

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE
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Legislative Turnaround

The Legislature is planning an early legislative “turnaround” day this session. Turnaround is the point in the session when most bills, except those from exempted committees, must pass the chamber where they originated and move to the other chamber for action.

The Legislature originally planned February 26 as Turnaround Day, but is planning to wrap up its first-round work on Monday, February 22, and save some days for the veto session in case they are needed. Most will remember that the 2015 Legislature went over the statutory 90-day session and took a record-breaking 114 days for legislators to complete their work. Legislative leaders are hoping to avoid going overtime this session, especially in an election year.

Given that this Update is not published for members until Tuesday of each week, bill reviews and updates that would usually be provided in today’s Update would already change by the publish date of the weekly newsletter. Therefore, a more complete midpoint legislative update will be prepared next week. [Click here for an up-to-date KAFP bill tracker.](#)

KanCare Expansion

Expanding KanCare (Medicaid) to Kansans making up to 138% of the federal poverty level remains a top priority of KAFP, the Kansas Hospital Association and countless other organizations and citizens across Kansas. To that end, two identical bills have been introduced this legislative session – [SB 371](#) and [HB 2633](#).

The bills were introduced in the Senate and House Federal and State Affairs Committees, respectively. These committees are among those exempted from Turnaround and other legislative calendar deadlines, which means the Legislature may take them up at any point in the legislative session.

Both legislative chambers have expressed a reluctance to debate KanCare expansion this year, but entities on both sides of the legislation are pushing hard to see action taken this year. For his part, Governor Brownback has publicly stated his continued opposition to the expansion.

In a publicized public brouhaha between Senate President Susan Wagle (R-Wichita) and former Senate Public Health and Welfare chair, Senator Mary Pilcher-Cook (R-Shawnee), the Senate President stated she plans to see KanCare expansion appropriately vetted in Senate hearings and debate in coming weeks.

This is an issue that many legislators would like to avoid voting on this (election) year. In previous elections, those who are against the expansion have used it as a divisive wedge between voters and those candidates who support it.

Well intended legislators, who genuinely care about all citizens having appropriate access to health care and who generally supportive of KAFP priorities have a valid concern of losing their next election if they

vote in favor of expansion this year – and these are legislators most of us want to see return and continue their work in Topeka.

*To move this issue, more responsibility will need to be shouldered in home communities at the true constituent grassroots level. Those in favor of expanding KanCare and increasing access to health care need to work in their own communities – civic organizations, local chambers of commerce, neighbors and newspapers – to build a groundswell of **support that provides legislators a mandate from their voters** to get it passed.*

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. Jera Smith, Wichita; Dr. Todd Miller, Wichita; Dr. Doug Gruenbacher, Quinter; and Dr. John-Michael Watson, Wichita.*