

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 10, 2009, in Room 711 of the Docking State Office Building.

All members were present except:

Representative Sydney Carlin- excused  
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:

Jim Snyder, Speaker, Silver Haired Legislature  
Irv Hoffman, President, Silver Haired Legislature  
Amy Campbell, Kansas Mental Health Coalition

Written Testimony:

Debra Zehr, President, Kansas Association of Homes and Services for Aging  
Mike Hammond, Executive Director, Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas  
Ernest Kutzley, Advocacy Director, American Association for Retired Persons (AARP)  
Craig Kaberline, Kansas Area Agencies on Aging Association

Others attending:

See attached list

Chairman Bethell encouraged Committee members who had not already done so to go to [Americaonthego.org](http://Americaonthego.org) to sign up for the fitness challenge. He stated that the Aging and Long Term Care Committee is ahead in the fitness challenge.

Chairman Bethell brought the minutes of the January 27 Joint Meeting with the Social Services Budget Committee, and the February 3 and February 5 minutes of the Aging and Long Term Care Committee for approval. Representative Horst made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Representative Furtado. The motion carried.

**Hearing on HB 2055 - Health care for seniors fund; senior services fund; disposition of additional lottery proceeds.**

Jim Snyder, Speaker, Silver Haired Legislature, spoke to the Committee in support of **HB 2055**, which would allow the use of lottery money for a senior trust fund operated by the Kansas Department on Aging (KDOA). (No written testimony)

**Hearing on HB 2056 - Health care for seniors fund; disposition of additional tobacco litigation settlement proceeds.**

Jim Snyder, Speaker, Silver Haired Legislature, testified that **HB 2056** called for all new money to go to the seniors trust fund to offset Medicaid treatment for smoking related illnesses, which was the original intent of the lawsuit. (Attachment 1) However, through negotiations the majority of the money would go to the Children's Initiative Fund with the remainder to the General Fund in order to ease opposition to highway construction. Mr. Snyder told the Committee that attempts had been made to find out where the money is going. Chairman Bethell stated the money is in an escrow account, and asked the Research Department to get the figures for the Committee.

Irv Hoffmann, President, Silver Haired Legislature, provided written testimony in support of **HB 2056**. (Attachment 2)

The hearing was closed on **HB 2055** and **HB 2056**.

## CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the House Aging And Long Term Care Committee at 3:30 p.m. on February 10, 2009, in Room 711 of the Docking State Office Building.

### **Hearing on HB 2057 - Enacting geriatric mental health act; establishing a geriatric mental health program.**

Jim Snyder, Speaker, Silver Haired Legislature, testified on the urgent need for a Kansas Geriatric Mental Health program as set out in **HB 2057**. (Attachment 3) Mr. Snyder referred to mental health problems experienced by older adults living at home: anxiety disorders, depression, cognitive problems such as Alzheimer's or dementia, and substance abuse. In nursing facilities, the percentage increases from 60 to 80 percent. Suicide rates are higher in older adults, and while case workers can identify some problems, the patient's built-in fears often prevent them from seeking treatment.

Irv Hoffmann, President, Silver Haired Legislature, presented written testimony in support of **HB 2057**. (Attachment 4) This testimony was a collaborative effort last year by several Aging Specialists from Community Mental Health Centers and stated that funding this bill, with revisions, will:

- provide early intervention in mental health assessment, education, outreach and services to older Kansans;
- lessen severe symptoms and have fewer medical and psychiatric hospitalizations; and
- allow older adults receiving mental health services to remain living in the community and avoid premature nursing home placement.

The program would be implemented by the eleven Area Agencies on Aging across Kansas, and the Kansas Department on Aging (KDOA) would administer and distribute the funds for education, outreach, and direct services. The Governor did not fund the KDOA's request for funding.

There was discussion on the stigma attached to going to Community Mental Health Centers or nursing homes and some older adults choose to go to a contracting facility. A contracting facility can treat people in their homes for short-term problems, but the more serious mental health issues, such as bipolar disorder or schizophrenia, are not addressed in the bill.

Amy Campbell, Kansas Mental Health Coalition, testified in support of **HB 2057**. (Attachment 5) Ms. Campbell told the Committee that grants are being cut in the budget that fund the mental health programs for the uninsured or underinsured. She stated that the individuals could be living much fuller, more satisfying lives and delay entry into nursing homes if they could receive the services. The outreach programs do not exist at all Mental Health Centers (MHC) across the state, and many will cease to exist within the next few years. The mental health worker or social worker at the MHC can assess the individual, offer appropriate interventions for care, and have a successful outcome.

Written testimony in support of **HB 2057** was submitted by the following:

Debra Zehr, President, Kansas Association of Homes and Services for Aging (Attachment 6)

Mike Hammond, Executive Director, Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas (Attachment 7)

Ernest Kutzley, Advocacy Director, American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) (Attachment 8)

Craig Kaberline, Kansas Area Agencies on Aging Association (Attachment 9)

Chairman Bethell commented that regardless of budget shortfall, it is important to keep these subjects in the forefront and try to fund them in the future.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 12, 2009.