



Kansas Maternal & Child Health Council (KMCHC)
Wednesday, July 23, 2025, | 9:00 am to 12:00 pm
Virtual | Zoom

Members Present: Afsheen Hasan, Ali Braun, Amy Dean-Campfire, Andra Doyle, Antje Anji, Brandi Bray, Britney Nasserri (Jill Nelson), Cari Schmidt, Caroline Rodriguez, Carrie Akin, Cherie Sage, Christina Smith, Cora Ungerer, Daina Zolck, Deborah Alliston, Donna Yadrich, Drew Duncan, Elaine Johannes, Genoveva Fernandez, Heather Braum, Heather Schrotberger, Holly Frye, Jamie Kim, Jason Geslois, Jennifer Bruning, Jennifer Miller, Jessica Sun, Jill Nelson, Kali Steelsmith, Kari Harris, Karly Lauer, Kayla Stangis, Kelsee Fout, Kendra Wyatt, Kourtney Bettinger, Lisa Frey Blume, Christy Shun, Mariah Chrans, Michelle Black, Oluwakemi Onyenagubo, Patty McNamar, Sara Hortenstine, Sarah Hinton, Sookyung Shin, Stacy Clarke, Stephanie Coleman, Stephanie Jerguson, Stephanie Wolf, Tara Wells, Vanessa Eberle, Zachary Ray

Guests: Andres Mata, Brianna Heslin, Maria Torres, Chris Tilden, Elizabeth Whitson, Heidi Hartner; Izzy Blackwood, Laigha Anderson, Monique Koerner, Pempho Moyo, Patricia Fox

Staff: Denise Cyzman, Mallory Laur, Marisa Guerrero

Agenda Item	Discussion	Actions and Decisions
Welcome Remarks	Dr. Kari Harris, KMCHC Chair, welcomed attendees and made a special welcome to new members and guests: Laigha Anderson;	

Agenda Item	Discussion	Actions and Decisions
<p>Federal and State Updates on Medicaid, SNAP, and other MCH Programs</p> <p>Heather Braum, Senior Policy Advisor, Kansas Action for Children</p>	<p>Brittany Nasserri (for Jill Nelson); Mara Torres (for Christi Shunn); Andra Doyle; and Afsheen Hasan</p> <p>Ms. Braum provided an update on federal and state policy developments. She reviewed the federal budget reconciliation bill, which focuses on making the 2017 tax cuts permanent and includes significant reductions to safety net programs, including Medicaid and SNAP, along with added eligibility restrictions that would increase barriers to healthcare, food assistance, and tax benefits for Kansas families. While the bill includes rural health funding, it is not expected to fully offset anticipated hospital losses.</p> <p>Heather also noted upcoming federal actions, including a freeze on federal education funding that may reduce access to before- and after-school programs, and new federal rules that could restrict benefit eligibility for immigrant families.</p> <p>She concluded with an overview of budget timelines, noting that the federal budget process is ongoing, with Congress recessed or preparing to adjourn, and that the Kansas state budget process is expected to begin in September.</p>	<p><u>Notices of the changes to Public Benefits</u></p> <p><u>HHS Release</u>: Head Start, Family Planning, and others</p> <p><u>HHS Notice</u>: Federal Public Benefit</p> <p><u>ED Release</u>: Taxpayer Subsidization of Postsecondary Education</p> <p><u>ED Notice</u>: Clarification of Public Benefit</p> <p><u>USDA Notice</u>: WIC</p> <p><u>DOL Release</u>: Taxpayer-Funded Workforce Programs</p> <p><u>DOL Notice</u>: Work Authorization Verification</p>
<p>Past Wins, Future Goals: Strengthening our Voice</p> <p>Elaine Johannes, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist, Kansas State University</p>	<p>Dr. Johannes led a discussion on leadership sharing and long-term sustainability. Members discussed current approaches to sharing leadership, plans for sustaining leadership over time, and the importance of asking others for support when self-advocacy is not possible. The group emphasized the value of including regular updates on leadership and sustainability at each meeting, with a focus on long-term planning.</p>	
<p>Youth Voices in Action: Insights from Governor’s Behavioral Health Services Planning Council</p>	<p>Mr. Mata, Ms. Jessica Sun, and Ms. Isabelle Blackwood presented the youth-led advisory group under the Governor’s Behavioral Health Services Planning Council. This diverse group of youth aged 14-25</p>	<p><u>Mr. Mata’s presentation: slides 7-23</u></p>

