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Dan Goodman, Executive Director

Kansas Advocate News

50 Years Strong!

A woman's cry for help that was ignored is what spurred Petey Cerf to become the incredible activist she was, wanting to make sure all aging Kansans were cared for with dignity and respect in nursing facilities. Here we are, 50 years later and still working hard to make that happen.

As a part of our 50th anniversary, Kansas Advocates for Better Care (KABC) is inviting the community to a special screening on October 28 at Liberty Hall in Lawrence of *No Country for Old People*, a powerful three-part investigative documentary series that shines a light on the national crisis unfolding inside America's nursing homes.

Filmmaker Susie Singer Carter's deeply personal and unflinching exposé chronicles her mother's final six months in a 5-star rated nursing facility - laying bare a profit-driven system where abuse and neglect are not exceptions, but patterns baked into the business model. The film is a clarion call to challenge the status quo and demand systemic reform.

This documentary enhances KABC's mission by offering a powerful, eye-opening educational experience to our community. By spotlighting systemic issues in long-term care through personal stories and investigative journalism, this film may help Kansans better understand the challenges facing older adults and motivate attendees to join the movement for meaningful reform. More than ever, older Kansans and their families need more: more support, more education, more equitable services, and a louder voice in decision-making.

This free, public screening aims to educate, inspire action, and spark meaningful conversation around the urgent need for oversight, accountability, and reform in long-term care across the nation.

RSVP: info@kabc.org or by calling 785-842-3088



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About KABC

Kansas Advocates for Better Care was founded in 1975 by citizens who were concerned about the poor care and undignified living situations in nursing homes. KABC incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. We do not receive funding from any state or federal agency, and depend entirely on membership dues, contributions and grants for special purposes to keep our doors open so we can help Kansans in their search for quality long-term care choices for loved ones.

Celebrating 50 Years of Advocacy

It's been said that Petey Cerf was a force to be reckoned with. She was strong and quite outspoken when it came to the rights of aging Kansans, especially those in nursing facilities. Her determination led to the implementation of many laws and regulations, both State and Federal, which helped to protect those individuals.

Petey wasn't alone in this effort. She recruited a number of community leaders to join her, as well as five other women who helped create Kansans for Improvement of Nursing Homes (KINH) to forward this movement. Harriet Nehring, Lee Ketzel, Jessie Branson, Bryona Wiley and Katie Pyle worked tirelessly alongside Petey to make state policy makers aware of the neglect and poor care happening all across Kansas. They convinced then Governor Robert Bennett to visit nursing facilities with them, to see first-hand the devastating results of this poor care.

As a result of his visits and KINH's urging, Governor Bennett appointed an Advisory Committee on Nursing Homes. Petey Cerf and Jessie Branson served on the 8-member committee, along with representatives from the nursing home industry and government agencies.

At the group's first meeting on July 29, 1977, Governor Bennett stated: **"Those in the nursing home industry have a responsibility to do better than simply operate profitable body warehouses for the aged."** The committee would study three areas: receiverships for problem homes; fines for homes that consistently violated regulations; and full financial disclosures of nursing home operations.

What Governor Bennett said all those years ago still holds true. The industry must work harder to assure residents are treated with dignity and respect, as well as receiving the best care possible.

KABC has been evolving all throughout its history. A number of talented Executive Directors and board members have helped lead the way to better care by engaging with legislative committees, presenting critical testimony on topics of importance to aging Kansans, and gathering community support to continue our Mission.

Thank you for supporting KABC's work toward Better Elder Care, No Matter Where.

"One person can make a difference, and everyone should try."

John F. Kennedy



Petey Cerf



Harriet Nehring



Lesley Ketzel



Jessie Branson



Katie Pyle



Bryona Wiley



Advocacy in Action

KABC Executive Director Dan Goodman recently provided testimony to both the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) during their Fiscal Year 2026 budget hearings. Our message was clear: Kansas must invest in systems that protect the dignity, independence, and well-being of older Kansans.

