INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH SERVICES

Minutes of the 5th Meeting of the 2026 Interim

October 20, 2026

Call to Order and Roll Call
The fifth meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Health Services was held on October 20, 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; Representative Kimberly Poore Moser, Co-Chair; Senators Julie Raque Adams, Karen Berg, Danny Carroll, Donald Douglas, Michael J. Nemes, Steve Rawlings, Craig Richardson, and Lindsey Tichenor; and Representatives Steve Bratcher, Josh Bray, Adrielle Camuel, Robert Duvall, Ken Fleming, Deanna Gordon, Kim Holloway, Mary Lou Marzian, Amy Neighbors, Marianne Proctor, Felicia Rabourn, Rebecca Raymer, Steve Riley, and Lisa Willner.

Guests: Dr. Steven J. Stack, Secretary, Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS); Tom Walton, Director, Kentucky Rural Health Transformation (KYRHT) Program, CHFS; Robert Long, Deputy Secretary, General Counsel, Kentucky Personnel Cabinet; Chris Chamness, Commissioner, Department of Employee Insurance, Kentucky Personnel Cabinet; Sharon Graves, Constituent Living with Alpha-gal Syndrome; Representative Layal Bou Harfouch, Policy Analyst, Reason Foundation; David L. Morgan, Governmental Affairs Associate, Reason Foundation; Lieutenant Colonel Gene Llaguno, Louisville Metro Department of Corrections (LMDOC); Dr. Martha Knighton, Medical Director, LMDOC; and Sarita Schoenbachler, Health Services Administrator, LMDOC

LRC Staff: Chris Joffrion, Cameron Franey, Robert Wright, and Becky Lancaster.

Consideration of Referred Administrative Regulations
The following referred administrative regulations were placed on the agenda for consideration:
201 KAR 028:240 Emergency - Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact.
201 KAR 046:035 Proposed - Practice standards, scopes of practice, and ethical standards.
915 KAR 002:050 Proposed - Qualifying Medical Conditions

All the above listed administrative regulations were reviewed.

Approval of Minutes
A motion was made by Senator Raque Adams and seconded by Senator Douglas to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2026, meeting. Minutes were approved by voice vote without objection.

Update on the Rural Health Transformation Program
Tom Walton, Director, KYRHT Program, discussed the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) strategic goals and funding constraints; various programs expanded throughout the state; the People who Work for Engagement and Resilience (PoWER) model of care; the Rapid Response to Recovery program for behavioral health; prioritizing oral health through workforce development and treatment expansion; the Chronic Care Innovation program, emergency response programs; other KYRHT activities under contract; and the CMS checkpoint model data.

Dr. Steven J. Stack, Secretary, CHFS, commented on the expansion of chronic care hubs and other expansion programs in rural areas.

In response to Senator Carroll, Mr. Walton stated the Rooted in Health team has mapped dental assets across the state to research where to allocate funds for mobile dental vans. Secretary Stack stated the Department for Aging and Independent Living is supportive of the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) and the funding for PACE will continue.

In response to Co-Chair Moser, Mr. Walton discussed how entities can become a lead organization, working with local people to govern services in those areas, developing training modules to be certified community health workers, and working to make the KYRHT programs sustainable.

In response to Representative Raymer, Mr. Walton stated hospitals can apply to become a lead organization to receive KYRHT funding and KYRHT is working to diversify funding opportunities to for-profit entities. Secretary Stack stated there was no intention to exclude awarding funds to for-profit entities but the KYRHT program was working within a tight timeline for disbursement in this first year.

In response to Representative Marzian, Mr. Walton discussed how the behavioral rapid response team ensures that patients have access to care as soon as possible and the two components of tele-behavioral health pathways of care.

In response to Chair Meredith, Mr. Walton stated the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky is contracted to distribute funds; the KYRHT program is concentrating on care coordination to optimize existing collaborations; and there is a contract with HealthForce Kentucky to do clinical trainings. Secretary Stack stated that the executed contracts report of distributed funds submitted to CMS does not indicate the work in progress.

