

LAWRENCE DOUGLAS COUNTY ADVOCACY COUNCIL ON AGING

Independence Inc., 2001 Haskell Avenue, Lawrence, KS 6044

Minutes of June 20, 2017

Attending: Mary Johnson, Ellen Paulsen, Brenda Nunez, Tamara Cash, Michele Dillon, Saunny, Tracy Harmon, Judy Bellome, Jonathan Herrera -Thomas(health dept), Jenn Preston, Susan Harris (new JAAA director), Jocelyn Lyons (retiring JAAA director),
Guest speaker: Sheldon Weisgrau, Director, Health Reform Resource Project

Judy opened the meeting with introductions all around and then introducing our speaker Sheldon Weisgrau, Director of the Health Reform Resource Project. Sheldon provided the group with detailed information on health care, the truth and the exaggerations. His remarks are summarized below:

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has been successful. The proposed American Health Care Act (AHCA) will harm health care and coverage. The ACA covered everything in healthcare. The % of uninsured in US and KS has declined to approx. 9%. The % of harm in hospitals has declined to 17% (readmission and deaths) with 200-400K deaths/year nationwide. The rate of growth in healthcare costs has gone down as well.

Long term Health care costs and spending is down. The Solvency of Medicare has been extended and the Healthcare share of the federal deficit is down.

Health care costs- inflation and premiums are going up but the deductibles have really increased 63%. A \$6,000 deductible is not much compared to a \$10,000 hospital stay for 1 day.

Marketplace – There is an adverse selection because healthy people are not enrolling; out of pocket costs have increased; Congress has defunded the programs to protect the insurers; and there is a lot of uncertainty regarding cost sharing reductions for the insureds.

The proposed AHCA is part of the budget reconciliation process which only required a simple majority. There are restructures of tax credits/subsidies which will be based on age NOT income (as is current plan). There will be no penalties for not having insurance. Medicaid is being attacked in areas of Medicaid expansion, Planned Parenthood.

However, the AHCA will guarantee that everyone will be covered. States can apply for the waiver to not cover pre-existing conditions, essential health benefits, and annual and lifetime limits of coverage. States can then set up high risk pools.

The AHCA is really a tax bill with tax cuts for upper income and Medicaid reductions which fund the tax cuts. The first congressional Budget office scores the bill. The house bill estimated that 14 million people would lose coverage. The biggest loss – those 50-64 and low incomes less than 200% of federal poverty level. Remember Medicaid covers kids, seniors and people with disabilities.

Here is info about how to speak up and be active.

Alliance for Health Kansas www.ExpandKanCare.com
Call the Kansas senators: Jerry Moran 202-224-6521
 Pat Roberts 202-224-4774

There are 52 Republican senators. If 3 of them vote no on the bill, it will be defeated.

Sheldon Weisgrau phone: 785-408-8008

The next meeting will be July 18th at 11:30 for eat and greet so bring your lunch and visit.

Returning Guest Speaker: Sheldon Weisgrau, Director, Health Reform Resource Project.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Johnson

Breakout groups:

Transportation – Brenda, MaryJ, Ellen, Dawn

Caregiving – Michele D, Tamara, Artie, Judy

Accessibility – Saunny, _____?

Affordable Housing – Tamara, Brenda, Dawn