

Testimony of the Kansas Health Consumer Coalition
Regarding the Kansas Health Policy Authority's Health Reform Recommendations:
HealthWave Outreach
Presented to the House Health and Human Services Subcommittee on Health Reform
Submitted by Corrie L. Edwards, MPA
March 6, 2008

Thank you Chairman Colyer for the opportunity to speak today in support of KHPA's Health Reform Recommendations, in particular the proposed outreach strategies for the HealthWave program. My name is Corrie Edwards and I am the Executive Director of the Kansas Health Consumer Coalition (KHCC) based in Topeka.

The mission of KHCC is to support state policies that will increase the availability of health care and health care insurance for all Kansans at affordable prices. For this reason, KHCC stands in support of all of the Kansas Health Policy Authority's recommendations, including strategies to increase the enrollment of eligible children to the HealthWave program.

As of September 2007, 36,730 children were enrolled in HealthWave. The average cost per child per month is about \$140.00. In FY 2006, 56,000 Kansas children received services through this program, at a cost of \$62.4 million.

We know that states that have been successful at increasing enrollment for eligible but not enrolled children in government-funded health care programs like HealthWave. We believe that in order to increase the enrollment numbers, aggressive outreach strategies must be put into place. These strategies include marketing, visible outreach, facilitated enrollment and web-based enrollment. By using web-based enrollment, children identified as eligible would be immediately enrolled and have immediate access to the benefits of this program. Other strategies include public-program coordination/collaboration, school-based outreach programs, and out-stationing eligibility workers with culturally competent community partners. We encourage KHPA to work with the already established safety net clinics, as we see them as the first line of contact.

Kansans share strong support for policies that insure all of our children have access to affordable health insurance. This is not an expansion of Medicaid. It is a way of getting more children insured by encouraging their parents to enroll them in existing insurance currently available to them. The bottom line is this: we think that any proposal that has the potential to impact the lives of approximately 15,000 additional Kansas children in the Medicaid program and approximately 5,000 additional Kansas children in the HealthWave program is an idea worth considering.

Thank you for this opportunity to support these recommendations. The Kansas Health Consumer Coalition looks forward to building on our partnership with the Kansas Legislature to advance the concerns of Kansas consumers.

Respectfully submitted,

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Target and enroll the children up to 200% FPL currently eligible but not enrolled in HealthWave (Medicaid/SCHIP)

Legislative Action:

\$2,100,000 SGF appropriation.

What services are covered by HealthWave?

Office visits, regular checkups, immunizations, hospital services, inpatient and outpatient hospital, lab and x-ray, prescription drugs, eye doctor exams and glasses, hearing services and speech, and physical and occupational therapy. In addition dental services such as checkups, cleanings, sealants, x-rays and fillings are provided. Mental Health services such as inpatient and outpatient mental, behavioral and substance abuse services are also provided.

Nearly all health care services purchased by Medicaid and HealthWave are financed through a combination of state funds and federal matching funds. Under SCHIP, the federal government provides approximately 72 percent of the cost up to a maximum allotment, and the State provides the remaining 28 percent and any excess spent above the federal allotment.