

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE VISION 2020 COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Larry Campbell at 9:00 am on Wednesday, January 28, 2015, 218-N of the Capitol.

All members were present

Committee staff present:

Scott Abbott, Office of Revisor of Statutes
Iraida Orr, Legislative Research Department
Natalie Teemer-Washington, Legislative Research Department
Mary Koles, Kansas Legislative Committee Assistant
Renae Jefferies, Office of Revisor of Statutes

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

John Zehnder, The Alliance for Kansans with Developmental Disabilities
Fred Benjamin, CO, Medicalodges, Inc.
Josh Umbehr, MD.

Others in attendance:

[See Attached List](#)

Informational briefing:

John Zehnder, President, The Alliance for Kansans with Developmental Disabilities, reviewed the background and focus of the Alliance. He discussed the important role of community service providers (CSPs) for these most vulnerable members of our society. He also discussed the impact that insufficient reimbursement rates have on both the provider community and the people for whom they care. Caregivers work for little more than minimum wage, have had no state reimbursement rate increase since 2008, many depend on KanCare for their insurance, and some rely on food stamps to make ends meet. The average annual turn-over rate for CSPs is over 60%: expensive for the state to continually train the workforce and difficult for our most vulnerable citizens to adjust to a revolving cast of caregivers.

Zehnder recommended adequately funding community service providers to compensate caregivers and their professional staff. ([Attachment 1](#)) Representative Francis asked questions following Zehnder's remarks.

Informational briefing:

Fred Benjamin, Chief Operating Officer, Medicalodges, Inc., emphasized that Medicalodges offers a continuum of health care options. Benjamin also serves as Chairman of the Board of the Kansas Health Care Association, the leading provider advocacy group for service providers to seniors in Kansas. Benjamin reviewed the company's beginnings in 1961, transition to Medicalodges in 1969, to 1998, when the employees of Medicalodges acquired the company from its previous owners.

Benjamin stated that around 360,000 Kansans lack health insurance and the areas that have the most

CONTINUATION SHEET

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uninsured are the same areas where it is difficult to find health care workers. Expanding Medicaid would create new jobs. The US Council of Economic Advisors has reported that States that have expanded Medicaid have added 79,000 new jobs: 365,000 new jobs are projected by 2017. He concludes, "a more robust health care system helps all of us." Expanding the Kansas Medicaid program will improve essential medical care, reduce financial hardship, improve our citizens mental health and longevity and provide millions of needed dollars in Federal funding that will boost our economy. ([Attachment 2](#))

Informational briefing:

Josh Umbehr, MD, Atlas MD, considers insurance a tool to prevent catastrophic loss, not a means to pay for common, affordable services. He adheres to a direct primary care (DPC) model that does not contract with insurance companies but operates on a monthly membership fee based on age. Atlas MD charges \$10/month for children and \$50-100/month for adults for 24/7 access to "your" physician, no copays for anything, and free procedures done in the office. Medications and services represent a savings to participants of around 95% over retail. Imaging services are discounted 60-80%, pathology services around 85%.

Atlas MD has helped launch 57 physicians and 45 clinics in the past 14 months. It has been featured on NPR, Bloomberg, Kiplingers, Fox News, and Time magazine. Several states are adopting pro-DPC legislation (direct primary care is not a form of insurance) to encourage physicians to adopt the model for their patients. ([Attachment 3](#)) Following Dr. Umbehr's presentation questions were asked by Chairman Sloan and Representatives Campbell, O'Brien, Bollier, Rooker, Houston, and Dannebohm.

Written testimony concerning Home and Hospice Care

Written testimony ([Attachment 4](#)) regarding home and hospice care was submitted by:

- Jane Kelly, Executive Director, Kansas Home Care Association

Bill introductions

Chairman Sloan asked if there were bill requests. *The Chairman requested a motion to draft a Medicaid expansion bill. Representative Rooker so moved and Representative Francis seconded the motion. The motion passed.*

Chairman Sloan thanked the conferees for their presentations.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m..

The next meeting will be Monday, February 2, 2015.

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The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

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