The Kentucky Employee Health Plan – Vendor Contracting and Procurement
Chris Chamness, Commissioner, Department of Employee Insurance, Kentucky Personnel Cabinet, discussed the Carrum surgical assistance program available on the Kentucky Employee Health Plan (KEHP); the program's warranty on most procedures which produces add-on cost avoidance for members; and that Carrum is engaged as a subcontractor under CVS/Caremark's vendor election process.

In response to Chair Meredith, Mr. Chamness stated that Carrum is compliant with all state laws and provider statutes; would like to expand its surgical vendor network; contracts with six different hospital networks at 11 locations; has a mutual referral agreement with CVS/Caremark; and programs provided by CVS/Caremark are evaluated independently for cost value to members as well as KEHP. Robert Long, Deputy Secretary, General Counsel, Kentucky Personnel Cabinet, stated the KEHP is tasked with creating cost-savings for members and providers must be willing to accept the bundled fees for benefits to the member and plan.

In response to Co-Chair Moser, Mr. Chamness stated Carrum is an optional program and explained the warranty benefit for cost-savings.

In response to Senator Carroll, Mr. Chamness stated there are no copayments for surgical services because the rates are part of the bundle shared savings model of pricing. Mr. Long stated the members' premiums go into the health fund trust to pay both Anthem and CVS/Caremark for benefits coverage and services that may be accessed for cost-savings.

In response to Representative Camuel, Mr. Chamness stated Carrum covers certain lines of surgery and cancer care and there is a travel stipend offered to offset travel costs for some members. Mr. Long stated that when a surgical need is identified a care specialist will work with a member to connect them to the providers available in-network.

In response to Senator Berg, Mr. Chamness stated Carrum vets its providers based on a proprietary list of quality metrics; the included warranty is only for a limited time after

the patient has the procedure; and the primary insurance would continue to provide medical coverage;

Alpha-gal Syndrome (2027 Regular Session Bill Request 427)
Representative Deanna Gordon, House District 81, discussed 2027 Regular Session Bill Request 427 that will ask CHFS to work with state and local health departments to track and report cases of Alpha-gal syndrome.

Sharon Graves, a constituent living with Alpha-gal Syndrome, discussed diagnosing Alpha-gal Syndrome; the various ticks that carry the disease, common symptoms and concerns relating to Alpha-gal Syndrome; by-products with possible mammal cross contamination; various ways to manage the disease; and suggestions to educate and protect against Alpha-gal Syndrome.

Prenatal and Postpartum Care for Incarcerated Women (2027 Regular Session Bill Request 425)
Representative Emily Callaway, House District 37, discussed 2027 Regular Session Bill Request 425, that will require reporting on prenatal and postpartum care for incarcerated women and their babies by jails and prisons.

Dr. Martha Knighton, Medical Director, LMDOC, discussed the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC) standards for healthcare in jails; the prescreening and intake process when pregnancy is confirmed; onsite and offsite prenatal visits for patients; labor and delivery evaluation along with security considerations; post-partum care and support; managing opioid use disorder during and after pregnancy; the outpatient addiction treatment program; and future goals of the department.

Layal Bou Harfouch, Policy Analyst, Reason Foundation discussed the lack of public reporting of incarcerated women; state and national rates of incarcerated pregnant women; the lack of public pregnancy data; and a proposal for consistent public reporting on every stage of pregnancy for women in custody;

In response to Senator Berg, Representative Callaway stated the standard medical rights for a father should be valid even if the mother is incarcerated.

In response to Senator Raque Adams, Representative Callaway stated community wrap-around services are important for pregnant, addicted women upon release. Sarita Schoenbachler, Health Services Administrator, LMDOC, stated the program with Comprehensive Correctional Care is funded by grants.

In response to Co-Chair Moser, Representative Callaway stated the NCCHC standards are not mandatory but those standards are beneficial and could be applied throughout the state. Ms. Schoenbachler discussed how to receive NCCHC accreditation for a facility.

In response to Chair Meredith, Representative Callaway stated she is still receiving feedback from various stakeholders.

Adjournment

With no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned.