

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH SERVICES

Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the 2026 Interim

June 16, 2026

Call to Order and Roll Call

The first meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Health Services was held on June 16, 2026, at 1:00 PM ET/12:00 PM CT in Room 149 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Stephen Meredith, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Stephen Meredith, Co-Chair; Senators Julie Raque Adams, Karen Berg, Danny Carroll, Donald Douglas, Robby Mills, Michael J. Nemes, Steve Rawlings, and Craig Richardson; and Representatives Steve Bratcher, Josh Bray, Lindsey Burke, Emily Callaway, Adrielle Camuel, Robert Duvall, Ken Fleming, Kim Holloway, Mary Lou Marzian, Amy Neighbors, Marianne Proctor, Felicia Rabourn, Rebecca Raymer, Steve Riley, and Scott Sharp.

Guests: Dr. Steven Stack, Secretary, Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS); Tom Walton, Director, Rural Health Transformation Program, CHFS; Missy Runyong, Block Grant Program Administrator, CHFS; and Dr. Patti Clark, Director, Division of Mental Health, Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental & Intellectual Disabilities (DBHDID), CHFS.

LRC Staff: DeeAnn Wenk, Chris Joffrion, Cameron Franey, and DJ Burns.

Update on the Rural Health Transformation Program

Dr. Steven Stack, Secretary, CHFS, and Tom Walton, Director, Rural Health Transformation Program, CHFS, presented an update on the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) including a timeline, focused priorities, and goals. Secretary Stack provided an overview of the 5 programs approved from the application submitted to the Center for Medicaid Services (CMS) and objectives for each.

In response to Representative Fleming, Secretary Stack stated each initiative has community partners who will help launch and provide services to ensure success. Mr. Walton stated a key to victories for the RHTP is partnerships with stakeholders which helps each initiative be locally led and tailored to the needs of that community. Secretary Stack stated all procurement rules and guidelines must be followed when

awarding contracts and all the tools within procurement guidelines are being utilized to meet the timeline CMS has set. Mr. Walton stated funding would be used to upgrade the Kentucky Health Information Exchange and Kynect technology platforms. Secretary Stack stated funding can only be used to enhance technology infrastructure.

In response to Representative Callaway, Mr. Walton stated RHTP would investigate including incarcerated pregnant women into the PoWERing Rural Maternal & Infant Health initiative. Secretary Stack stated the Department for Public Health has worked with the Department of Corrections in the past and can use that existing relationship to explore the feasibility of expanding the maternal health initiative.

In response to Senator Douglas, Secretary Stack stated the initial focus within the 5 initiatives are identifying citizens within the area that will benefit from the services offered, ensure access, and use any resources available to mitigate barriers. Secretary Stack stated CMS has mandated outcomes and key results (OKRs) be defined for each initiative, which may be redefined and added to as the program evolves. He stated the vitality dashboard that is being developed with the University of Kentucky will be public-facing and show the progress made towards OKRs.

In response to Representative Proctor, Mr. Walton stated the OKRs referenced in the presentation are a summary and are more specific within the application and plan. Secretary Stack stated performance metrics will be available in 2027.

In response to Senator Carroll, Mr. Walton stated the HANDS program, or Health Access Nurturing Development Services, is part of the wrap-around services provided in the PoWERing initiative. Secretary Stack stated the initiative is intended to assist new mothers in the year prior to delivery and the first year of the baby's life to ensure successful parenting and a healthy baby. Mr. Walton stated community stakeholders should bring issues to the office of the RHTP and if the issue can be addressed, the plan is amended, if allowable.

In response to Chair Meredith, Secretary Stack stated the transition to a new administration should not affect the RHTP and changes could be made as allowable under federal guidelines. He stated sustainability is at the forefront of planning initiatives and not all will succeed, but with expanding access to providers, CHFS is hopeful many will continue after federal grant funding concludes. Mr. Walton stated CMS only required 3 of the 9 allowable uses of funds and Kentucky addressed all 9. He ensured the remaining 16% of funding be used before the deadline as it is at risk of being returned. The legislature can assist the RHTP by identifying priorities within the perimeters of the approved application.

In response to Representative Holloway, Mr. Walton stated certified professional midwives are included in the plan to expand maternity care in rural communities. Secretary Stack stated maternity wards are a key issue in rural communities and the PoWERing initiative will look for ways to provide access to maternal health services in the best way for each community.

In response to Representative Marzian, Mr. Walton stated discussions about public schools being stakeholders in the RHTP are ongoing.

Community Mental Health Services and Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services Block Grant

Missy Runyong, Block Grant Program Administrator, CHFS, and Dr. Patti Clark, Director, Division of Mental Health, DBHDID, CHFS, gave an update on Kentucky's unified block grant abbreviated funding application for FY 2027.

In response to Chair Meredith, Dr. Clark stated primary substance abuse prevention services provide training for teachers to identify substance abuse disorder risk signs in youth.

In response to Senator Berg, Ms. Runyon stated the parameters of the mental health funding is set by the federal government and administrative costs for both block grants are under 5%. Dr. Clark stated multiple funding sources are utilized for behavioral health crisis services.

Consideration of Referred Administrative Regulations

The following referred administrative regulations were placed on the agenda for consideration:

201 KAR 002:010
201 KAR 002:050
201 KAR 002:090
201 KAR 002:116
201 KAR 002:160
201 KAR 002:180
201 KAR 002:185
201 KAR 002:190
201 KAR 002:205
201 KAR 002:250
201 KAR 002:260
201 KAR 002:280

201 KAR 002:300
201 KAR 002:330
201 KAR 006:030
201 KAR 006:061
201 KAR 006:071
201 KAR 009:360
201 KAR 028:240
201 KAR 036:100 Emergency
201 KAR 036:100

All the above listed administrative regulations were reviewed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.