

Making Elder Care Better Since 1975

Kansas Advocates
for
Better Care



March 15, 2012

Chairwoman Schmidt, and members of the Senate Public Health & Welfare Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SR 1831 which calls for a six-month delay on the implementation of the proposed Medicaid managed care program, KanCare. Kansas Advocates for Better Care (KABC) is a not-for-profit membership organization whose mission is to improve long term care for elder and disabled Kansans. KABC was originally formed in 1975 as Kansans for the Improvement of Nursing Homes by volunteers throughout our state.

Kansas Advocates for Better Care supports SR 1831 and any effort to delay the implementation of KanCare. We believe the plan has been crafted with an unrealistic implementation timeline that runs concurrent to a massive reorganization of the affected State agencies and without enough consumer or legislative input or oversight. We also believe it has been crafted without the consideration of potential improvements to the Medicaid program, such as providing dental coverage for adults and funding for mental health services for seniors.

Promoting healthy outcomes for Medicaid recipients is an expressed goal of KanCare. However, the proposed managed care reform primarily measures processes but does not include substantially improved health outcomes for elders. We would like to see meaningful outcomes added that improve the functional status of nursing home residents, improved quality of life, measure the emotional and behavioral status of residents, preventive care, and patient safety.

KABC has serious concerns about the large funding reductions to program areas based on projected savings that have not been thoroughly vetted. Not only are we concerned that savings aren't being reinvested in services to seniors, we are concerned that there is no back-up plan to fund these services should those savings not occur or not occur as quickly as anticipated. This has the very real potential to cause services to be compromised and elders needing assistance to fall between the cracks.

The KanCare timeline is too much; too fast and we urge you to support SR 1831 to delay the implementation to at least July 1, 2013.

On behalf of KABC members and volunteers,
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