



January 22, 2008

Kansas Governor Sebelius' State of the State & FY '09 Budget - Summary of Children's Priorities -

Governor Sebelius delivered her 2008 State of the State address on Monday, January 14th, with a strong focus on expanding opportunities for Kansas children. In addition to highlighting her increased investments in K-12 education, Governor Sebelius shared her commitment to ensuring that every child enters kindergarten ready to succeed. To address the growing problem of health care affordability, Sebelius urged the State Legislature to pass the entire health reform plan recommended by the Kansas Health Policy Authority. Other legislative priorities outlined in the State of the State include higher education, transportation, and new energy and fuel technologies.

The following excerpt from the Governor's speech highlights the importance of investing in our youngest Kansans:

"As leaders we will be measured by a simple test – how well did we use the assets we were given to make Kansas a better place for future generations? Are we hopeful about the future for young Kansans like Kimberlin and Samuel? Are we willing to turn our attention to their future and focus on their opportunities?"

You can read Sebelius' complete 2008 State of the State address here:
<http://www.governor.ks.gov/news/sp-stateofstate2008.htm>

The following is a summary of Governor Sebelius' FY09 budget recommendations relating to children, youth, and families:

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

- ▶ **\$23 million for a new Early Childhood Block Grant:** The Governor proposes a new Early Childhood Block Grant administered by the Children's Cabinet to expand early learning opportunities for Kansas children. Grant funds can go to community-based programs, school districts, Head Start sites, and child care programs with a focus on the needs of at-risk children and under-served areas. Funding for \$5 million in FY'08 and \$18 million in FY'09 will come from the Children's Initiatives Fund. At least 30% of the grant funds will be set aside for infant and toddler programs.
- ▶ **\$5 million for Child Care Assistance (\$85.1 Million Total):** The Kansas Child Care Assistance Program helps parents enter and remain in the workforce while providing safe, quality care for their children. But the program also faces funding shortfalls each year as demand for assistance increases and federal funding remains stagnant. An increase of \$5 million over FY '08 will fund an expected shortfall in the program this year while maintaining family income eligibility

at 185% of federal poverty. An additional 900 Kansas children and their parents (22,500 total) will receive support for the high cost of child care this year.

- ▶ **\$500,000 to pilot early childhood program collaboration:** In order to provide a child care setting where children have an optimum learning environment, SRS, Head Start, Early Head Start and the Kansas Preschool Program will collaborate to blend funding for at-risk children in selected child care centers and family child care homes. Programs will be evaluated at the time of kindergarten entry to assess the effectiveness that credentialed/qualified caregivers and low teacher-to child ratios have on improved school readiness outcomes for at-risk children, ages birth to five.
- ▶ **1.2 million for the Pre-K Pilot program (\$6.2 million total):** The Pre-K Pilot Program offers high quality early education experiences to children in 15 Kansas counties, including currently Johnson, Leavenworth, Shawnee & Wyandotte counties in the Kansas City metro area. All classrooms will be required to meet teacher qualification requirements, implement a research-based curriculum, maintain low teacher child ratios, complete at least 15 hours of training annually, and provide additional family services referrals. The Governor's budget builds on last year's \$5 million investment in the Pre-K Pilot program by adding another \$1.2 million in FY '09 to serve approximately 1,000 children annually. The program will move from the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services to the Department of Education. In addition, Governor Sebelius plans to combine the Pre-K Pilot with the Four-Year-Old At-Risk pre-k program in order to encourage collaboration and coordinating between state early learning programs. The new combined program will be called the Kansas Preschool Program.
- ▶ **Maintain funding for Kansas Early Head Start:** KS Early Head Start provides early intervention to enhance children's development during their formative years, enables parents to be better caretakers and teachers to their children, and helps parents meet their own goals, including economic independence. Comprehensive services available to program participants include weekly home visits, physical and mental health education, nutrition education, social services, parental involvement and education, services for children with disabilities, job seeking and retention support, and child care for parents who are working or are in school. The Governor's recommendation maintains funding in FY '09 at \$11.3 million to serve 1,177 children.
- ▶ **Maintain funding for Parents as Teachers:** The Governor's FY '09 budget maintains funding for the Parents as Teachers program at \$7.5 million to serve over 19,000 Kansas families.
- ▶ **\$550 thousand decrease for Smart Start Kansas:** There are currently 17 Smart Start Kansas sites that offer quality early learning experiences and health services for children in 47 counties in Kansas. The Governor's FY '09 budget has an overall \$550 thousand decrease for Smart Start but the number of individuals served annually is estimated to remain the same at 25,675.

