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Subject: Governor's Column: Rising health costs require high-tech solution

Attachments: health technology 6-20-06.doc

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Governor's Column: Rising health costs require high-tech solution

The following column is by Governor Kathleen Sebelius:

We're all aware that the cost of health care continues to increase, which keeps many Kansans from getting the quality care they need and deserve.

There are a variety of reasons for the increase in health costs, but one of them is the huge proportion of health care dollars being spent on administrative costs.

Thirty cents of every health care dollar goes to paperwork. In Kansas, that adds up to over \$3 billion every year that isn't spent on caring for patients.

Kansas is working to change that by using technology to reduce administrative costs and reduce the chances of harmful medical errors.

One of the best examples of the need for new thinking in health care can be found in our wallets. Most of us have ATM and credit cards that we can use quickly and easily anywhere in the world.

Compare this to your health insurance card – or in most instances cards – which usually carries no information beyond what is printed on the card itself. The physical copying of health insurance cards when you go to the doctor costs time and money, and it increases the likelihood of errors, which then cost more time and money.

There's no reason the same technology that's used on billions of ATM and credit cards can't be used on health insurance cards. That's why we're working with health care providers and business leaders to create an electronic health insurance card that would reduce costs and reduce the chance for errors.

The use of "smart cards" will also reduce the need for duplicative tests and provide a doctor with important information in order to be more fully informed about your medical history, such as alerting her to the potential for harmful drug interactions.

This is part of a broad initiative we have underway to use technology to provide more affordable, higher quality health care for more Kansans, and it's part of our commitment to promoting efficiency in

the services Kansans use on a regular basis.

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