MEDICAID, continued from page 1

in Kansas, Gina Hinojosa in Texas, and David Crowley in Wisconsin campaigned on finally broadening access to the joint federal-state insurance program for those with low incomes or disabilities. More than a million people collectively in Georgia, Kansas, Texas, and Wisconsin could be covered by full Medicaid expansion, according to 2024 data from KFF, a health information nonprofit that includes KFF Health News.

But expanding their Medicaid programs is no small task.

These Democrats would have to surmount political and legislative hurdles at a time when the realities of Medicaid expansion have changed. Last year's GOP budget law eliminated a financial bonus for states to expand, imposed a work mandate, and implemented funding restrictions that are tougher on full expansion states.

"It's so messy," said Caylee Noggle, a former Georgia Medicaid director who is now president of the Georgia Hospital Association. "We're in this real moment where there are benefits and trade-offs to traditional expansion."

Federal changes

The Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, required states to expand Medicaid to millions more low-income adults. But a 2012 Supreme Court decision made that choice optional.

Forty states plus Washington, D.C., have expanded Medicaid, most recently North Carolina in 2023. Ten states, including Georgia and Wisconsin, have declined to fully expand eligibility for the program. But those two states have offered coverage to some who would be covered under full expansion.

The calculus for expanding changed last year. Along with eliminating the expansion bonus, President Donald Trump's signature One Big Beautiful Bill Act imposed restrictions on how much federal money states can draw down to help prop up doctors and hospitals that treat large numbers of Medicaid patients. And the limits are lower for expansion states than non-expansion states.

Those funding restrictions will likely be a focal point for lawmakers in Wisconsin. Fully expanding Medicaid could threaten hundreds of millions of federal dollars flowing into the state, according to estimates from the Wisconsin Hospital Association.

Bobby Peterson, a Madison-based attorney who helps clients navigate benefit programs, said any plan to cover



Sean Frye I Tribune photo

Kansas Gov.-elect Cindy Holscher speaks at a campaign event in Parsons prior to the primary elections.

more people with full Medicaid expansion in Wisconsin would likely hit headwinds, even with Democrats controlling the governor's office and both branches of the state legislature starting in January.

"These are going to be hard conversations," he said.

Crowley, the state's incoming Democratic governor, embraced full Medicaid expansion early in his campaign. Later, he called for opening the state's partial Medicaid expansion to anyone who wants to buy a plan. Since his win, he's moved further away from full expansion.

The Crowley campaign did not answer specific questions from KFF Health News about which policy he would pursue, and spokesperson Jonathan Fera said the governor-elect would share more about his agenda after his inauguration.

When states expand eligibility, they get a larger federal funding match per enrollee in the expansion pool than for other people in their Medicaid programs. And having fewer uninsured patients can reduce the financial strain on hospitals and other players in the health system, which can win support for expansion from the hospital industry and rural politicians worried about facility closures in their communities.

Still, states must find the money to pay their share for this bigger group of enrollees while wrestling with the new funding restrictions.

"It's a lot of complicated math," said Lawson Mansell, senior health policy analyst at the Niskanen Center, a think tank focused on free-market policies.

Expansion also comes with new rules from the One Big Beautiful Bill Act requiring enrollees to prove they're working or completing at least 80 hours of other qualifying activities a month. Democrats would need to grapple with the politics of rolling out rules pushed by Republicans — and the potential of their congressional counterparts to change course again.

The political landscape in Washington, D.C., has shifted with the blue wave entering Congress. Democrats have already pledged to roll back the Medicaid cuts in the GOP budget law but haven't said how. And it's unclear whether Trump would be on board.

"When states operate in an environment where they're uncertain about federal policy, that makes it harder for states to legislate," said Brian Blase, president of the right-leaning Paragon Health Institute.

States would also need to figure out how to enact those work requirements if they hold. In Georgia, administrative hurdles for similar work rules made it difficult for people to enroll in the state's limited expansion program, which is set to expire at the end of the year. And many states that have already expanded Medicaid are struggling to implement the rules.

On Nov. 13, the White House allowed states to delay the new work rules, originally set to take effect Jan. 1, by six months after pushback.

"Even if a state adopts the expansion, unfortunately, this could result in people still remaining uninsured just because of all these changes that essentially add more red tape," said Edwin Park, a research professor at Georgetown University's Center for Children and Families.

