



WEALTH POLICY, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, AND YOU!

WITH MITZI MCFATRICH

KANSAS ADVOCATES FOR BETTER CARE

Excerpts from a series of CEP LIVE on Facebook events that highlight policies impacting Kansas WEALTH and outline effective civic engagement strategies

WATER – ENERGY – AIR – LAND – TRANSPORTATION – HEALTH = KANSAS WEALTH

OVERVIEW

Mitzi McFatrigh of Kansas Advocates for Better Care joined the Climate + Energy Project on March 6, 2018, to discuss policy priorities for the 2018 legislative session. Kansas Advocates for Better Care works to ensure that all older Kansans receive quality long-term health care in the setting of their choice.

TOP WEALTH POLICY ISSUES FOR KANSAS ADVOCATES FOR BETTER CARE

- Of the 18,000 Kansans who live in nursing facilities, as many as half or more of them may have Alzheimer's or some other form of dementia. While Kansas is first in the nation for not using physical restraints, we are worst in the nation for our **overuse of chemical restraints and antipsychotic drugs** to sedate people. That practice creates a lower quality of life for people who are dealing with those drugs, and it also raises the likelihood that they will die prematurely. These drugs can confuse a person and make their cognitive function even more difficult than it already is. We support [House Bill 2704](#), which would require informed written consent for older adults in order to accept or deny antipsychotic drugs. This would provide a way to ensure that older adults are really being informed about the risks of using antipsychotics.
- Another proposal KABC supports is [House Bill 2458](#), which would **create the crime/victim category for elder physical abuse**. There was a crime/victim category for elders in a bill a couple of years ago, and it addressed financial exploitation and abuse, but it didn't include physical abuse. This bill would create specific crime categories around the abuse of older adults and makes it very specific to the physical injuries they sustain.
- KABC also has **concerns about the Medicaid program**, which serves a large number of older adults who cannot otherwise afford health insurance. Under managed care in the KanCare program, there has been a huge backlog at the "front door" for Medicaid applicants. Older adults who need long-term services and support at home or in a facility can't get their Medicaid application processed in a timely manner. There has been as long as a nine-month waiting period for people in a process that is supposed to take 45 days. If you're waiting nine months, you already need help on a daily basis for many things that you do to live.
- This year there has been an attack from the industry on **nursing home inspections**. The state inspection process is the only entity with any authority to protect an older adult from abuse and poor care in an adult care home. That is supposed to be happening every 12 months, but right now it is happening every 15 to 22 months in a nursing facility and around two years for assisted living. It is really key and important that we keep those state inspections of the facilities safe and strong.



The Climate + Energy Project seeks to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions in America's Heartland through the ambitious deployment of energy efficiency and renewable energy, in policy and practice.

Join the Conversation at climateandenergy.org, on Facebook & Twitter @CEPHeartland

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY TIPS FROM MITZI MCFATRICH

- **Share your concern and stories with your elected officials and the people in state agencies** that represent interests that you have. For us that is the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. When your local legislator is at home, meet with them. If you have a loved one in a nursing facility or assisted living facility, invite legislators to come and visit with you and your loved ones so that they can see firsthand the good things that are happening there and the things that may need more attention. **Connecting personally** is the most powerful way to advance what we care about.
- It's always a good idea to **call and talk or email legislators**. You don't have to be in Topeka—you can talk with your legislators when they're at home. If you want to testify, the legislator's assistant can walk you through that process. If that's intimidating to you, resources such as Kansas Advocates for Better Care or Climate + Energy Project can help. Whatever your area of interest or concern is, don't be bashful to communicate that to elected officials. They cover an unbelievable amount of subjects during the 90 days that they are in Topeka doing the work of our democracy. **It is key that they hear from people**. From what I hear, as few as three people talking to legislators about the same thing is enough to cause them to become focused on that. It doesn't always take hundreds of people contacting them—simply let them know what is of interest to you.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Learn about and advocate for Water, Energy, Air, Land, Transportation, and Health (WEALTH) in Kansas with the Climate + Energy Project and other sponsor organizations at WEALTH Day on March 15, 2018, at the Kansas Statehouse.

- Get up-to-date on current environmental advocacy
- Visit the Solutions Showcase
- Participate in WEALTH Forums throughout the day
- Enjoy the Local Foods Luncheon
- Sample new ideas at the Cookies and Conservation Conversation
- Meet with your legislators

Connect with CEP on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) and sign up for our [email updates](#).

Join us for WEALTH Day on March 15th at the Kansas Statehouse!

RSVP: <http://bit.ly.2018WEALTHDay>



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