

Commissioner says House measure threatening health care funding

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By [Tim Carpenter](#)

Insurance Commissioner Sandy Praeger said Wednesday a bill awaiting action in the Kansas House would jeopardize all federal funding of health care services and health plans under jurisdiction of the state.

She issued the warning following adoption by the House Federal and State Affairs Committee of a bill described by advocates as an escape route from the Affordable Care Act.

The bill would allow Kansas to ask Congress for approval of a multi-state health care compact that would work with participating states with management of Medicaid, Medicare, Obamacare and other federal programs. Kansas has about 450,000 Medicare beneficiaries and 400,000 Medicaid recipients.

"This legislation would include but is not limited to Medicare, Medicaid, the children's health insurance program, rural hospitals, hospice and federally qualified health centers," Praeger said. "The funding would be received in a block grant to the state, and the state legislature would decide how to spend those health care dollars."

The eight states passing bills in support of the health care compact are Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, South Carolina and Utah.

The concept is modeled on legislation promoted by the American Legislative Exchange Council, an organization comprised of conservative legislators and business owners.

Rep. Brett Hildabrand, R-Shawnee, introduced the bill challenged by Praeger. He discounted the notion House Bill 2553 was more of an ideological statement than a meaningful piece of legislation.