

Health-Care Delivery Systems and Health-Care Policy

How does this Extension program benefit the public?

Kansas citizens will have a better understanding of state and federal health-care policy and how it will affect them and their future. Communities will gain the resources they will need to develop affordable, high-quality health-care delivery systems for their localities and regions.

What is Extension's mission?

To provide information about health-care policy, changes in the health-care system, and the availability of resources (human and financial) for improving health-care delivery to empower individuals and communities so that they can address their health-care needs.

What is the problem, need, or opportunity?

Health-care remains a priority concern of Kansans. Even without comprehensive federal health reform, the health-care system is undergoing significant changes. It is important to know what changes are likely to take place; what policies will be emphasized by government; and what communities can do to ensure the best outcome, since many of the serious decisions about health systems and health policy will fall to states and local communities.

In Kansas, decisions will be made against a backdrop of unmet needs, especially in rural areas. In 1993, sixty-five Kansas counties were underserved in health-care, including the fifty-three counties that were critically underserved. The Office of Local and Rural Health Services, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, states, "The epidemic of medical underservice is hardly news anymore. Lack of access to basic health care has become one of the major problems plaguing rural Kansas." Twenty-five percent of rural doctors will reach retirement age by the year 2000. These retirements will leave many counties without a doctor. The shortage of other allied health professionals and administrators in rural areas is equally critical.

Health-care discussions can no longer be the exclusive realm of health-care professionals, academics, or governing institutions. People and communities need to become involved in decision making about the future of the health-care system and to take increased responsibility for its development. The Kansas Cooperative Extension Service can provide community-based educational programs to enable people and communities to work together to address critical health-care issues. Extension can help communities understand the crucial questions about the future of health care, assess the impact of changes in health-care consumers, and assist them in finding the resources to solve their problems.

What is Extension's objective in offering this program?

➤ Kansas citizens will:

- help communities identify effective intervention strategies to alleviate health-care problems and to expand their capacity to bring about necessary changes.
- understand and successfully adapt to changes in the financing and delivery of health-care services, and
- understand health policy and provide information about how citizens make their preferences known to policy makers at the local, state, and federal levels.
- better understand how to access the health-care system.

How is Extension going to help Kansans reach this objective?

➤ Partner with groups having similar interest:

- Kansas Department of Health and Environment
- Kansas State Office of Local and Rural Health Systems
- Kansas Department on Aging
- Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services
- Kansas Health Data Board
- Kansas Hospital Association
- Kansas Academy of Family Physicians
- Kansas University School of Medicine



- Kansas University Department of Health Administration
- Wichita State University Department of Health Administration
- Kansas Health Foundation
- American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Kansas Association of Counties
- Kansas League of Municipalities

➤ **Conduct necessary applied research:**

- Health-care system economic impact analysis.
- Hospital service and diversification analysis.
- Health policy legislation analysis.
- Demographic analysis.
- Health needs assessment.
- Local health services needs and feasibility analysis.
- Health-care finance and reimbursement analysis.
- Telecommunications applications.

➤ **Provide relevant materials and educational strategies:**

Materials:

- Provide information and program guides: fact sheets, policy reports, community planning workbooks, teaching packets.
- Evaluate and distribute available material from extension and other sources: *Hometown Health*, *Community-based Health-Care Planning* from Iowa Cooperative Extension; *Plugging the Leaks in Health Care: Harnessing Economic Opportunity in Rural America* from the Center for the New West, Denver, Colorado.
- Develop materials: health reform fact sheets, newspapers, and teaching packets which have been distributed and used nationwide.
- Develop information about health policy and community-systems development.

Educational strategies:

- Identify forums to use when conducting local programs: small-group presentations, community forums, and major community health-systems development programs.
- Develop mass media programs to raise general public awareness and support local educational initiatives.
- Establish a Kansas extension clearinghouse for unbiased educational information on health policy and health systems to assist state agencies, provider associations, citizen groups, and industry organizations.

➤ **Partner with agents in:**

In-service education:

- Agent updates: Provide latest policy information and distribute resource materials.

- Annual conference: Conduct workshops which inform agents of latest community-planning techniques. Provide information on latest policy initiatives and suggest educational program opportunities.

- Area workshops: Introduce new educational material and facilitate extension's partnering with other local and regional agencies working in health-policy and community-systems development.

- Solicit agent input regarding educational material development and program design.

➤ **Presenting information at local meetings and one-on-one:**

- Specialists take part in local meetings and confer one-on-one with local citizens and health-system personnel.
- Specialists in health-policy and systems development maintain a library of overheads, videos, handouts, teaching packets, curricula, and other materials for use in a variety of program-topic presentations.
- Specialists are available to meet with agents to plan local meetings.

➤ **Provide education and technical services to customers:**

- Health-care system economic impact analysis.
- Community outreach program development.
- Community health councils organization.
- Health-policy education and information.
- Educational programs explaining rural health systems.
- Demographic analysis.
- Health-needs assessment.
- Local health-services needs and feasibility analysis.
- Finance alternatives investigation.
- Reimbursement systems analysis.
- Local health-systems and business community linkages.
- Rural-health leadership development.
- Long-term care systems planning.
- Health-systems strategic planning.
- Data analysis and program evaluation.
- Telecommunications planning and development.

What are the outcomes of the Extension program?

➤ **Long-range outcomes customers want:**

- Expanded capacity of communities to take charge of their health-care system.
- Improved quality of life and economic well-being for Kansans.
- Expanded capacity to provide affordable health care to all Kansans.

7 Indicators of accomplishments and measurements from 1996-98:

- Increased establishment of community health-planning projects.
- Successful accomplishment of planning goals.
- Increased use of telecommunications and greater use of extension telecommunication resources by health-care systems and communities.
- Increased participation of extension personnel in health-care policy forums.
- Increased use of extension personnel as “expert resources” for legislative and other public hearings and public and private agency activities involved in health-care policy and systems development.
- Increased participation of extension personnel in local health-system analysis.

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