



How smart health policy protects Kansas businesses

For many Kansas employers, health care is one of the hardest costs to predict – and one of the most difficult to control. Even businesses that invest in competitive benefits, wellness programs and strong workplace cultures continue to face rising premiums year after year.

One component often overlooked is how decisions made at the Statehouse may directly impact what employers pay.

Why health care costs keep rising

Health insurance premiums reflect the cost of health care. As prices for prescription drugs, hospital care and medical services increase, insurance premiums must rise to keep coverage sustainable. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas (BCBSKS) returns nearly 88 percent of premium dollars towards medical care. The remaining portion of the premium covers taxes and supports customer service and employee salaries, as well as investments that improve access, innovation and stability.

As Kansas' only not-for-profit mutual health plan, we serve our members and communities, not shareholders. That structure matters – especially when it comes to public policy.

The business impact of health care legislation

State policies can either support affordability or quietly add costs that show up in employer premiums. When legislation increases the cost of delivering or covering care – those costs are passed on to employers and employees.

That's why BCBSKS actively monitors and participates in the Kansas legislative process. Employers count on us to manage health benefits and advocate for policies that help keep those benefits affordable and predictable.

Why advocacy matters to employers

Kansas businesses want to offer high-quality health benefits without breaking their budgets. Stable benefits support employee retention, productivity and long-term growth. Legislative decisions that increase health care costs threaten all three.

As a not-for-profit health plan without shareholders, our advocacy is driven by one priority: helping legislators understand how health care policy decisions affect Kansas employers, families and communities – not stock prices or quarterly earnings.

A short session with long-term consequences

The 2026 Kansas legislative session runs from Jan. 12 through March 27, followed by a brief veto session in April. In just a few months, lawmakers consider proposals that can have lasting effects on health care access and affordability statewide.

That limited window makes accurate, timely information essential. BCBSKS works to ensure legislators understand how proposed policies may affect employer-sponsored coverage and overall health care costs.

What we support

Our advocacy focuses on policies that help employers manage costs while ensuring Kansans can access the care they need, including:

A stronger health care workforce

When communities lack doctors, nurses and specialists, employees miss work and care is often delayed. Policies that expand Kansas' health care workforce help businesses maintain a healthier, more productive workforce.

Healthier Kansans

Preventive care and healthy habits lead to better outcomes and lower long-term costs. State policies that empower individuals to improve their health benefits employees and employers alike.

Employers at the center of health policy decisions

For many Kansas businesses, health care is one of the largest operating expenses. In addition, eight out of ten Kansas patients tell BCBSKS that medical bills are among their top financial concerns – second only to groceries and gas. Policymakers deserve clear data that shows how legislation impacts employers and families in real dollars.

Responsible Medicaid reimbursement

When Medicaid reimbursement rates fall below the cost of providing care, providers must make up the difference elsewhere – often through higher charges to commercial plans. Aligning Medicaid payments with the actual cost of care will help prevent cost-shifting that ultimately impacts employers.

What we urge policymakers to avoid

We encourage caution with policies that will unintentionally increase premiums:

Costly coverage mandates

Mandates requiring coverage of additional services limit employer choice and typically result in higher premiums to cover new costs.

Price-setting policies

Legislation requiring health plans to pay a specified amount for health care services shift expenses to employers and employees while doing nothing to reduce health care spending overall.

One-size-fits-all benefit requirements

Policies that eliminate cost-sharing for services can drive up premiums for everyone, even when they don't align with an employer's workforce needs.

A system businesses can trust

Kansas employers deserve a health care system that is transparent, sustainable and affordable. BCBSKS advocates for thoughtful, data-driven policy that supports those goals – not just for today, but for the future of Kansas' workforce and economy.

Staying informed

Employers who work with BCBSKS can contact their sales representative for updates on health care legislation and its potential impact.

Many Kansas legislators offer constituent newsletters to share updates on bills under consideration. To find your state legislators and learn more about their legislative activity, visit pluralpolicy.com/open.