



1 thing KU's Self knows he must focus on early in season

SPORTS, 1B

Salina Journal

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Survey shows where Kansans stand

Respondents want Medicaid expansion and abortion access

Rose Conlon
Kansas News Service

Support for Medicaid expansion in Kansas remains high, according to a new survey by the Docking Institute of Public Affairs at Fort Hays State University.

But it's unclear whether those views will inform how Kansans vote this election.

More than 72% of respondents to the Kansas Speaks survey said they support expanding Medicaid, up slightly from last year. That includes over 63% of Republicans and nearly 90% of Democrats.

"It's a little remarkable that there's been such a constant drumbeat of support," for expansion, said Docking Institute director Brett Zollinger.

Kansas one of 10 states to not expand Medicaid

Medicaid expansion would allow an estimated 152,000 more low-income Kansans to receive coverage under the government health care program, according to the Kansas Health Institute. The existing Medicaid program already covers low-income children, pregnant women, elderly Kan-

sans and people with disabilities.

Federal money pays for the bulk of the cost of expansion, and Kansas is one of only 10 states that has not yet done so. Analysts say many people who would be covered by expansion are working jobs that don't offer health insurance.

Opponents of expansion say the proposal is too costly and argue that the policy would primarily benefit working-age adults who have the ability to obtain

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Candidate:

ing the late "Friends" star one year after his death.

The family – including Perry's mother, Suzanne Morrison, stepfather and "Dateline" correspondent Keith Morrison and sisters Caitlin, Emily and Madeline Morrison – opened up to Savannah Guthrie in a "Today" show interview that aired Monday.

Perry, 54, was found unresponsive and face-down in the "heated end" of his pool a year ago Monday on Oct. 28, 2023. The Los Angeles County Medical Examiner's office revealed in December of last year that Perry's cause of death was due to "the acute effects of ketamine."

"It hits me so hard that he's not there," Suzanne Morrison said.

The interview also highlighted the family's work to create the Matthew Perry Foundation of Canada. Suzanne Morrison shared Perry with her ex-husband John Bennett Perry, their only child together. The Morrisons, who married in 1981 and share four children of their own, started the foundation to assist agencies and organizations that help people who are struggling with addiction and substance abuse.

'Bob's Burgers' actor sentenced for role in Jan. 6 Capitol riot

Actor Jay Johnston was sentenced to a year in prison for his involvement in the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol riot, court records show.

Johnston, 56, who's known for his roles in "Bob's Burgers," "Arrested Development" and other comedies, was sentenced to spend a year in jail on Monday.

In July, he pled guilty to one felony charge of obstructing officers during a civil disorder, according to court documents previously acquired by USA TODAY.

Video

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D-Topeka, called on Republican leadership in the state to condemn Sweely and for law enforcement to conduct an investigation to determine if crimes were committed.

"The perpetrators claim the actions in the video are all a joke, and even if that's the case – which it does not appear from an actual view of the video – there is absolutely nothing funny or humorous about sexual assault, or attempts to simulate it," Miller said. "This is particularly true when those involved are in power and seeking power. To even put that explanation forward is preposterous."

makes most of the cookie dough. I'm the only one that makes the sugar dough and the icing, so it's always consistent."

What's your word of advice to

them." She can be reached at klately@cjonline.com. Follow her on Twitter @Late-ly_KT.

Survey

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jobs that provide them with better wages or health insurance.

The survey also found that there was a more than 11% increase in the portion of Kansans who agreed that expanding Medicaid would help rural hospitals remain in business. Several rural hospitals in the state have closed in recent years, including closures last year in Fort Scott and Herington, which have threatened timely access to emergency medical care.

There was a slight increase in the portion of respondents who think that the people who would obtain coverage through Medicaid expansion deserve the benefit.

These signs of growth in support for Medicaid expansion follow a significant media tour and legislative push by Democratic Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly earlier this year. For the first time in years, Republican legislative leaders allowed an expansion bill to reach the state Senate floor for a vote, but most Republicans voted against it.