Key recommendations from KABC:

- **Protect Access to In-Home Services**
- **Strengthen Care Coordination**
Improve Oversight & Resident Protections (KDADS)
- **Increase the Personal Needs Allowance**
- **Continue the Statewide Senior Resource Guide** (KDADS)

Why It Matters

By 2030, more than 20% of Kansans will be age 65 or older. Budget decisions made today will directly impact whether older Kansans can age with dignity, safety, and independence.

Read KABC's full testimonies to [KDADS](#) and [KDHE](#) on our website.

Annual Meeting & Caregiver Training Update

On Thursday, September 18th, KABC held its annual business meeting and caregiver training via Zoom. Approximately 20 people attended.

During the business meeting, Molly Wood (President), Barbara Braa (Treasurer) & Deborah Merrill were unanimously voted in to retain their current board positions. There were no recommendations from the floor. Director Dan Goodman talked about KABC's legislative accomplishments for 2025.

Katie Tipton of AskSamie discussed the many ways to prevent falls such as:

- Remove trip hazards such as loose rugs or clutter.
- Provide adequate lighting especially around stairs or in the bathroom.
- Use contrasting colors on stairs.
- Use of adaptive equipment such as grab bars, shower seats, and proper/supportive footwear can help prevent falls.
- Exercise regularly to improve strength and balance.

KABC is grateful to Katie for sharing her time and knowledge with our constituents. Her slideshow will be sent to those who registered, and will be on our website soon.



Memorials

We are grateful for these gifts
in memory of:

Jean & Maxine Soldan

*from their daughter
Linda Mason*

Wyatt Hundley

*from
Lenette Hamm*

Do You Know Your Rights?

Moving into a long-term care facility doesn't mean you lose your rights as an individual. State regulations ensure your right to be treated fairly, with dignity and respect.

"Each resident of an adult care home has the right to a dignified existence, self-determination, and communication with and access to persons and services inside and outside the facility."

Regulations require that licensed care homes inform residents verbally and in written format about their rights.

KABC gets questions about some rights more than others including:

- You have the right to be fully informed about care and treatment, and any changes in that care that may affect your well-being.
- You have the right to inspect (and purchase) photocopies of all of your records.
- Choose an attending physician, unless you've been adjudged incompetent or otherwise found to be incapacitated.
- Choose a pharmacy. However, if the home uses a unit dose system to dispense medications, the pharmacy must also use that system.
- You have a right to check out of the home. (For example-to visit family. You do not need a doctor's order to leave the home.)
- You have a right to be free from any physical restraints imposed or anti-psychotic drugs administered for the purpose of discipline or convenience not required to treat a diagnosed medical symptom.

You have the right to be free from verbal, sexual, physical, or mental abuse, corporal punishment and involuntary seclusion. Situations that constitute abuse, neglect or exploitation include but are not limited to:

- Infliction of physical or mental injury.

- Any sexual act when the resident does not consent or when the other person knows or should know that the resident is incapable of resisting.
- A threat or menacing conduct directed toward a resident that results or might reasonably be expected to result in fear or emotional or mental distress to a resident.
- Omission or deprivation by a caretaker or another person of goods or services which are necessary to avoid physical or mental harm or illness.

You also have the right to privacy, confidentiality and dignity which includes:

- The right to privacy in written communications, including the right to send and receive unopened mail promptly. The Resident has a right of access to stationery, postage and writing implements at the Resident's own expense.
- The right to reasonable accommodation of individual needs and preferences, except where your health or safety or that of other Residents would be endangered.
- The right to visit and communicate with persons of his/her choice in privacy, and at any reasonable hour. Immediate access must be given to family members, attending physician, and certain state officials, such as the Ombudsman or a surveyor from the State.
- The right to retain and use personal possessions, including some furnishings and appropriate clothing, as space permits.

