

# Lincoln Trail Behavioral Health wins award

Recognition  
for excellence in  
eliminating seclusion,  
commitment to  
quality innovation

**BY THE NEWS-ENTERPRISE**  
Lincoln Trail Behavioral Health System in Radcliff recently was recognized for its quality service to its patients. The health organization, a provider of psychiatric care, offering a safe and therapeutic environment designed to meet patient needs, was the recipient of the 2025 Kentucky Hospital Association Quality Award in the Psychiatric Hospitals category. The award was presented March 19 at the 2025 KHA Quality Conference Award Cer-



Submitted  
**Lincoln Trail Behavioral Health System CEO Leslie Fletcher, middle, accepts the 2025 Kentucky Hospital Association Quality Award in the Psychiatric Hospitals category along with employees of the hospital in Radcliff.**

emony Luncheon held at the Marriott Lexington Griffin Gate Golf Resort and Spa. This honor recognizes Lincoln Trail's work in eliminating the use of seclusion and its commitment to quality innovation and leadership, a news release from the organization said. The KHA Quality Team cited

Lincoln Trail's use of positive deviation, positive reinforcement, direct patient engagement and a well-supported interdisciplinary approach as key factors in the hospital's success, the release said. These evidence-based strategies have significantly improved patient outcomes and reinforced Lincoln Trail's reputation as a leader in psychiatric care. "Receiving this award is a testament to the hard work, dedication and passion of our entire team," said Leslie Flechler, CEO of Lincoln Trail Behavioral Health System, in the release. "Our commitment to creating a safe, supportive environment while delivering the highest quality of care remains at the core of everything we do. Eliminating seclusion required a fundamental shift in our approach to patient care, and I am incredibly proud of how our team has embraced

this challenge and succeeded in improving the patient experience." Kyle Fortune, CNO of Lincoln Trail Behavioral Health System, highlighted the collaborative effort behind the success. "This recognition is a reflection of the interdisciplinary approach we've taken to improving patient care," Fortune said in the release. "By focusing on direct patient engagement and positive reinforcement, we've created a more therapeutic environment for our patients. Our nursing and clinical teams have been instrumental in driving this change, and I'm honored to work alongside such a dedicated group of professionals." For more information about Lincoln Trail Behavioral Health System and its comprehensive approach to behavioral health care, go to [lincolnbhavioral.com](http://lincolnbhavioral.com).

## Funding question puts GOP's Medicaid changes in doubt

**BY SARAH LADD**  
KENTUCKY LANTERN

Changes the Kentucky General Assembly ordered in Medicaid face an uncertain future after Gov. Andy Beshear said lawmakers failed to fund the legislation. For the second year in a row, Beshear last week sent the House and Senate a letter listing bills they had passed without providing what Beshear said was the necessary funding.

Beshear sent the letter on the next to last day of the 2025 session, listing 11 bills and writing "there is still time in this legislative session to add appropriations."

The Republican-controlled legislature took no action in response to the Democratic governor's letter, and Senate President Robert Stivers, R-Manchester, told reporters Beshear is obligated to carry out laws as enacted by the legislature.

"He wants to make some excuse about, 'Oh, you didn't give me the money.' But it's basically: Yes, you do have the money. Find it within your budgets," Stivers said.

Among the 11 bills that Beshear said lack "the appropriations necessary to implement" is House Bill 695, which directs the Beshear administration to take steps to enact a Medicaid work requirement while prohibiting the administration from making any changes in the \$15 billion program without first receiving the legislature's approval. The bill also creates a Medicaid Oversight and Advisory Board to look for cost savings in Medicaid.

Beshear vetoed the bill and the legislature easily overrode his veto.

The clash comes as Democrats in Washington are bracing to fight Republican efforts in Congress to cut Medicaid — a federal-state program that covers health care for low-income people — in order to pay for renewing federal tax cuts.

In the letter, Beshear

said HB 695 would require rebidding Medicaid managed care contracts, which he said would cost the state \$1.4 million, including hiring a contractor to help develop the request for proposal. The bill also is estimated to cost \$500,000 in state funds to conduct a managed care long-term service study, Beshear wrote.

In his veto of HB 695, Beshear said the Medicaid community engagement requirement, commonly called a work requirement, would "undoubtedly" cost some adults their health coverage and also spark costly litigation challenging the requirement.

Emily Beauregard, the executive director of Kentucky Voices for Health, said health care advocates are concerned about new costs associated with a work requirement.

