

# healthplan insider

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*By Sunee Mickle,  
Director of government relations,  
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas*

## Health insurance among top priorities at Kansas Statehouse

Unpredictable is a good way to describe the 2009 Kansas legislative session. We entered the session thinking many issues would take a back-seat to budget concerns and energy legislation. However, health insurance and health care reform are right there among the top priorities for legislators and many bills are still active.

Following is a brief summary of the 2009 health and life insurance Kansas legislative bills as of mid March. This is not a complete list of the bills that we are following, and the summaries do not include all of the provisions in each bill. However, I hope this general overview provides you an opportunity to understand the different types of health legislation that are active this year.

## 2009 Legislative Mid-Term Summary

### **SB 12 and HB 2367 – Autism Mandate**

SB 12 mandates guarantee issued individual and group coverage of autism and autism spectrum disorders up to a maximum of \$75,000 per year through age 21. Coverage includes applied behavioral analysis (ABA) services. Small groups (less than 50 employees) and individuals with underwritten health plans have the option to exclude coverage. HB 2367 is similar but contains provisions that could wipe out the proposed \$75,000 maximum coverage for an insured per year.

### **SB 25 – Clean Indoor Air Act**

The Clean Indoor Air Act, which also is known as the statewide smoking ban, prohibits smoking in most public places including restaurants and drinking establishments. The amended version of the bill excludes casinos and tobacco shops from the ban. The bill was passed by the Senate (26-13) with few amendments, but was later tabled indefinitely by House members.

### **SB 49 – Mental Health Parity**

The Kansas Insurance Department introduced SB 49 to update current state mental health laws to match the new federal mental health parity requirements. The federal mental health parity law requires large groups (fully insured and ASO) with mental health insurance coverage to provide full parity.

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## **SB 136 – Patient Protection Act**

This bill updates the current Patient Protection Act to include specific guidelines on the language that health insurers use in their provider and hospital contracts. The bill is in the Senate Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee.

## **SB 174 – Removing Mandatory Group Life Participation Requirements**

SB 174 amends the current group life insurance law to allow both employers and insureds to pay towards life insurance premiums. The bill also removes the 75 percent eligible employee participation requirement.

## **HB 2044 & HB 2262 – Amendment to State Continuation Coverage Law**

HB 2044 and HB 2262 reverse language in last session's House Substitute for SB 81 which required small employers to collect insurance premiums for former employees who opt to continue insurance coverage and to provide notification. Small employers feel the bill places an unnecessary administrative burden on employers whereas insurance carriers were better equipped to manage the collection of state continuation insurance premiums and handle notification.

## **HB 2075 – Colorectal Cancer Screening Mandate**

HB 2075 was introduced to guarantee that all insurers cover colorectal cancer screening for insureds over age 50. The bill also requires insurers to cover screenings for members who are less than age 50, but have a high risk of colon cancer. Standard deductibles and coinsurance will apply.

## **HB 2344 – Dietary Formulas Mandate**

HB 2344 is identical to last year's dietary formula mandate HB 2769. This bill mandates coverage for special dietary formulas for the treatment of various metabolic, malabsorption and gastric diseases including phenylketonuria (PKU).

## **What to Expect Next**

We will continue to monitor these bills and any other bills or amendments that might arise. Our focus is to be available as a resource on health insurance issues and to express our concern to legislators on any proposed legislation which likely would raise the cost of health insurance for our members.

For more legislative news, including summaries of more health insurance-related bills, information on federal health reform and contact information for legislators, please visit our Web site at: [www.bcbsks.com](http://www.bcbsks.com). From the home page, select *News* then, *Legislative Issues*.

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# **Atwood Named Chief Medical Officer and Medical Director**



*Michael D. Atwood, M.D., Chief medical officer and medical director, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas*

## **Among other duties, Dr. Atwood takes a leadership role in defining medical policies and procedures for BCBSKS.**

Michael D. Atwood, M.D., has joined Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas as the company's chief medical officer and medical director. In that capacity, he is the primary medical liaison for the company's contracting health care providers, and also is responsible for defining and resolving issues related to medical care.

Prior to joining BCBSKS, Dr. Atwood served as a medical director for Stormont-Vail HealthCare in Topeka, where he participated in strategic planning, establishing organizational goals, and creating and approving administrative policies and procedures. His previous experience also includes 18 years as a physician with the Cotton-O'Neil medical group and five years as a physician for Family Practice, PA.

Dr. Atwood earned his bachelor's degree in human biology from the University of Kansas, and his medical degree from the University of Kansas School of Medicine. While in school he earned several honors for his academic achievements including membership into Alpha Omega Alpha, Phi Beta Kappa and Phi Kappa Phi. Dr. Atwood completed his residency at the Cedar Rapids Family Practice Residency Program in Iowa.

He is a member of the Association of Medical Directors of Information Systems, American Medical Informatics Association, American Academy of Family Physicians, Kansas Academy of Family Physicians, Kansas Medical Society and Shawnee County Medical Society. Dr. Atwood and his wife, Jennie, have three children.