Political realities and uncertainties

Enrollment in the Obamacare marketplaces has ballooned in several non-expansion states, including Texas, where more than 4 million people picked plans for 2026, according to KFF. Opponents of full Medicaid expansion have long warned against adding more people to Medicaid, a government program, rather than keeping them on private Affordable Care Act plans.

Former Democratic U.S. Rep. Beto O'Rourke said he believes Medicaid expansion will be a priority for Hinojosa given her past work in the state legislature and her campaign messaging.

"The stories of people she met across the state struggling without healthcare really made an impact on her," he said. "It's clear that this is a priority for her."

But while Texas Democrats won the governor's office and a majority in the state House, Republicans will still hold a majority in the state Senate.

John Henderson, president and CEO of the Texas Organization of Rural & Community Hospitals, said he's skeptical that Republican legislators will reverse their long-standing opposition to expanding Medicaid.

"It's been several sessions since there was even a real attempt at a conversation around Medicaid expansion," Henderson said. "There was an appetite in the House, but never enthusiasm in the Senate."

Full Medicaid expansion has also eluded lawmakers in Kansas, where Holscher won a close race for governor. She will replace Gov. Laura Kelly, a Democrat whose efforts to expand Medicaid were stymied.

In this month's elections, Kansas Republicans maintained control of the state Senate and House, but Democrats broke the GOP supermajority in the latter body.

The Holscher campaign did not respond to questions from KFF Health News about her plans to get Medicaid expansion through two GOP-controlled legislative bodies.

Humboldt Happenings



Carman Huse

Correspondent

Nov 25-27
NO SCHOOL
Thanksgiving break
Nov 27 5pm-8p, Bike around the Square, Lighting of lights, 5pm.
Nov 30 6:30 pm, Elementary Music program 1,2 & 3; HS Scholars Bowl @ Cherryvale
Dec 1 HS Basketball @ Home vs Girard; HS Wrestling @ Erie; MS Girls BB @ Iola
Dec 2 6:30 pm MS/HS Band Concert in Auditorium
Dec 3 MS Basketball @ Home
Dec 4 HS Basketball @ Chanute; HS Girls Wresting @ Caney
Dec 5 HS Boys Wrestling @ Caney
Dec 7 MS Basketball @ Caney
Dec 8 HS Basketball @ Home
Dec 10 HS Basketball @ Home Tournament; HS Wrestling @ Bluestem
Dec 11 HS Basketball @ Home Tournament; HS Girls Wrestling @ Coffeyville
Dec 14 HS Boys Wrestling @ Coffeyville; HS Scholars Bowl @ Caney; MS Basketball @ Fredonia; UDS 258 Board Meeting
Dec 15 HS Basketball @ home
Dec 17 HS Basketball @ Neodesha; MS Basketball @ Home
Dec 18 End of 2nd 9 weeks- Dismiss @ 11:45am; HS Boys/Girls Wrestling @ Columbus
Dec 21-Jan 1 NO SCHOOL HOLIDAY BREAK

BIKE AROUND THE SQUARE

Nov 27th, 5-8pm, lighting of lights 5pm, Decorate your bike and Celebrate the start of the Christmas season with a night of family fun!

Photos with Santa, food booths, s'mores stations, glow sticks available at city hall(while supplies last)

Send my your Humboldt information to be put in the paper. Carman Huse at 620-365-9311, or star62us1962@yahoo.com, or message me on Messenger.

The Chanute Tribune
26 W. Main - Chanute - 620-431-4100
www.chanute.com

Three-day Art Auction
Sudlow to Sandzen
Paintings to Prairie Print Makers
December 4, 5 and 6
SoulisAuctions.com
Lone Jack, Missouri | 816.697.3830



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Evergy Kansas Central (EKC) and Evergy Kansas Metro (EKM), combined as "Evergy," have filed a Petition with the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) requesting a determination of the prudency of five generation investments, if the investments will result in just and reasonable rates for customers, and whether EKC and EKM would be entitled to recover costs of the investments and under what terms. The generation investments are one unit at a new combined cycle gas-fired generating turbine plant (CCGT), one stand-alone solar facility, two stand-alone battery storage facilities, and one hybrid solar and battery storage facility.