Agenda Item	Discussion	Actions and Decisions
<p>Youth Subcommittee</p> <p>Andres Mata, Youth Engagement Specialist, Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services</p>	<p>works in partnership with adult allies, mental health professionals, and policy leaders. Its mission is to strengthen youth mental health and behavioral health across Kansas by empowering people to shape the policies and services that affect them.</p> <p>KMCHC can support this effort by inviting youth to share their perspectives and by listening to their experiences and ideas on how to better support young people. Creating a safe and welcoming environment will allow youth to speak openly and contribute meaningfully to the discussion.</p>	<p>Application to serve on youth subcommittee - application</p> <p>Contact Mr. Mata with questions at Andres.mata@ks.gov</p>
<p>Reimagining Care: The Kansas Transforming Maternal Health Model (TMaH) Grant</p> <p>Heidi Hartner, Senior Manager, Policy Initiatives, KDHE – Division of Healthcare Finance</p>	<p>Ms. Hartner presented an update on the KDHE/Medicaid grant, Reimagining Care: The Kansas Transforming Maternal Health (TMaH) Model.</p>	<p>Contact Ms. Hartner with questions at Heidi.x.hartner@ks.gov</p>
<p>Domain Work Group Discussion</p>	<p>Denise Cyzman reviewed the expectations for the Domain Work Groups.</p>	
<p>Domain Work Group Report Outs</p>	<p>See Attachment A for a summary of the Work Group Discussions</p>	
<p>Member Announcements and Updates</p>	<p>Throughout the virtual meeting, members shared numerous resources and information.</p>	
<p>Closing Remarks <i>Kari Harris, MD, KMCHC Chair</i></p>	<p>Hearing no new business, Dr. Harris thanked everyone for participating and adjourned the Council meeting.</p>	

This project is supported in part by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment with funding through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under grant number #B04MC32543 and Title V Maternal and Child Health Services.

2025 KMCHC Meetings

October 15, 2025 – 10 am to 2 pm

Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - 1515 SW 10th Ave., Topeka, Kansas

(New Location)

January 14, 2026 – 9 am to 12 pm

Virtual Meeting

July 23, 2025, Domain Workgroup Reports – Summary

Women/Maternal

Response to Presentations: Members noted that the presenters brought strong energy and enthusiasm, which was motivating and inspiring for the group.

Special Project Update: The Work Group discussed a potential special project related to KanCare accountability for their health risk assessment form. Members noted the importance of clear communication with the TMaH team to support timely consideration of this issue. The need to improve the dissemination of mental health resources to providers and hospitals was also identified.

Members also noted that there is currently no specific maternal health representative on the KMCHC Executive Council and discussed the value of including one.

Perinatal/Infant

Response to Presentations: The Work Group discussed concerns raised by providers regarding proposed changes to the age thresholds for work requirements for parents. Providers expressed concern about the potential impact on families if the age were lowered to seven; it was noted that the requirement was ultimately set at fourteen years old, and that work requirements are waived when a child has a qualifying diagnosis. Both providers and parents remain concerned about how changes to age thresholds may affect access to services.

An update was provided on the ongoing Friday “Code Red” meetings coordinated by Brenda Bandy. Participants reported that the meetings have been helpful for receiving state and federal policy updates, for sharing perspectives, and for providing a dedicated space for discussion and support. Information on how to join was shared in the chat.

Members also discussed concerns about families’ hesitation to access services, particularly among undocumented populations. Concerns were raised about reduced access to prenatal care, WIC, and early intervention services due to fear and uncertainty about data sharing and immigration enforcement.

Members noted that families often have difficulty understanding which policies are currently in effect and how they may apply. Maria shared an example of outreach at a recent baby shower where resources were shared, while noting ongoing concerns that fear may prevent families from applying for available support.

