



To: Chairman Hawkins, and Members, Joint Committee on Home and Community Based Services and KanCare Oversight

From: Rachel Monger, Vice President of Government Affairs

Date: November 8, 2018

Thank you, Chairman and Members of the Committee. I am Rachel Monger, Vice President of Government Affairs for LeadingAge Kansas, the state association for not-for-profit aging services. We have 160 members across Kansas, which include not-for-profit nursing homes, retirement communities, hospital long-term care units, assisted living, homes plus, housing, low-income housing, home health agencies, home and community based service programs, PACE and home delivered meal programs. Our members serve more than 25,000 elders each day.

We would like to update the committee on the status of the Medicaid eligibility processing system, and its effect on our nursing home providers. Namely, that it has not improved in any significant way since our last report to the committee. The broken eligibility system continues to have a huge financial impact on nursing homes around the state. And in turn, it continues to harm the availability and quality of care for seniors. We still have homes that are in danger of not making payroll, delaying payments to food and medical supply vendors, cutting care staff, and turning away elders in need of care. All as a direct result of the dysfunctional Medicaid eligibility system.

We are two and a half years into the new Medicaid eligibility system created by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, and there are still long delays in processing and approving applications. Our nursing home members continue to report their struggles with poor communication, lost documents, delays, incorrect and inconsistent information from KanCare Clearinghouse staff, and incorrect resident liabilities. While the number of backlogged applications has decreased, the system itself remains dysfunctional and ill-equipped to handle Medicaid applications for seniors.

We look forward to an update from KDHE on new plans to try and fix the system, and how quickly it can be achieved. The eligibility processing mess is hacking away at the safety net for lower and middle-income seniors, and will have echoing effects for years to come. We can't afford another year of failed systems.

We thank the Committee for its time and attention, and we are always happy to have further discussion on these issues.