Kansas Association of
Area Agencies on
Aging & Disabilities

k4ad

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2026 PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

The eleven Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) are the local aging experts and leaders serving older Kansans and caregivers throughout the State of Kansas. Established by the 1973 amendments to the Older Americans Act, Area Agencies on Aging provide resources and coordinate community-based services to help older adults and people with disabilities live with optimal health, independence and dignity in their homes and communities. Our aim is to educate and help address the unique and specific needs of older Kansans as we experience the changes at the state and federal level. For 2026, our priorities are:

1. Potential Wait Lists for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waiver Services

The Area Agencies on Aging are concerned about the well-being of older Kansans and individuals with disabilities because access to health services that prevent hospitalization and nursing home stays is limited. As additional funding was not appropriated to support the growing HCBS Brain Injury Waiver, Frail Elderly Waiver, and Physical Disabilities Waiver—significant threats loom as older Kansans without other options may be forced into a nursing home: ***at a higher cost to the State***. Area Agencies on Aging support the $60 million enhanced budget request from the Kansas Department for Aging and Disabilities Services (KDADS) for additional HCBS waiver slots.

2. Support for KanCare HCBS Customers and those on Waiting Lists

Area Agencies on Aging support Community Care Coordination to add an additional layer of support to enhance the well-being and health outcomes of HCBS customers with complex medical and social needs. Coordinators are informed and unbiased to help individuals navigate a fragmented, complex health system to achieve sustainable care solutions. As the local experts on aging issues, the Area Agencies on Aging are keenly aware that most Kansans want to age well at home for as long as possible. For more than 50 years, AAAs have worked to provide Case Management; and providing Community Care Coordination is a natural extension of services to help Kansans navigate the complex HCBS system.

To timely address social and medical care, health emergencies, and falls, Area Agencies on Aging endorse adding an additional layer of support to assist individuals on HCBS on HCBS waiting lists. This safeguard will ensure Kansans do not fall through cracks while waiting for services and offers optimal health services and strengthens the health care delivery system.

To ensure that vendors have the capacity to build new infrastructures, engage partners, and implement accountability systems, the Kansas Association of Area Agencies on Aging and Disabilities requests the full amount appropriated to be allocated to sustain the service.

3. Optimal Physical and Mental Health for Kansans

Area Agencies on Aging support optimal physical and mental health for Kansans. As of 2023, there are 537,000 Kansans age 65 years and older, certain people with disabilities, patients with kidney failure and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's disease) on Medicare Part A and Part B in Kansas. An additional 180,000 individuals are Medicare Advantage Plan beneficiaries (https://ksdata.ku.edu/ksdata/ksah/vital/3health13.pdf). Having the right plan can be the difference between optimal health or costly long-term recovery and life-long financial challenges.

Medicare is a federal program, and the coverage is the same across the nation; States can and have applied specific rules to Medicare Supplemental Plans (Medigap plans) including Medicare Advantage Plans. States have autonomy to control advertising and marketing practices and coverage options that are transparent, understood, and affordable. Area Agencies on Aging report on misleading communications and/or plan changes, resulting in beneficiaries losing access to chosen healthcare services and paying higher costs. While many Medicare Advantage Plans (Part C) and Part D plans deliver valued benefits and trusted coverage for Medicare beneficiaries, Area Agencies on Aging know that many beneficiaries report that they were enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan without their express consent and unknowingly purchased a plan. To prohibit undermining access to care and the trust beneficiaries have in the Medicare program, the Area Agencies on Aging ask the State of Kansas to:

1) Implement stronger marketing guardrails to protect beneficiaries and support informed decision-making.

2) Ensure that choosing a Medicare Advantage plan once does not lock in beneficiaries forever; and

3) Require *guaranteed issue* of a supplement policy for Kansans who change from an Advantage plan to Traditional Medicare. In other words, allow a beneficiary to switch from a Medicare Advantage Plan back to traditional Medicare that requires a Medigap policy without "underwriting" and requiring healthcare questions.

Kansas Area Agencies on Aging are part of a strong national network of 613 AAAs and 246 Title VI organizations, which are the designated leaders on aging issues at the local level. Using flexibility, Area Agencies on Aging respond to the needs of older adults and caregivers to divert them away from costlier services. The AAAs are locally administered and use federal, state and local funding to provide five broad categories of services aligned with Title III-B (in-home and access services); III-C1 (site-based nutrition program) and III-C2 (home delivered nutrition program); III-D (disease prevention and health promotion services); and III-E (caregiver services); all provided in the homes and communities for older adults in need of services.

Comments? Questions? Please feel free to contact:

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