

**Legislative Update
March 6, 2015**

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Short week for legislators

Legislators returned from a short turnaround break on Wednesday and Thursday, taking a “pro forma” day on Friday. Most bills they consider from here on must have already passed one chamber. There are some exceptions, as a few committees are exempt from the usual legislative bill deadlines.

One of the bills still open for legislative action is [HB 2306](#), proposing a tax increase on cigarettes and tobacco products. The bill has had a hearing in the House Taxation Committee, but has yet to receive any formal committee action.

Budget recommendation stirs controversy

A surprise move by a Senate budget subcommittee this week to reallocate funds among the state’s Regents universities has set up a hotbed of controversy. A Senate budget subcommittee chaired by Sen. Tom Arpke (R-Salina) recommended, by a vote of 4-1, to shift \$9.4 million funding over the next two years from The University of Kansas to the KU Medical Center and the Medical Student Loan Program.

The shift would add \$3.7 million each of the next two years to the KU medical school in Wichita and \$1 million each year to the Medical Student Loan Program. Sen. Arpke made the motion because he said he believes Kansas’ medical infrastructure needs to be expanded, to better address physician need across the state over the next decade.

Those on the subcommittee voting in favor of the Arpke motion were Senators: Michael O’Donnell (R-Wichita); Steve Abrams (R-Arkansas City); and Greg Smith (R-Overland Park). Senator Laura Kelly (D-Topeka) was the lone dissenting vote.

The subcommittee’s recommendations met significant opposition and questions when presented to the full Senate Ways and Means Committee, with some saying allocation of funds should be left to the Regents institutions. Arpke continued to defend the reallocation, saying the training of doctors to work in underserved areas of the state should be a higher priority.

The committee ultimately agreed to postpone a final vote by the full budget committee, until more information can be gathered about the potential impact of the cuts and reallocations.

Medicaid expansion hearing set

Hearing dates have been set on [HB 2319](#), a bill requested by the Kansas Hospital Association (KHA) that would remove the current statutory prohibition against Medicaid expansion. The House Health and

Human Services Committee will hold hearings on March 18 (proponents) and March 19 (opponents), at 1:30pm.

Committee chairman Rep. Dan Hawkins (R-Wichita) has asked the KHA to help coordinate proponent testimony and KAFP has been asked to participate in that effort. KAFP will present testimony, and individual physicians should feel free to write letters supporting HB 2319.

The nexus of this hearing came when Rep. Jim Ward (D-Wichita) moved to add Medicaid expansion into a bill relating to donor breast milk and Medicaid, in House debate. He withdrew his amendment when the Rep. Hawkins agreed to hold a hearing on the expansion.

Nurse midwifery informational hearing

The House Health and Human Services Committee held an informational hearing on the topic of nurse midwifery on Wednesday. This was not a hearing on a particular bill, rather it was a way for the committee to hear from nurse midwives what their practice entails and why they want to practice independently from physician collaboration agreements.

Several themes emerged as the midwives presented their perspective. First, they look back over time and describe childbirth as a natural process that has become overly medicalized. They see anesthesia and other medical procedures as being more invasive than they should be. They see cesarean sections as being over-performed and indicative of the “medicalization” of childbirth.

Second, they continually stress they take care of the “normal,” low-risk women’s health issues. They talked about sending higher risk situations to physicians or working collaboratively with a physician in higher risk situations.

Then, they see their practice as a free market opportunity that should not be restricted by the requirement to have a collaborating physician agreement. Conferees referred to themselves as “primary care providers” to women and babies. They include “well woman” care and newborns in their practice sphere.

Whether this concept moves forward this session is in doubt. HB 2280, which would eliminate collaborative practice agreements and define much of their practice in statute, has been referred to the House Taxation Committee. This makes it exempt from the turnaround deadline, but still would require both chambers to pass it in just a few short weeks.

Family Doctor of the Day Recognition

A special **thank you** goes out to those providing FDOD services this past week: **Dr. Robert Kraft**, Salina; and **Dr. Vance Lassey**, Holton. 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

Monday, March 9

1:30, House Health & Human Services, 546-S

Hearing on:

- [HB 2362](#) – Healing arts licensees; resident active licenses & health care records
- [HB 2376](#) – EMS Board authority to impose fines
- [HB 2387](#) – EMS amendments

Tuesday, March 10

1:30, House Health & Human Services, 546-S

Hearing on:

- [SB 142](#) – KDADS; programs for all-inclusive care for seniors
- [SB 180](#) – HMOs and Medicare provider organizations; privilege fees

Thursday, March 12

1:30, House Health & Human Services, 546-S

Hearing on: [HB 2118](#) – Podiatrists surgery treatment of the ankle