

Making Elder Care Better Since 1975

Kansas Advocates
for
Better Care



March 13, 2012

House Health and Human Services Committee HB 2573/Enacting the KanCare Accountability Act

Thank you for the opportunity to offer our comments on HB 2573 to enact the KanCare Accountability Act. 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.

KABC supports the provisions proposed under HB 2573 that direct a thorough annual review of the KanCare managed care program. Unlike an advisory council which provides program direction, the accountability act creates an independent audit and evaluation of the program by a respected, objective third party, the Kansas Health Institute (KHI).

An annual independent audit and evaluation of the program assures a regular review of the impact on both consumers and the contractors providing a continuing view of the program's effectiveness. We have expressed concerns about the speed with which KanCare has been created and the large funding reductions to program areas based on projected savings that have not been thoroughly vetted through either the Kansas legislature or consumers. We continue to voice concerns that savings aren't being reinvested in services to seniors, and 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.

Promoting healthy outcomes for Medicaid recipients is an expressed goal of KanCare. However, the proposed managed care RFP outcome primarily measures processes but does not include substantially improved health outcomes for elders. We would hope that review under the accountability act would include 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.

Evaluation is especially critical since no other state has attempted a change of the magnitude to its Medicaid service delivery process and very few states have turned their long term care waivers over to managed care companies. Our experience and the data collected through the annual audit should be of interest and provide guidance to other states.

KABC urges the committee to support passage of HB 2573. An annual audit of KanCare will help allay consumer fears that privatization of Medicaid services in Kansas will result in limited choices for individuals, incentivizing profits for the managed care companies rather than provide care for enrollees.