

Legislative Update March 31, 2018

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First Adjournment Drawing Near

The Legislature spent much of their time on the floor this week, working to pass bills out of each chamber and into conference committees. Most conference committees will meet early in the week to work through differences so the House and Senate can take final action on reports before first adjournment on April 6th.

[HB 2674](#), which would establish the Telemedicine Act in Kansas, is still awaiting action in the Senate. As explained in last week's Update, the bill was complicated in Senate committee action that added a bill establishing *dental therapist practice* – mid-level dental professionals – into HB 2674. An amendment adding other health professionals – physical therapists, occupational therapists and speech-language therapists – is also now included in the bill. The last item was added so that these services delivered in the school setting could be billed to Medicaid.

Once the Senate takes action on HB 2674, it will go to a conference committee. There is a good chance the dental therapist practice provision will be removed in the end. While the telemedicine act has broad popular support in the Legislature, the support for the dental therapist act has been decidedly mixed – especially as it has tended to pit advocates for the mid-level practice against dentists.

KAFP will continue to support the establishment of telemedicine, to provide insurance coverage parity between in-person medical visits and those provided via teleconference.

Fate of Other KAFP Priorities Undecided

The fate of other measures supported by the Academy this year is less certain. Bills in both chambers that would increase the tax on cigarettes and other tobacco products have had hearings, but face a steep climb for passage. In addition to the potential of decreasing smoking rates, advocates have also pressed the benefit passage would have on the State budget – especially as legislators seek to answer a Supreme Court decision requiring increased funding for K-12 education.

KanCare expansion is the other compelling issue at the Statehouse that is facing overwhelming odds of passage this year. Remember that legislation did pass both chambers last year, but was vetoed by then-governor Sam Brownback. The 2017 Legislature came just short of over-riding the governor's veto and advocates had been hopeful they could gain political ground this year.

However, Governor Colyer does not support the expansion and Republican leaders in both chambers are with him on that. While there have been numerous efforts to amend KanCare expansion into other bills in the House, the chamber's rules on "germaneness" – meaning the amendment must relate on two points in the underlying bill – have prevented the measure from receiving debate and consideration in the House.

The Senate has also controlled debate of KanCare expansion, largely by preventing any bill that could relate to Medicaid from being debated.

Rallies by advocacy coalitions for both the tobacco tax and KanCare expansion are planned at the Capitol in the coming week.

Family Doctor of the Day

KAFP sponsors the [Family Doctor of the Day \(FDOD\) program](#) during the Kansas legislative session. Licensed physicians, including residents, volunteer to provide mostly-minor health needs to legislators and their staff. The Legislature highly values and appreciates access to these services, especially when so many are away from their hometown primary care physicians.

The following members provided services last week: **Doug Crase, MD**, Wichita; **Deb Doubek, MD**, Manhattan; and **Jen Bacani McKenney, MD**, Fredonia. Thank you all for your time and service to Capitol legislators and staff last week.

Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

Fri, April 6	First adjournment – end of regular session
Mon, April 9 – Wed, April 25	Legislative Break
Thurs, April 26	Veto Session begins
Fri, April 20	Consensus revenue estimates
Mon, April 30	Deadline to respond to the Court in the <i>Gannon</i> school finance case
Fri, May 4	90 th Day of the Session