

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE KANSAS FUTURES COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Carlos Mayans at 1:30 p.m. on February 19, 2002 in Room 526-S of the State Capitol.

All members were present except: Representative Al Lane - excused
Representative Gene O'Brien - excused

Committee staff present: April Holman, Legislative Research Department
Sherman Parks, Jr., Revisor of Statutes' Office
Lois Hedrick, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Jerry Slaughter, Kansas Medical Society

Others attending: See attached list

The minutes of the meeting held on February 14, 2002 were approved.

Vice-Chairman Bob Bethell opened the hearing on **HB 2905**, which would establish the Kansas Health Commission. His statements are attached as Attachment 1. He indicated that the ultimate goal of the Commission is to better the delivery of health services, reduce health care disparities within the population, and promote wellness. The intent of the legislation is for the Commission to make inroads into these issues, and then address other outstanding issues--such as cost of health care.

Jerry Slaughter, Kansas Medical Society, spoke as a proponent of **HB 2905**. He stated the bill represents a very important concept for Kansas: it consolidates stakeholders' interests in the health of Kansans (not just financing health care, but its delivery, motion, etc.) and, most importantly, identifies the plan for health care of Kansans. It provides a wider venue for the discussion about health care. Through the process of a Health Commission, Kansas can begin to develop a strategic plan for the health of all Kansans, take steps to consolidate health services, and insure their availability to all Kansans. (See written testimony, Attachment 2.)

Various committee members offered suggestions to strengthen provisions that define the mission and responsibilities of the Commission. April Holman presented a staff briefing on the bill, and Representative Karen DiVita suggested deletion of the word "All" on page 2, line 21. Rep. Laura McClure offered to prepare a balloon amendment for consideration at the next meeting.

Chairman Mayans noted that **HB 2965** (establishing an affordable housing project under the department of corrections) will be heard by the New Economy Committee on Thursday, February 21. Representative Bonnie Sharp will be a conferee on the bill. Other committee members were encouraged to appear in support of the bill.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 21, 2002.

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TOPEKA

Testimony on House Bill 2905

Chairman Mayans and members of the Kansas Futures Committee, thank you for allowing me to be a part of the presentation in support of HB 2905.

This bill as you know is the result of a weekend workshop that Chairman Mayans and I were privileged to be a part of in Naples, Florida.

I have for some time been concerned with health and the delivery of health care in Kansas. As one looks at the escalating cost of health care one wonders if the residents of the Kansas can continue to support the ever-increasing level demanded. Senator Praeger made the statement “only in America is dying an option.” That may sound harsh at first but in the long run it is a statement that must be taken into consideration and dealt with at great length. Often the reason that the cost of the delivery of health care is large and growing larger every day is because of the choices that we, the people of Kansas, make on a daily basis.

The Kansas Commission on Health is designed to be gender, geographically and ethnic neutral. It is intended to focus on the areas of prevention, wellness and public health, with the intent of creating an atmosphere that will cause the easing of the delivery of services in both the urban and rural areas of Kansas.

By looking at the make up of the Commission one can see that great care was taken to be sure that all the citizens of Kansas have a voice. This voice will be one that will be capable of being heard as it delivers recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature. It will be a unified voice that will point persons in the direction of improved health for the residents of Kansas.

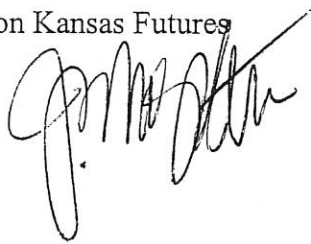
Chairman Mayans, it is a great pleasure for me to ask that this committee view HB 2905 favorably. I will stand for any questions.



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To: House Committee on Kansas Futures

From: Jerry Slaughter
Executive Director 

Date: February 19, 2002

Subject: HB 2905; concerning the Kansas Commission on Health

The Kansas Medical Society appreciates the opportunity to appear today on HB 2905, which would establish the Kansas Commission on Health. We support the underlying concept in this bill, which is to create a commission with broad representation that begins a dialogue on ways the state can work towards improving the health of Kansans. In particular, we believe such a commission could serve as the starting point for discussions about the appropriateness of consolidating all the health-related functions of state government into one agency, a concept we have supported for some time.

Quite clearly one of the potential outcomes of such a commission is greater focus on developing a plan for the health of Kansans that integrates all of the public and private assets for improving health. Currently, our state distributes responsibility for health care policy among at least three and possibly four cabinet-level agencies. Decisions related to the financing of health care, particularly as it relates to indigent and vulnerable populations, is housed in one agency, while public health policy is found in another. The financing of private health care is yet in another, while issues related to our senior citizens is yet in another. While we believe each of those agencies is working hard on its mission and goals, the idea of better integrating our efforts is worthy of a broader discussion and evaluation.

Probably one of the most immediate benefits of the proposed commission is that of creating the opportunity for a public dialogue on the health of Kansans. It has potential for directing attention to the issues of the uninsured, underinsured and how we as a state will address those issues. Additionally, it has great promise for actually beginning to identify a comprehensive health plan for all Kansans, which integrates planning, financing, distribution of resources and the roles of the various stakeholders in our health care system.

We support the establishment of the commission, and would urge the committee to report the bill favorably. Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.