This is a very limited list of your rights. For more information, you can request a copy of KABC's booklet ["Legal Rights on Nursing Home Residents"](#) free of charge. It is also available on our website www.kabc.org



Inside Kansas Nursing Homes: A Special Series Returns in Honor of KABC's 50th Anniversary

In celebration of Kansas Advocates for Better Care's 50th anniversary, we are proud to reintroduce a powerful special series from our early days as Kansans for Improvement of Nursing Homes. Originally launched in the mid-1980s, "Inside Kansas Nursing Homes: Through the Eyes of the Experts" offered an unflinching look at nursing home care across Kansas, as observed by those who know it best: the relatives, friends, residents, and caregivers of residents.

Now, nearly four decades later, we are bringing this vital series back, with the same grassroots spirit and commitment to truth. This first issue of Volume One marks the beginning of our updated report on the current state of nursing home care in Kansas, informed by the honest voices of frequent visitors who witness daily life inside these facilities.

Since April 2025, we have been gathering recorded and transcribed conversations with individuals who care deeply about their loved ones in long-term care. These candid reflections are edited to preserve confidentiality—identifying details are removed, names are changed, and nursing homes are referred to by assigned numbers and regions. Mentions of facilities in passing are designated with alphabetical letters (e.g., Nursing Home A).

Over the next year, we aim to gather insights on 40 to 50 percent of Kansas's 300 nursing homes. Volume One of this series, covering roughly 40 homes, will be released in serial form over the coming weeks.

Through these voices, we invite readers to reflect, question, and advocate, just as we did in the 1980s, because meaningful change begins when we listen.



KABC Privacy Policy

Kansas Advocates for Better Care (KABC) protects your privacy. KABC maintains password-protected computerized data files regarding financial support. We do not sell or share our membership list or member financial information with any other agency, and will not divulge any personal information about any members, contributors or contacts without express written permission.

Visit www.kabc.org/inside-kansas-nursing-homes-through-the-eyes-of-the-experts

to learn more and read these interviews.

Fire Safety Inspections are NOT Optional



On a July night in Massachusetts, [flames tore through Gabriel House](#), an assisted living facility. The fire claimed the lives of nine

residents and injured more than 30. Survivors described heartbreaking scenes: residents leaning out of windows, screaming for help as staff members fled.

Many were rescued only by the bravery of firefighters, neighbors, and police officers who broke down doors and carried people to safety. Despite the building having a sprinkler system, fire drills had not been conducted, elevators were broken, and residents with mobility limitations were trapped.

A field supervision with Massachusetts's long-term care ombudsman pled with the state to investigate Gabriel House's faulty elevator. He was met with excuse after excuse.

In 2024, a fire at Brandon Woods senior living facility in Lawrence, Kansas forced the evacuation of 85 residents. Dense smoke filled the structure, and a passerby was the first to call 911 and begin evacuating residents. Mutual aid from surrounding counties was called in, and a Lawrence police officer was hospitalized for smoke inhalation. Thankfully, no residents were hurt — this time.

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And yet, during the 2024-2025 legislative session, a bill was introduced in the Kansas Senate that would have **eliminated minimum fire safety standards for 720 adult care homes and provider locations** across the state. [Senate Bill 276](#) (SB 276) would have **removed the authority of the State Fire Marshal to inspect these facilities or enforce compliance**, a move KABC calls **a recipe for disaster**.

KABC strongly opposed SB 276 because it would have stripped the State Fire Marshal of its vital role in inspecting facilities, identifying hazards, and ensuring life safety codes are followed. While the bill allowed for the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) to contract with the Fire Marshal's office, **it did not require it**, leaving oversight optional and dangerously unclear. Worse still, KDADS is already chronically understaffed with surveyors, who are not trained in fire safety, and who are struggling to meet existing inspection requirements, often with only **half the staff needed**.

By contrast, State Fire Marshal inspectors are specifically trained to identify fire code violations and help facilities improve safety before tragedy strikes

Due to diligent oversight, **Kansas has had only two fire-related deaths in adult care homes over the past decade**. That record could be reversed if oversight is weakened.

At KABC, we believe every older adult deserves safe, dignified care and that includes protection from preventable tragedies like fires. As we approach the 2026 legislative session, we anticipate this dangerous proposal could return and we'll be prepared.

If you feel strongly that fire safety inspections are critical in facilities, [reach out to your legislators](#) and speak out!

