

Legislative Testimony

To: The Alliance for a Healthy Kansas Medicaid Expansion

To Kansas Policymakers –

My name is Sondra L Samuels, Wyandotte County Resident, and member of the Voter Rights Network of Wyandotte County located in Kansas City, Kansas. I would like to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony in support of KanCare Expansion.

My purpose today is to urge the 2024 legislative body to pass the KanCare expansion for the citizens of Kansas because medical costs are increasingly rising for us. The rising costs are causing all Kansans to pay more money for health care for families. KanCare expansion will help reduce health care costs for all because it will provide health insurance to Kansas residents in rural areas, small towns, and cities across the state.

Expanding KanCare will provide coverage for hardworking Kansans and help to invest in Kansas communities. For example, it will help strengthen hospitals, clinics, and provider networks. In addition, it will make Kansas more competitive with neighboring states that have expanded Medicaid; protect jobs; and ensure that Kansas continues to be a good place to live, work, and raise a family. A survey conducted by the national research firm of Perry/Undem and Bellwether Research, found nearly 4 out of 5 Kansans (78 percent) want low medical costs for them and their families.

The benefits of passing KanCare are as follows:

- Reduce health care costs for everyone. For example, every Kansan benefits as it relates to mental and physical health care. Without health coverage increases the cost of more ER bills, increased uncompensated care for hospitals, and untreated mental and physical health needs. Expanding KanCare will bring the cost of health care down for everyone which and without it, individuals, families, and businesses all end up paying more for health care.
- Protect Kansans from medical debt. The rising costs for Kansans are felt as it relates to housing, food, and other needs, including health care. Almost half of Kansans have medical debt or knows someone who does. By expanding KanCare, tens of thousands of people will be able to afford insurance coverage. That protects them from medical debt. By saving on medical costs, individuals will be able to pay for other essentials.
- Fix eligibility limits. The income limit to qualify for KanCare is less than \$8,345 a year for a family of three, which is less than \$4 per hour. Expanding KanCare would raise the income eligibility limits so that more hardworking Kansans who contribute to the economy can get the health care they need for themselves and their families.
- Rural health care can be preserved and strengthen. At the present time, Kansans living in rural communities struggle as they face difficulty accessing health care when and where they need it. Also, rural health care providers face high levels of uncompensated care. Many rural hospitals are currently at risk of closing across our state, which is more than any other state our size. Expanding KanCare would strengthen and sustain the rural health care system and help ensure that rural Kansans get the health care they need as well as giving a boost to their economies. HB 2556 and SB 355 expands Medicaid and lowers health care costs. It gives 150,000 Kansans access to affordable health care. It can go toward tax

cuts, funding for public schools, and infrastructure. Only a few extremists in the legislature stand in the way of expansion but I urge you not to let them prevail in their efforts to make this bill fail.

- Make Kansas more economically competitive. Expanding KanCare would increase the state's future economic output by billions and increase the personal income of Kansans by billions. Expanding KanCare will not only improve the health of Kansans, but it will also help our state compete with our neighbors who have expanded eligibility for their Medicaid programs.

In closing, cutting health Cutting Healthcare Costs for all Kansans Act is a must. HB 2556 and SB 355 expands Medicaid and lowers health care costs and gives 150,000 Kansans access to affordable health care. It is common sense way to help increase the Kansas economy providing funds for public schools, infrastructure, and providing health care simultaneously for all Kansans. It helps to strengthen our work force and eliminates barriers to health care for Kansans.

I urge to help Governor Kelly and her commitment to help all Kansans receive the health care well supporting Kansas communities. I urge you to listen to your constituents and protect all of us. Thank you again for your support regarding this urgent matter.

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. Sondra B Samuels
Dr. Sondra B Samuels



March 20th, 2024

To: Honorable Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services

Re: Support for HB 2556: Expanding medical assistance eligibility and enacting the cutting healthcare costs for all Kansans

Dear Chairwoman Landwehr and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of all ALS patients, including the 240 patients we serve in Kansas, I respectfully request your support of HB 2556, which would expand medical assistance eligibility and reduce healthcare costs for all Kansans.

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as ALS, is an always fatal neurodegenerative disease in which a person's brain loses connection with the muscles. People with LAS lose their ability to walk, talk, eat and eventually breathe. There is no cure. ALS also bring devastating financial implications for families. Over the course of their illness, people with ALS need significant medical care, which can easily exceed \$80,000 a year.

