

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

March 7, 2020

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Short, Slow Week at the Statehouse

Legislators returned on Wednesday from a short turnaround break. A few committees met on Wednesday and Thursday, but there was little action taken. The Legislature has just a few weeks remaining to complete the work of the regular session. It is hard to predict how the ongoing impasse on Medicaid expansion finally breaks this session, assuming it does. The only legislation that is legally required of each legislature is passage of a budget for the next fiscal year.

Impasse on Medicaid Expansion Heats Up

Nearly all health-related bills are caught in the ongoing impasse on Medicaid expansion, because some top Republican leaders do not want to put any bill on the floor that is amendable to expansion legislation. That impasse grew even more heated this past week.

On Monday and Tuesday, Senate Majority Leader Jim Denning (R-Overland Park) joined Governor Laura Kelly for meetings in Wichita, designed to put pressure on legislators holding back Medicaid expansion debate. On Monday, the duo met with hospital officials and, on Tuesday, they met with faith leaders seeking their help in winning over more senators. Two of the senators playing key roles in stalling Medicaid expansion are from Wichita.

The bipartisan rallying set off tempers in the Senate, which spilled over in a Senate Republican caucus meeting and subsequent debate in the Senate chambers. Senate President Susan Wage and Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee Chair Gene Suellentrop, both from Wichita, confronted Majority Leader Denning over his joining the democratic governor in Wichita in pushing passage of SB 252 or similar legislation this session.

They and a few other Senate republicans admonished Denning, they said, because he is the leader of Senate republicans and should lead the republican agenda, not the governor's agenda. They asked him to promise not to make further appearances with the governor, to which he said he would not make that promise. Several also said they believe the appearances in Wichita will hurt republicans in their senate races this fall.

KAFP Priority Bills

- [HB 252](#) – Bipartisan bill expanding Medicaid to 138% FPL and implementing a health plan reinsurance program.
Status: amended, then voted down in S-Public Health & Welfare; non-exempt
KAFP provided proponent testimony
- [SB 350](#) - Amending healthcare stabilization fund coverage requirements and membership on the board of governors and providing for the dissolution of the fund, should the Supreme Court rule that caps on non-economic damages in medical cases is unconstitutional. This is a proactive response to the Hilburn ruling.
Status: re-referred to S-Ways & Means; exempt
Bill introduced at request of KMS
- [SB 381](#) – Authorizing medical student and residency loan assistance to encourage the practice of obstetrics and gynecology in medically underserved areas of the state (separate fund from primary care MSLP).
Status: passed by Senate, 25-15; moves to House
KAFP provided neutral testimony, with recommendation to ensure it does not interfere with MSLP for primary care
- [HB 2412](#) – a bill providing independent and expanded scope of practice to APRNs

Status: referred to H-Health & Human Services; roundtable discussion on 2/19; exempt bill

- [HB 2563](#) - Increasing the minimum age to purchase or possess cigarettes and tobacco products from 18 to 21; prohibiting cigarette vending machines and flavored vaping products.
Status: passed, as amended, by H-Federal & State Affairs on 2/13; on H-General Orders
KAFP provided proponent testimony, with recommendation to remove menthol exemption
- [HB 2570](#) – Limiting certain Schedule II, III and IV opioid prescriptions to a seven-day supply, with certain exceptions, and allowing pharmacists right to refuse any prescriptions of more than seven days.
Status: re-referred to H-Appropriations; re-referred to H-Health & Human Services

Note: many of the bill web links go to their fiscal notes (FN) or supplemental notes (SN), rather than the actual bill, as these notes provide more brief and clear descriptions of the bills.

Family Doctor of the Day

KAFP is again sponsoring 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.

Appreciation goes out to the following members, who provided FDOD care this past week: **Dr. Cassandra McKarnin**, Olathe; and **Dr. Danelle Perry**, Manhattan. Thank you for your gift of service!

Week of March 9-13

Tuesday, Mar 10

9:30 am, S-Public Health & Welfare, Room 118-N

Discussion & questions on:

- *Impact of Medicaid Expansion in other states*

Wednesday, Mar 11

1:30 pm, H-Health & Human Services, Room 546-S

Presentation:

- *The Cost of Health Care – Kansas Health Institute*