chair Dan Hawkins (R-Wichita), therefore, promised to hold a hearing on Medicaid expansion, if Rep. Ward would withdraw his amendment on the floor. And that is how it is that the House will finally hold a Medicaid expansion hearing.

Rep. Hawkins is coordinating with the Kansas Hospital Association on a specific hearing date – not this coming week, but soon. This is a top KAFP legislative priority and the Academy is planning to present proponent testimony when the hearing is held.

House committee to have midwifery briefing

The House Health and Human Services Committee on Wednesday will hold an “informational hearing” on the subject of midwifery. This comes as nurse midwives have recently made their own push for legislation allowing them independent and expanded practice.

This is *not* a hearing on HB 2280, which would expand their scope of practice to include a number of OB/GYN procedures that could be done independently of a collaborating physician’s oversight.

The committee chairman is interested in the topic and sees midwives’ practice to be different that APRNs overall. This hearing will just be an opportunity for the committee to learn more about their practice.

The following day, the same committee will have an informational hearing on *hookah bars*. Interesting times and topics!

Mental health pre-auth bill killed in Senate debate

A bill that would have required mental health providers to obtain preauthorization on psychotropic medication for Medicaid patients was killed in Senate debate on Wednesday. [SB 123](#) was proposed by the Brownback administration as a way to save an estimated \$8 million in the next year.

Providers and consumers alike turned out en masse against SB 123, when it was heard in the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee. KDHE maintained that the transition would have little impact on Medicaid consumers currently on these medications. They said that the MCOs wouldn't be able to disrupt patients from taking mental health medications they're already on.

Opponents, though, said requiring pre-authorizations would be very disrupting and could be life threatening. Some providers described the potential harm if psychotropic medications are delayed.

In the end, the majority of the Senate agreed that these decisions should be left between providers and their patients, and not at the discretion of MCOs and the state. The bill failed on a vote of 15-25.

Family Doctor of the Day Recognition

A special **thank you** goes out to those providing FDOD services this past week: **Dr. Rick Rajewski**, Hays; **Dr. Todd Miller**, Wichita; **Dr. Mike Engelken**, Topeka; and **Dr. Stacey Dimitt**, Goddard. We know that setting aside this kind of time in your already busy schedules is not easy, but your commitment is truly appreciated!

There are still FDOD openings in the 2015 legislative session. In addition to providing an appreciated service to legislators, it allows an excellent opportunity to view the legislative process firsthand and to speak with your own legislators on KAFP legislative priorities.

Legislative Committee Meetings

The Legislature is taking a short turnaround break and returns to work on Wednesday, March 4.

Wednesday, March 4

1:30, House Health & Human Services, Room 546-S
Informational hearing: Midwifery

Thursday, March 5

1:30, House Health & Human Services, Room 546-S
Informational hearing: Hookah bars