"One of our concerns all along with HB 695 has been the additional administrative cost it requires to ultimately provide less health care, which isn't a good use of taxpayer dollars," she said.

Beshear's letter to lawmakers last week echoed one he sent the year before, which has sparked a lingering controversy over the state's failure to fund relief for kinship care families.

Lawmakers previously said Beshear has misinterpreted a 2005 state Supreme Court decision that he says precludes the executive branch from spending money the legislature has not appropriated. That decision came out of a cycle when the General Assembly passed no budget.

Still, Beshear wrote: "These holdings are simple: if the legislature creates a policy or program but does not provide funding, it does not intend for the executive branch to perform those services over the biennium. The omission of an appropriation is the same as its elimination."

Beshear also cited a more recent federal court

decision.

On Friday, Stivers criticized Beshear's handling of the kinship care issue, which resulted in months of back and forth with no solution for families who are raising minor relatives and need more assistance.

"He decided to expand Medicaid rolls, not do kinship care, but then he says he doesn't have the money to do it," Stivers said. "He picks and chooses what he wants to do, even though we've told him what to do."

"We've talked about on this floor all the things he decided to fund without authority, things he does without authority. We send him bills, and it's his obligation to carry out those laws that we change and empower him to execute on," Stivers said.

Most of the funding for Medicaid comes from the federal government. Beshear said 1.6 million Kentuckians are covered by Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Beshear's letter to lawmakers also said they had failed to take into account the costs of their decision to protect conversion therapy. House Bill 495 overrules restrictions Beshear had placed on the discredited practice and also prohibits Medicaid from covering transgender-affirming medical care. Beshear estimated it would cost \$540,000 to

\$1.95 million in state funds.

"Other states with similar laws have experienced an increase in suicide attempts, some by as much as 72%," Beshear wrote. "The increase in services expected include an additional six hours of behavioral health counseling and therapy, an increase in pharmacy costs and increased psychiatric hospitalization."

Among other bills Beshear said the legislature failed to fund:

Senate Bill 4, which he said would cost at least an estimated \$2.5 million to operate a centralized registry of artificial intelligence systems in state government and implement an AI governance process.

House Bill 390 to set up an accessible online vehicle insurance verification system, which Beshear said would cost \$600,000 to \$1.1 million initially and then \$750,000 a year to operate.

Beshear also said that House Bill 346, exempting emergency temporary internal combustion engines from paying an emissions assessment fee and to retroactively refund some fees would cost the Division of Air Quality \$1 million in expected revenue from fees.

## Beshear to challenge Trump's health cuts

**BY MELISSA PATRICK**  
KENTUCKY HEALTH NEWS

Kentucky's health departments are set to lose nearly \$150 million in health-related grants after the Trump administration announced it would cancel the state's Covid-19 health care grants, Sylvia Goodman reports for Kentucky Public Radio.

The grant money is used for childhood vaccines, suicide prevention, community health workers and addiction treatment services, she writes.

Kendra Steele, a spokesperson for the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, told Goodman these cuts would delay some childhood vaccine orders, bi-annual vaccine provider re-enrollment and vaccination outreach, education and services programs.

"The cuts will also affect the Purple Star Program, which supports military-connected children, and the delivery of addiction treatment services," Goodman writes. "She said the Trump administration also eliminates a grant to develop community health workers across the state, and affects grants supporting staffing at youth drop-in centers and call centers for the 988 suicide prevention and crisis hotline."

These cancellations come as the U.S. Department of Health

and Human Services announced it was canceling \$11.4 billion in federal grants to state and local health departments during the Covid-19 pandemic. The funds were set to run through September 2025.

HHS says it is making these cuts because the pandemic is over.

"The Covid-19 pandemic is over, and HHS will no longer waste billions of taxpayer dollars responding to a non-existent pandemic that Americans moved on from years ago," the federal health department said in the termination notice.

In his Team Kentucky update Thursday, Gov. Andy Beshear said he intends to challenge the grant cancellations.

"We have received notice of grants being canceled," Beshear said. "It's an unlawful cancellation and we'll challenge it. These are contracts that we have. The contracts can only be terminated for cause, which means somebody did something wrong and they are trying to define cause as the pandemic's over. That's not a legal argument."

Beshear, who served as the state's attorney general prior to his election as governor, also said he is worried about the 10,000 federal workers being laid off at HHS, especially with bird flu and measles outbreaks ongoing.



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*Happy  
65th Birthday*

**Sandra Cundiff Stout**



**From Brandon and John  
Love you!**