



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

2020

This guide summarizes the Kent County Board of Commissioners' 2020 federal legislative priorities.

Extension of Medicaid Health Coverage

Position: Kent County joins the National Association of Counties (NACo) and the National Sheriff's Association (NSA) in supporting efforts to amend Section 1905(a)(A) of the Social Security Act to allow the continuation of federal benefits, such as Medicaid, Medicare and Children's Health Insurance Plan, for enrolled and eligible individuals who are pending final disposition in county jails.

A section of the Social Security Act, known as the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy, prohibits federal health care benefits for otherwise qualified individuals who are housed in adult jails and juvenile facilities even during the time they are housed before there is a formal resolution of the charges against them. An individual can be enrolled in Medicaid while incarcerated; however, even if enrolled, Medicaid will not cover the cost of their care unless the inmate is in a medical facility. The costs of any behavioral health care for inmates is otherwise covered by the County general fund. NACo and the NSA are working together to explore the impacts of the national behavioral health crisis and the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy. Kent County supports these efforts to ensure that inmates receive the health care benefits to which they are entitled.

Environmental Contamination Challenges

Position: Kent County advocates for increased federal funding to address the significant public health risks presented by environmental contaminants including lead and PFAS. Additional federal revenues are needed to effectively address the high rates of lead poisoning in the County and the contamination of private and public drinking sources from PFAS. The County also urges the adoption of safe and practical federal standards to protect our residents from the harmful effects of these contaminants.

Kent County is home to some zip codes with the greatest number of children with elevated blood lead levels in the state from the legacy of extensive use of lead in building paint. Elevated levels of this contaminate have been shown to result in poor performance in school, work and other activities. Educating residents and implementing abatement programs are critical but very expensive. At the same time, there is a growing awareness that PFAS as a chemical that has been widely used throughout manufacturing, food preservation and clothing and textiles, has become a prevalent contaminator of residents' drinking water supplies in Kent County. To effectively address this environmental challenge, challenge more study is required and clear standards need to be established.

COVID-19 Funding

Position: Kent County urges the U.S. Congress to provide direct and flexible funding in the next COVID-19 response package to county governments of all sizes who are on the frontlines of this unprecedented public health emergency and economic crisis.

To date, the U.S. Congress has enacted four separate coronavirus-relief packages at a total cost of more than \$2 trillion. In the coming weeks, Congress will determine whether to pass another coronavirus relief bill in an effort to restart the economy. Kent County urges any new stimulus bill provide direct and flexible funding to assist local units of government in responding to the COVID-19 crisis.