

KAFP Legislative Update
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Senate Committee Chair Ousted

Senate President Susan Wagle (R-Wichita) announced Friday she's removing Sen. Mary Pilcher-Cook (R-Shawnee) from her position as chair of the Senate Public Health & Welfare Committee and from the committee altogether.

Sen. Michael O'Donnell (R-Wichita) will move up to chair the committee and Sen. Elaine Bowers (R-Concordia) will serve as vice-chair. Wagle will fill the vacancy on the committee.

The move comes following Pilcher-Cook's attempt to amend Medicaid expansion into SB341, a bill authorizing drug step therapy into the Medicaid program, during Senate debate last Tuesday. SB341 was a bill that had come out of her own committee. According to Pilcher-Cook, she requested the amendment so that her fellow Senators "could send a message to the House" by voting Medicaid expansion down.

The amendment action was challenged and ruled not germane. Pilcher-Cook then challenged that ruling, forcing a vote to try and overturn that decision. In doing so, she commented that those not voting against the germaneness ruling were, in fact, voting in favor of Obamacare. That was what Sen. Wagle pointed to as the reason for the ousting as chair – that she put her fellow members in an unfair and untenable position.

Sen. Wagle also stated she is calling for a full hearing and vote on expanding KanCare, allowing it to be fairly vetted through the legislative process.

Step Therapy Bill Passes Senate

[SB 341](#), a bill that would apply drug step therapy to the KanCare program, passed the Senate Wednesday on a vote of 23-16. The bill was opposed by most health organizations, who generally cited this as a decision best made by a patient's physician and one that could pose greater risks to those with critical health issues, such as HIV or multiple sclerosis.

The bill was carried by Sen. Jim Denning (R-Overland Park), but was suggested by the governor, who included the \$10.6 million associated annual savings in his FY2017 budget proposal. Sen. Vicki Schmidt (R-Topeka) suggested a number of amendments aimed at carving out certain health conditions and providing greater consumer protections, but most were voted down. Her final amendment, which was approved, requires the Dept. of Health and Environment to report to the legislature the amount of savings that is actually achieved by the measure prior to the 2017 legislative session.

SB341 now goes to the House Health and Human Services Committee.

Interstate Licensure Compact

A bill allowing Kansas physicians to participate in an Interstate Licensure Compact, [HB 2456](#), passed favorably out of the House Health and Human Services Committee. The bill defines the practice of

medicine as occurring where a patient resides, allowing increased access to telemedicine. The bill requires physicians to be licensed in their home state, but preserves the authority of the Board of Healing Arts' oversight. Currently, about a dozen states participate in the Compact.

The bill was introduced and supported by the Kansas Medical Society.

Family Doctor of the Day

Appreciation goes out to Academy members who served as Doctor of the Day at the Kansas Capitol this past week. Your simple gift of service makes a difference to so many, especially those who are away from their hometown physicians and needing medical attention. Following are those who served this past week: *Dr. John Feehan, Olathe; Dr. Abigail Heinz, Wichita; Dr. Jen Bacani McKenney, Fredonia; and Dr. R.C. Trotter, Dodge City.*

Lest we forget how important this service is, last Wednesday a young woman passed out as she was presenting to a legislative committee. Yes, to the great gratitude of all involved, it was Dr. Jen to the rescue! Thank you to those participating and taking time from your busy practices to serve those in the Capitol.

Committee Meetings

Health committees in the House and Senate will be devoting much of the week to taking action on bills that have received hearings in the respective committees. The Legislature is still working to shave days off of the 2016 session, so committee and chamber activity is increasing across the board.