



# Kansas Insurance Department

Sandy Praeger, Commissioner of Insurance

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## Kansas insurance exchange workgroup leaders meet

TOPEKA, Kan. — Volunteer leaders met with Kansas Insurance Commissioner Sandy Praeger Feb. 17 to begin planning for Kansas' health insurance benefit exchange.

At the meeting, leaders for the eight exchange working groups, established by the Kansas Insurance Department (KID) in January, discussed the scope of work and the organization of policies and procedures, according to Commissioner Praeger.

“We are moving forward with these leaders to find ways to make a health benefit exchange work best for Kansans,” Commissioner Praeger said. “As part of the federal health reform law, it’s really important that our work in producing an exchange provide the best solution for Kansans.”

The federal Affordable Care Act allows states to plan their own benefit exchange, which is designed as an online one-stop marketplace for consumers to find affordable health insurance plans. The technology of the exchange would allow consumers to “comparison shop” for plans based on their ability to pay for them. In some cases, subsidies from the federal government would help make up the balance of a premium. In other cases, consumers would be referred directly to Medicaid plans because of their income levels.

The Kansas Insurance Department was awarded a \$1 million federal grant in 2010 to begin exchange planning. Earlier this week, the department was specified as the state’s lead agency for a \$31.5 million federal grant as an “early innovator” in planning the exchanges. Six other states were awarded similar grants from the Department of Health and Human Services. Most of the funding will go for technology infrastructure coordination and consulting.

The workgroup meeting was the first for the task force leaders. Their working groups will set their own times for meetings, which will be posted on the KID website, [www.ksinsurance.org](http://www.ksinsurance.org).

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“I am gratified by the time and effort these volunteers agreed to in order to make our exchange proposals work best for Kansans,” Commissioner Praeger said. “They have come together from business, civic and governmental organizations to exchange a variety of ideas on how the exchange can be successful.”

Workgroup chairs and their task forces are Matt All, focus/business operations issues; Jeff Ellis, governance/legal/legislation; Duane Goossen, background research; Bob Stephan, consumer outreach/education/information; Marlee Carpenter, insurance market issues; Doug Farmer, funding/financial; LeRoy Brungardt, agents/brokers/navigators; and Dr. Andy Allison, Medicaid integration and interagency communications.

A description of each work group will be posted on the department website. More on the innovator grant award is also available there.

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*The Kansas Insurance Department, established in 1871, assists and educates consumers, regulates and reviews companies and licenses agents selling insurance products in the state. More about the department is online at [www.ksinsurance.org](http://www.ksinsurance.org).*