Special Project Update: Drew Duncan from KDHE provided an update on the Welcoming Babies postcard pilot project. The project involves mailing postcards to families with infants born in Kansas, with a 2–3-month delay to avoid sending materials to families who may have experienced an infant loss. A total of 5,000 postcards is being distributed as part of the pilot, with an additional 500 postcards printed in Spanish. Distribution of the initial 5,000 postcards is expected to be completed by the end of the week.

Drew reported an increase in website traffic and referrals to resources associated with the postcards. The Newborn Screening (NBS) team has also been invited to present this project at a national conference, and the state of Wyoming has expressed interest in replicating the model.

Discussion included next steps following the pilot phase. Drew noted that additional funding would be needed to expand the project, with an estimated cost of approximately \$0.80 per postcard. Staff workload

has been manageable, and the project has demonstrated the value of the new NBS-specific website. Ongoing concerns about funding sustainability and staff salaries were noted. Lessons learned from the pilot included the need to use a trackable QR code in future printings to better measure engagement. Members also discussed potential electronic versions of the postcard for sharing via email and use during postpartum visits. Drew indicated plans to further outline considerations for transitioning the project from a pilot to full implementation.

Next Steps

1. Drew will develop a cost estimate for full implementation of the Welcoming Babies postcard project, including clarification of per-card costs (postage versus total cost) and an estimate of staff time required. Consideration will be given to sharing funding across bureau programs that benefit from the postcard project.
2. The existing presentation slides will be used to support advocacy for full implementation.
3. Staff will continue to include the wallet card in communications sent through the hearing and bloodspot programs.
4. Programs featured on the postcard will be asked whether they have seen an increase in service utilization.
5. Additional outreach options will be explored, including posters with QR codes in provider offices and other locations frequented by families, recognizing that posters alone may not reach all families.
6. Andra expressed interest in assisting with the planning and implementation of the expanded program.
7. Home visiting programs will help share information during upcoming meetings, and staff will be directed to the website contact for ordering additional materials.

Children

Response to Presentations: The Work Group discussed a revised special project focused on collecting impact statements and developing a website with an interactive map. Members expressed interest in including all KMCHC programs in the survey to gather impact statements and asked that ideas be shared with Jennifer or Ali. The goal is to have these materials prepared by January, ahead of the legislative session. Members also reflected on the youth presentations, noting the resilience, strength, and courage demonstrated by the youth, the importance of recognizing incremental successes, and the value of supporting families in advocating for themselves.

Special Project Update: The Work Group reported limited progress since the last meeting but discussed next steps related to advocacy and storytelling. Members considered expanding the collection of impact statements beyond Head Start to include additional programs, noting that Head Start had previously been prioritized due to immediate policy risk.

The group reaffirmed its focus on advocacy and the value of personal stories, and discussed identifying appropriate platforms to share these stories, such as the KMCH website and KMCH social media channels.

Members also discussed adapting existing Head Start outreach questions to gather stories from other programs. A flexible format was proposed, allowing contributors to share written, photo, or video stories, with personal details included at the contributor's discretion.

Next Steps

1. The work group will identify programs to include and ask Council members to submit program suggestions to Aletheia Braun or Jennifer by August 15.
2. KDHE staff will compile a consolidated list of programs by the end of August.
3. Stephanie will draft proposed survey questions by the end of August.
4. Jennifer will follow up by August 1 on the feasibility of posting stories on the KMCH website and whether this is an available option.
5. Ali will work with Zack to create the survey by mid-September.
6. KDHE will distribute an email blast that includes the survey by the end of September.
7. The goal is to collect at least two to three stories per program by January for posting on the KMCH website and/or KMCH Facebook page.

Adolescent

Special Project Update: Members noted that they are awaiting an update on the contract for the project funded through the Kansas Leadership Center and have not yet received new information. The group discussed inviting representatives from the Kansas Leadership Center to provide a progress update at an October meeting, potentially to a smaller group.

The group also discussed creating an award to recognize organizations focused on youth health and to acknowledge their contributions.