

Veto cuts pharmacy school funds

BY JEANNINE KORANDA
Eagle Topeka bureau

TOPEKA — Gov. Kathleen Sebelius cut money to expand Kansas University's School of Pharmacy on Monday, when she eliminated a provision in the state budget that dictated how future gambling money could be spent.

She said she supported the pharmacy school expansion and suggested

lawmakers fund it in a different way.

She used a line-item veto to eliminate provisions that created three funds that future gambling money would go into. The additional funds and stipulations would "limit the flexibility of future legislatures to target gaming receipts toward the most important and pressing needs of the state," she said.

The eliminated provision included part of \$50 million that would have

allowed 20 new pharmacy students to start school at KU School of Medicine's Wichita building in 2009 and expanded the school's west campus in Lawrence.

Both the governor and lawmakers have supported the pharmacy school expansion, said university spokeswoman Lynn Bretz.

"We'll work with all of them so we don't let this procedural dispute prevent us from ensuring that Kansans

have access to pharmacists in their communities," Bretz said.

Sebelius had included money for the pharmacy school's expansion as bonds that the anticipated gambling money would pay for. She urged lawmakers to use her original proposal to pay for the expansion project.

Seven Kansas counties currently have no pharmacist; 30 have only

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one. The average age statewide is 54.

"The longer we wait, the bigger the problem will be," said Bruce Schneider, owner and pharmacist at Hart Pharmacy & Home Medical in Wichita and president of the Wichita Academy of Pharmacists.

It takes six years to train a pharmacist, he pointed out.

The rest of the \$13.4 billion budget approved by lawmakers in early April was not affected by the line-item veto. It includes funding for several Wichita projects, including

\$5 million apiece for aviation training and research, and \$1 million for the Wichita Center for Graduate Medical Education for its medical residency program.

Lawmakers will be able to look for money for the pharmacy school as they return for a wrap-up session April 30. But the fight for funding could be fierce; legislators delayed decisions on about \$140 million in additional spending.

Legislators learned last week that the state expects \$130 million less in revenue over the next two years than originally projected.

Reach Jeannine Koranda
at 785-296-3006
or jkoranda@wichitaeagle.com.