

- Special to the Daily Leader

TOPEKA – The Kansas Department on Aging has announced the indefinite suspension of four services provided through the Home and Community-Based Services-Frail Elderly waiver program. Acting Secretary Martin Kennedy said the change was made as a result of cuts to the agency's budget.

Effective Jan. 1, 2010, the HCBS-FE waiver program will no longer pay for new recipients to receive assistive technology support, sleep cycle support and comprehensive support services. In addition, dental services will no longer be paid for under the program after Jan. 1.

The services will be suspended Jan. 15 for those customers who currently receive support in these areas. Seniors currently receiving the suspended services will receive a written 10-day notice of the closure date.

"This was not an easy decision," Kennedy said. "We know these are services that many Kansas seniors rely upon to stay in their homes. But we can't continue to provide them and stay within our budget. However, we'll continue to monitor expenditures and restore these services if conditions allow."

Kennedy noted that the services are among the most recently added benefits to the HCBS-FE waiver program. "By cutting these four services, we can continue to provide the basics to seniors and avoid a waiting list for HCBS-FE services."

The HCBS-FE program provides home-based services to approximately 5,400 Kansas seniors each month. The program is funded with both state and federal funds. Kennedy said the

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suspension of the four services will impact about 550 persons, saving approximately \$2 million; \$625,000 of which are state funds.