

Welcome to the first Legislative Update of the 2017 Kansas Legislative Session. This year the state's governing bodies will have approximately one third of its members new to the legislature. There also has been a turn toward more moderation. This was seen by many as repudiation of the Governor's fiscal policies. As has been the case, previously budget issues and shortfalls will continue to dominate the lawmaker's thoughts in 2017.

**Budget-** When new lawmakers began the 2017 session they were staring at a \$350 Million shortfall for the remainder of the fiscal year which ends in June. The governor largely left it to the new legislature to find a way to balance the budget. In addition to the shortfall, there will also be a large projected deficit for the coming fiscal year. Hard decisions await our elected representatives. Expect some combination of taxes (revenue enhancements in legislative language) and cuts to programs. Also expect attempts by the administration and some legislators to raid the Department of Transportation, Kansas Employees Pension Fund, and the Children's Initiative Funds to make up the deficits.

**HB 2064 Medicaid Expansion-** Despite the promise of the new President and the Congress to repeal the ACA (Obamacare) groups in the state are moving ahead to expand KanCare. The KAAP has provided testimony in the past to support this initiative and we have given written testimony for it again this year. A hearing is scheduled February 6, 8, 9. While the prospects of passage seem better this year than in any time in the past the decisions by Congress on the ACA may make it inapplicable.

**HB 2030 Vaccines by Pharmacists-** This bill would allow pharmacists to give immunizations to children 6 years of age and up. It is sponsored by the big chain pharmacies and they are using the argument it will improve our immunization rates. The KAAP is against this bill because we don't see this improving immunization rates and it will fragment care. Unfortunately, the political reality is that this bill has traction. KMS and other health care groups are in a bit of a bind in opposing this as they don't want to appear to be anti-immunization or obstructionist and they all want to increase immunization rates especially for HPV and Menactra. There is a move to amend this to 12 years of age which would probably get the support of KMS. The bill already had a hearing on January 23 and January 26. KAAP will oppose this if it moves out of committee and provide opposition testimony if it moves to the Senate.

Other Bills not yet introduced at the time of this writing

**Concussion-** Again a bill will be introduced that allows ALL healthcare providers authority to release teenage athletes to return to play following a concussion. This time the bill is being forwarded by the trainers. We will oppose it as we have in the past.

**Telemedicine-** This bill has a goal to encourage telemedicine and pay parity. Some concerns that may hang this up are content of the services and licensure of the provider.

As always if you have any questions or I can help with any legislative issues please feel free to contact me:

**[denniscooley664@gmail.com](mailto:denniscooley664@gmail.com)**

Dennis