K-12 EDUCATION

- ▶ **\$77 million for all day kindergarten:** The Governor's budget includes a plan to phase in all day kindergarten in every school district over three years, beginning in FY 2010. The expansion will be initially targeted to economically disadvantaged students. As access to pre-k programs continues to expand across the state, it is imperative that half-day kindergarten programs do not create a gap in a child's early education experiences. Kansas currently funds half-day kindergarten and half of the state's school districts use their own funds to offer full-day K.

HEALTH

▶ **Fully implement the Kansas Health Policy Authority's health reform plan:**

The Kansas Health Policy Authority was created through legislation on July 1, 2005. It is a nine-member board, including health care, business, and community leaders appointed by the Governor and the Legislature, as well as six ex-officio members that include state agency secretaries. On July 1, 2005 the Authority became a state agency. The Authority is responsible for coordinating a statewide health policy agenda that incorporates effective purchasing and administration with health promotion strategies.

In 2007, the KHPA set out to develop healthcare reform recommendations for the state with input from four advisory councils, listening tours in 22 communities, and over 1,000 Kansas citizens. The resulting 21-point healthcare reform plan is based on three priority areas:

- **Promoting Personal Responsibility.** Proposed recommendations link responsible health behaviors with an informed purchase of health care services, such as increased cost transparency and health literacy.
- **Promoting Medical Homes and Paying for Prevention.** Recommendations focus on obesity, tobacco control and chronic disease management. This recommendation includes defining medical homes and improving coordination, exchange and standardization of health information. Also included is a statewide smoking ban, increased access to healthy choices for adults and children, Medicaid dental care for pregnant women, tobacco cessation programs and expanded cancer screenings.
- **Providing and Protecting Affordable Health Insurance.** Recommendations in this category focus on small businesses, children, and low income or uninsured Kansans. Recommendations include implementation of Premium Assistance, aggressive enrollment of children currently eligible for Medicaid or HealthWave and promoting affordable coverage for small businesses.

A summary of all 21 policy recommendations is available at:

http://www.khpa.ks.gov/PressReleases/12-20-07KHPA%20Report_3Ps_UPDATED_122007_FINAL.pdf

It is important to note that the Kansas Health Policy Authority did not recommend increasing eligibility for the HealthWave Program to 250% of FPL, even though the fastest growing group of uninsured Kansas children lives in families that earn between 200%-250% of poverty. These children are not eligible for HealthWave, but their families are being pushed out of the private market. This issue is a health policy priority for Partnership for Children and Kansas Action for Children, our sister statewide organization in Kansas. To view, the entire policy agenda of Kansas Action for Children, click [here](#).

- ▶ **\$10 million for Kansas Healthy Choices:** Kansas Health Choices is a new program in the Kansas Health Policy Authority that will use state and federal Medicaid funds to subsidize health insurance for low-income families. The premium assistance program was approved as part of SB 11, the comprehensive health care reform bill passed by the legislature in 2007. In year 1 and 2 of the plan, individuals and families with incomes under 50% of the federal poverty level would be eligible for health insurance premium assistance.
- ▶ **\$866,388 increase for newborn screenings:** SB 211 in 2007 expanded the state's requirements for newborn screenings from 4 to 29 screenings of metabolic disorders for which treatments are available. Early diagnosis and treatment can prevent serious. Total Funding: \$2.55 million

- ▶ **Maintain funding for Healthy Start Home Visiting:** The Governor's FY '09 budget maintains funding for the Healthy Start/Home Visitor program at \$250,000. Healthy Start offers prenatal care and follow-up visits to low-income mothers and is part of a larger Mothers & Infants Child Health Program that will serve approximately 78,300 children in FY '09.

The full Kansas FY '09 Governor's budget is available online at:
<http://budget.ks.gov/gbr.htm>



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