

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE AGING AND LONG TERM CARE COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bob Bethell at 3:30 p.m. on February 3, 2009, in Room 711 of the Docking State Office Building.

All members were present except:

Representative Don Myers- excused

Committee staff present:

Doug Taylor, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Kelly Navinsky-Wenzl, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Terri Weber, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Judith Holliday, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Michelle Niedens, Alzheimer's Association, Kansas Chapter
Kathy Sikes, Program Director, Alzheimer's Association, Central & Western Kansas
Marcia Manter, Community Development Specialist, Oral Health Kansas
Annette Graham, Executive Director, Central Plains Area Agency on Aging
Cindy Luxem, Executive Director, Kansas Health Care Association
David Sandford, Executive Director, GraceMed Health Clinic, Wichita
Dr. Glenn Hemberger, Pediatric Dentist, Overland Park

No written testimony:

Rhonda Partridge, Prairie Star, Hutchinson

Others attending:

See attached list.

Chairman Bethell brought the Minutes of the January 29, 2009, meeting before the Committee for approval. Representative Williams moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Representative Hill. The motion carried.

Chairman Bethell told the Committee that after the meeting last Thursday on adult abuse, neglect and exploitation, he decided to appoint a Subcommittee to deal with these issues. Representative Schwab will be the Chairman, and Representatives Hill and Williams will be on the committee.

Michelle Niedens, Alzheimer's Association, Kansas Chapter spoke to the Committee about Alzheimer's disease. (Attachment 1) Ms. Niedens cited statistics for the number of Kansans diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, ages at diagnosis, and effects on care givers.

Ms. Niedens stated that many Alzheimer's victims have tragic situations, tragic not because they have Alzheimer's disease, but because systems fail them. She stressed the need for a plan to expand the system to include short term needs, but also to look realistically at long term needs.

Ms. Niedens listed proposed priorities of the Kansas Alzheimer's Association Coalition:

- The creation of an Alzheimer's State Task Force to deal with issues such as absence of day programs, shortage of respite care providers, state alert systems in place for Alzheimer's victims who wander, and transportation issues.
- Developing the Uniform Adult Guardianship and Protective Proceedings Jurisdiction Act, which enables judges to determine jurisdiction regarding adult guardianship cases.
- Loan forgiveness for new geriatric psychiatrists, which would encourage medical students to enter the geriatric psychiatry field.

Kathy Sikes, Program Director, Alzheimer's Association, Central & Western Kansas, spoke to the Committee about the growing epidemic of Alzheimer's victims in Kansas, particularly as baby boomers reach retirement. (Attachment 2) She cited statistics regarding the percentage of aging population in Western Kansas. For residents in nursing homes, 79% suffer cognitive impairment. There are direct care costs to the State because over half of those in nursing homes receive Medicaid.

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Specific areas of concern include: availability of adult day care; respite care; transportation; financing services; professional dementia care education; public education and awareness; and availability of healthcare in rural areas.

Ms. Sikes recommended utilizing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System to assess the impact of cognitive impairment, and to partner with the Alzheimer's Association Central and Western Kansas to collect information for development of state policy to meet individual and state needs.

Marcia Manter, Community Development Specialist, Oral Health Kansas, updated the Committee on the strides being made in Kansas regarding oral health care. (Attachment 3) She stated there is an organized statewide approach to oral health care for elders through partnerships among dentists, hygienists, safety-net clinics, state agencies, professional associations, and long-term care facilities.

Ms. Manter stated the financial challenges elders face often prevent accessing dental care, and most simply cannot afford it. Since most dental offices are located where large populations of people live, many Kansas counties have no full time practicing dentists. Transportation to a dental office is also a problem, particularly for frail or disabled individuals.

Annette Graham, Executive Director, Central Plains Area Agency on Aging, testified before the Committee. (Attachment 4) Ms. Graham cited the lack of access and resources for dental health services for older adults is one of the top five unmet needs in the community. Oral health care is not a luxury, it is a requirement. Ms. Graham stated that Central Plains Area Agency on Aging applied for grant funding to develop and implement the "Healthy Teeth, Healthy You" program in partnership with GraceMed Health Clinic in Wichita.

Home and Community Based Services-Frail Elderly Medicaid Waiver covers the cost of dental hygiene to prevent oral disease, and dental services for restoration and dentures.

Ms. Graham responded to questions by Committee members on whether data exists on tracking of previous oral health care, and if there is resistance by elderly to oral health care. She stated efforts are being made to obtain this information, and that there is some resistance of elderly to having dental care.

Cindy Luxem, Executive Director, Kansas Health Care Association, testified before the Committee about funded grants for oral health care in Kansas. (Attachment 5) Ms. Luxem expressed gratitude that the 2007 Legislature expanded oral health services to the Frail Elderly Waiver benefit and recommended that oral services be added to the Medicaid program for all adults.

Ms. Luxem stated that FACE of Kansas, the Foundation for Aging and Care of Elders of Kansas, had received a grant to begin their oral health training program, and a registered dental hygienist has been added to staff. The grants allow teaching direct care staff to deliver everyday oral hygiene to residents. Providing good oral health prevents a number of other health-related problems.

David Sanford, Executive Director, GraceMed Health Clinic, Wichita, testified before the Committee. (Attachment 6) Mr. Sanford stated that GraceMed established a dental clinic in 2005 and with private and public resources is now one of the largest safety net dental practices in the state. The majority of dental encounters were made possible through the Extended Care Permit (ECP) for dental hygienists by the Kansas Dental Board. Hygienists with ECP, under supervision of a licensed dentist, provide preventative care in schools, senior adult group residences, churches and community centers, assuring that targeted underserved populations have access to care.

The Dental Hub project is managed by the Kansas Association for the Medically Underserved (KAMU) and will provide increased access to dental care in 58 counties throughout Kansas. However, there are many areas where uninsured and low-income residents cannot access needed services, so the support of the Legislature, KAMU and the safety net clinics is still needed.

Rhonda Partridge, Prairie Star Health Center, Hutchinson, spoke to the Committee about the success of the dental hub in her area. (No written testimony) Ms. Partridge told the Committee the dental hub started in July

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of last year now has four dental labs, two full-time dentists, and two dental hygienists. Approximately thirty patients are served every day, and walk-ins with pain issues are treated. Twenty percent of their patients are on the Home and Community Based Services Waiver. The dental clinic saw 500 patients in January, and they are presently scheduling into June. She told the Committee that in January, thirty children missed five days in school due to dental issues, so the need to do more exists.

Dr. Glenn Hemberger, Pediatric Dentist, Overland Park, Kansas, testified before the Committee (Attachment 7) Dr. Hemberger stated that the largest strides are with children's oral health care, but the biggest need is in the elderly population. He stated that the majority of elderly patients do not practice daily oral hygiene, which results in:

- root caries – rapid tooth loss;
- periodontal disease–infections/inflammations causing heart disease, diabetes, pneumonia, etc.;
- oral cancer;
- dentures;
- drug-related dry mouth.

Dr. Hemberger seeks to educate dental professionals, the public, families, and nursing home personnel in the need for good oral health care. The goal of the Kansas Dental Association is to establish a team of dental hygienists and dentists to deliver dental care in nursing homes to include: preventive dental care; daily oral health care monitoring; dental cleaning and fluoride treatments; basic dental services in-house, such as extractions, denture care and fillings; and education of future dental students in geriatric dental care.

Dr. Hemberger stressed the need for a simplified and streamlined reimbursement procedure to dental professionals. By doing so, more professionals could be brought into nursing homes and long-term care facilities to provide oral healthcare.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 5, 2009.