Nursing Facility Closed Due to Black Mold



In late August, Kansans learned of deeply troubling conditions inside Advena Living of Clay Center, a nursing facility where state inspectors from the Kansas Dept. for Aging & Disability Services (KDADS) discovered black mold spreading throughout the facility. The complaint inspection report, available publicly for only seven days (August 24–31), revealed mold contamination in **20 resident rooms, the entryway, activity room, quiet room, and even the facility's shower areas**. KABC has a copy of that inspection report.

At the time of inspection, the facility housed 30 residents. Despite knowing about the mold, staff had not relocated residents or adequately decontaminated their rooms. Inspectors noted black mold actively growing in air conditioning vents and coils blowing directly into occupied rooms, placing all residents in the **highest level of immediate jeopardy to their health and safety**. Shockingly, some staff tasked with cleaning the mold admitted they were not trained to handle hazardous materials.

The **Salina Post** reported that residents were finally relocated in the middle of August, after state officials intervened. But the question remains: *how could conditions deteriorate this far before decisive action was taken?* Families entrust facilities with the care and dignity of their loved ones, yet the basics of infection control and environmental safety were neglected.

Mold is not a minor housekeeping issue; it can cause serious health problems, especially for older adults with chronic respiratory conditions. The Environmental Protection Agency warns that exposure can trigger asthma, allergic reactions, and other complications. For some, it can even be life-threatening. *It is worth noting that KDADS conducted a regular health survey on April 9th of this year. Nothing about mold was mentioned.*

This case is another reminder that strong oversight and accountability are essential to ensure safe care for older Kansans. When facilities fail, residents pay the price. At KABC, we will continue shining a light on these failures and pushing for the quality care every person deserves.

Read more from the Salina Post: [More questions than answers: State of Kansas evacuates nursing home residents in Clay Center](#)

Consumer Assistance

To report abuse, neglect and exploitation occurring in adult care homes, contact the KDADS hotline: **800-842-0078**

Adult Abuse in the community
APS hotline: **800-922-5330** (24/7)
(Also for reporting care home abuse/neglect after hours)

KanCare Ombudsman **855-643-8180**
KanCare.Ombudsman@ks.gov

Aging & Disability Resource Centers
855-200-2372

Kansas Attorney General
Consumer Protection Division
800-432-2310
Medicaid Fraud **866-551-6328**

For assistance with concerns/problems with adult care homes, call the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman **877-662-8362**
<https://ombudsman.ks.gov>

Elder Law Hotline **888-353-5337**

Report suspected Medicare fraud:
800-447-8477

For no-cost mediation regarding problems with Medicare Providers, contact

Livanta **888-755-5580**
<https://www.livantaqio.com/en/States/Kansas>

Centers for Medicare/Medicaid Services
Care Compare (CMS)
<https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/?providerType=NursingHome>

For **one-stop** long-term care information:
Kansas Advocates for Better Care
Toll-free: **800-525-1782** Email: info@kabc.org Website: www.kabc.org



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Newsletter Produced by KABC Staff Members

**Join other KABC friends who believe older adults deserve safe and compassionate care.
Protect those you love now and ensure a better future for all of us.**

You've read about the urgent issues facing older Kansans in this newsletter and you can make a difference today. Please complete the form below and return by mail or make your gift online by clicking the [DONATE](http://www.kabc.org) button on the top of the screen at www.kabc.org

Note: A gift of \$100 will deliver immediate guidance and support to five families in search of quality care.

I want to make a difference with my gift today:

___ \$50 ___ \$100 ___ \$250 ___ \$500 Other amount \$ ___

- ☐ **** My Gift is in Honor or Memory** of a loved-one (see below)
- ☐ Please use my gift where needed most
- ☐ Harriet Nehring Education Fund (*provides training & resources for caregivers across Kansas*)

Name _____

Address _____

City, State & Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

**** In Honor/Memory of:** _____

All gifts make a difference ~ Thank You!

**Make checks payable to KABC & Mail to:
536 Fireside Ct., Ste. B, Lawrence, KS 66049**