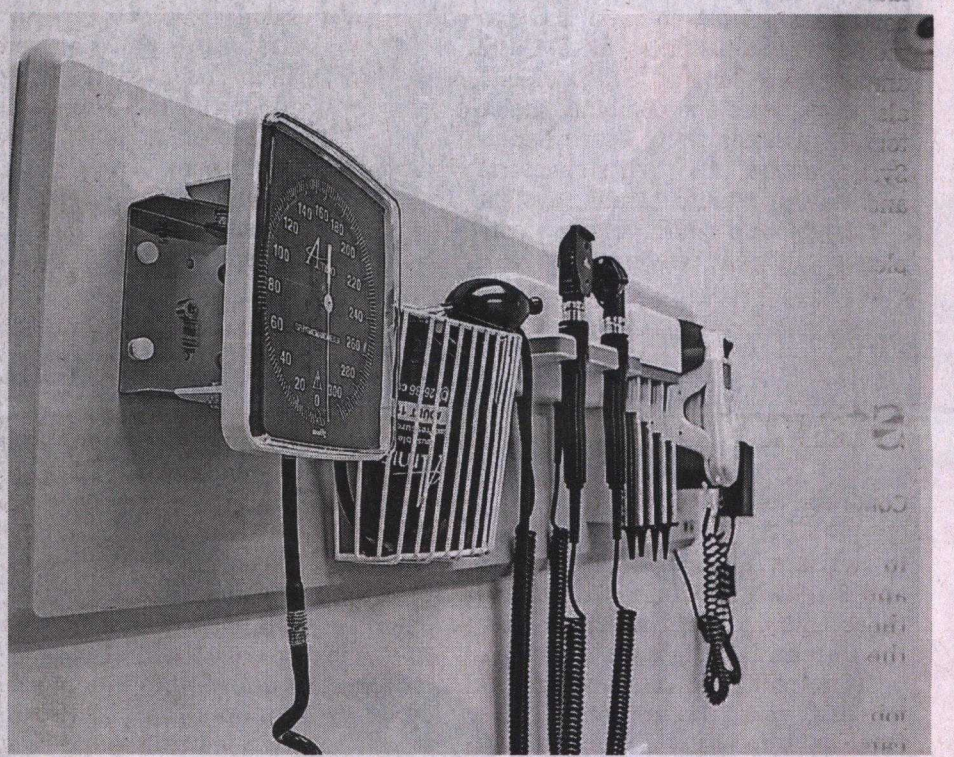
Around half of Kansans who responded to the Kansas Speaks survey said the issue is highly or extremely important as they decide who to vote to represent them in the state legislature. It remains to be seen whether the issue will motivate voters to break the legislature's Republican supermajority.

"We can see that a huge portion of Kansans say that (Medicaid expansion) is important to some degree," said Alexandra Middlewood, a political science professor at Wichita State University who contributed to the survey's development. "But there are so many other issues, too, that they're being forced to consider when making decisions about who to vote for."

Survey says Kansans support access to abortion

Kansans responding to the poll reiterated their support for the right to access abortion and signaled that they generally dislike policies that limit abortions. That's notably out-of-step with actions by Republican lawmakers in recent years.

Around 65% of respondents said women are in a better position than politicians to make the choice about whether to get an abortion, including 46% of Republicans and 89% of Demo-



It's unclear how Kansans' views on Medicaid expansion and abortion rights will impact their voting behavior. ROSE CONLON/KANSAS NEWS SERVICE

crats – a slight increase compared to last year.

There was a significant difference in how men and women responded: Around 55% of women "strongly agreed" that women are better positioned to make their own decisions about an abortion compared to only 36% of men.

Compared to last year's survey, there was a 4% increase in the portion of Kansans who said that lawmakers should not place any regulations on the circumstances under which women can get abortions. Around 55% of respondents agreed with that statement and around 29% disagreed.

Middlewood said those responses do not align with the actions of Kansas lawmakers, who earlier this year passed laws directing more money to anti-abortion organizations and requiring doctors to report women's reasons for obtaining abortions to state officials. The latter law is not currently in effect due to an ongoing court case.

The survey found that slightly over 50% of Kansans strongly or somewhat strongly opposed those new laws, and slightly under 25% of Kansans strongly or somewhat supported them.

"These (responses) go against the trend that we're seeing in the Kansas Legislature," Middlewood said.

Almost 70% of respondents said, in

the event that Kansas bans abortion, they would not be willing to report a woman for obtaining an illegal abortion to authorities. Nearly 20% said they would be willing to do so.

Around 20% of respondents agreed that, if the state bans abortion, lawmakers should also make it illegal to travel to another state to obtain an abortion. Over 60% disagreed.

Abortion featured topic in some state and national campaigns

Those scenarios are not likely to become a reality in the state in the near future due to the Kansas Supreme Court's determination that the Kansas Constitution protects the right to obtain an abortion.

"While (abortion bans) may not be being passed in Kansas right now," Middlewood said, "they have been passed in other states and Kansas is still seeing restrictions introduced in the state legislature."

Kansans are not voting directly on any abortion-related issues this election, but the issue has featured prominently in some candidates' campaigns at the state and national level.

Voters in neighboring Missouri and Nebraska are voting on abortion-related ballot measures this election.

Rose Conlon reports on health for *KMUW* and the *Kansas News Service*.

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