Public Hearing

The Commission has scheduled a virtual public hearing to provide Evergy Kansas customers an opportunity to learn more about the proposed projects, as well as ask questions and make comments about the proposal. The virtual public hearing will be:

Thursday, December 10, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.

An evidentiary hearing on Evergy's request is scheduled to begin February 15, 2027 at 10:00 a.m. Central, at the Commission's Offices, 1500 SW Arrowhead Rd., Topeka, KS 66604-4027.

Attendees that participate virtually using Zoom must register at https://kcc.ks.gov/your-opinion-matters by noon the day before the hearing. The hearing will be broadcast live on the agency's YouTube channel for those unable to attend. Any person requiring special accommodations at the hearing site under The Americans with Disabilities Act must notify the Commission at least 10 days prior to the scheduled public hearing by calling 800-662-0027.

Public Comments

The Commission will also accept written comments from the public through 5 p.m., January 29, 2027. Comments regarding the case should reference Docket No. 27-EKCE-0149-PRE and should be sent to the Kansas Corporation Commission Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Protection, 1500 S.W. Arrowhead Road, Topeka, KS 66604-4027. Comments may also be submitted online at https://kcc-connect.kcc.ks.gov/s/public-comments, by e-mail to public.affairs@kcc.ks.gov or by calling 1-800-662-0027.

Evergy's Petition Request

Evergy's Petition requests approvals as follows: 1) EKC's 100% ownership of the Buchanan Bluffs Unit 1 CCGT located in Buchanan County, Mo.; 2) EKC and EKM split ownership (50%/50%) of Iron Horse Solar to be located near Parsons in Labette County, Kan.; 3) EKC and EKM split ownership (50%/50%) of Iron Horse Storage to be located near Parsons in Labette County, KS; 4) EKC's 100% ownership of Pixley Energy Storage located in Barber County, Kan.; and 5) EKC's 100% ownership of Pixley II Hybrid solar and storage located in Barber County, Kan.

Evergy has asked the KCC to allow recovery of construction work in progress (CWIP) during the construction of the CCGTs and in a future rate proceeding will ask for recovery of the investments once they are in service, which is is expected in in 2028 for the Iron Horse Solar, Pixley Energy Storage, and Pixley II Hybrid projects; 2029 for Iron Horse Storage; and 2031 for Buchanan Bluffs Unit 1 CCGT.

EKC serves about 749,000 customers in Topeka, Lawrence, Olathe, Leavenworth, Atchison, Manhattan, Salina, Hutchinson, Emporia, Parsons, Wichita, Arkansas City, El Dorado, Newton, Fort Scott, Pittsburg, and Independence, among other towns and rural areas. EKM serves about 279,800 customers in Lenexa, Overland Park and other communities near the Kansas City metro area.

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a TRADITION of INNOVATION

CEMETERY FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS REMOVAL

Cemetery flowers and decorations that are not in permanent fixtures and/or on concrete slabs should be removed before MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30th, at the City of Chanute cemeteries - Elmwood and Memorial Park.

This follows the guideline of City Ordinance 2.60.080 – Flowers, adornment restrictions.

Decorations which are not removed by this date will be disposed of by cemetery personnel.

Questions will be answered by calling 620-431-5250.

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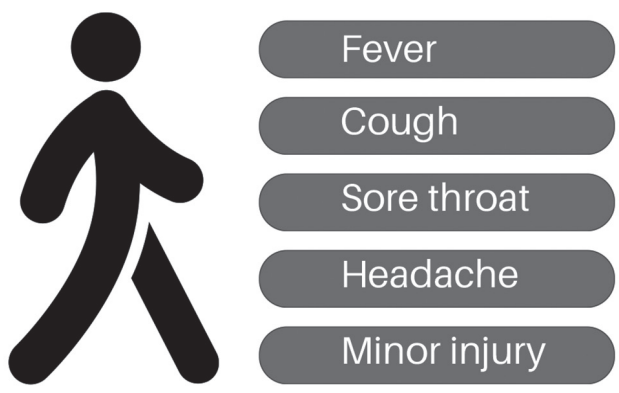
HOLIDAY HOURS
Dec. 24 – closes at 3:00 pm
Closed all day on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.



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