Most people living with ALS need to rely on Medicare and Medicaid to cover the crushing cost of care associated with the disease. The ALS Association conducted a survey of people living with ALS, and one out of four respondents said they experienced significant debt or had to borrow money due to their ALS treatment or caregiving, and the respondents said that the cost of care was their number one stressor. This is why Medicaid expansion in Kansas is crucial for individuals living with ALS.

Medicaid expansion will not just benefit people living with ALS, but it will also reduce the strain and financial burden on the healthcare system and state budget. Leaving people without access to necessary medical care, treatments or equipment puts an even larger burden on the state's budget because individuals end up overutilizing expensive emergency services and rehab facilities. The state can save money that would otherwise be spent on avoidable and expensive outcomes if more cost-effective interventions are implemented earlier. Additionally, providing the care people need earlier in the course of their disease means caregivers face less burnout, better quality of life, and may be able to remain in the workforce longer.

Finally, Medicaid expansion would improve access to care for individuals with ALS who live in rural areas of the state. Many individuals with ALS are unable to travel long distances to access medical care, and without adequate healthcare facilities in their area, they are left with limited options. Medicaid expansion would increase access to telehealth and the availability of healthcare facilities and providers in underserved areas, ensuring that individuals with ALS have access to the care they need, when they need it.

It is critical for Kansas residents living with ALS and other rare diseases that this legislation is passed. When individuals have access to consistent and adequate coverage, they are more likely to seek treatment early, get the care they need, and avoid trips to emergency rooms or expensive stays in rehab facilities that end up costing the state much more. States that have expanded Medicaid have 20 outcomes.

For these reasons, I ask that you please vote Yes on HB 2556 to close the coverage gap by expanding Medicaid and help people impacted by ALS and so many other Kansas residents in needs.

Sincerely,

Sarah Sanchez
Managing Director, Advocacy
The ALS Association
sarah.sanchez@als.org

March 13, 2024

Hello,

Since 2008 I have been paying for Medicare through F.I.C.A. yet I have not been able to receive any of the Medicare reduction benefits. Other States get the benefit of MINE and ALL Kansans payments into FICA-Medicare!

My daughter goes without health insurance because she is self employed. She gross annual income is just above the range to enjoy any benefits she pays into the system.

It's TERRIBLE that ALL Kansans suffer because of ONE MAN...Daniel Hawkins!!!!
Where is the democracy in one man denying others of the money that is rightful due to ALL KANSANS!

Daniel's false narrative needs to be exposed all across Kansas!!!

Please spread the news!!

Sara Schaufler
Shawnee KS

March 13, 2024

As a taxpayer I ask that you do NOT cut Kansas healthcare care please vote for Medicaid expansion.

Debby Schloegel

March 17, 2024

Dear Chairman and committee members,
Please support Medicaid expansion and vote NO HB2653

Thank you for your consideration.
James Schloegel
Leawood, KS

March 15, 2024

A lady I know comes to my home to help me with an assortment of things when I call her. She is on a limited income and needs better healthcare. She has looked into Medicaid (and may have it) but I know she has found it challenging to acquire the medical care she needs because of limitations. I do not understand her complete health situation but she needs adequate and more easily obtainable health services when she has certain health issues that need attention.

Thank you,

Marge Schlosberg
Overland Park KS 66207

Testimony in support of Medicaid Expansion in Kansas

March 16, 2024

Dear Legislators:

I am a retired physician and an enthusiastic supporter of expanding Medicaid in Kansas. In addition to spending many years in the private sector practicing pulmonary intensive care medicine in Missouri, I also spent a significant part of my career seeing patients in rural Kansas communities through an outreach program.

While in Missouri, before that state expanded Medicaid, I became familiar with the frustrating scenarios that healthcare providers still face every day in Kansas: serving patients who cannot afford insurance, whose financial circumstances cause them to delay care, and whose conditions worsen until they must seek acute treatment at an emergency room. As a pulmonary specialist, for example, I saw patients in extreme distress because they could not afford medication to treat their COPD. Imagine having to choose between feeding your family and breathing freely without discomfort.

While treating patients in rural Kansas, I learned how the hospitals there operate on razor thin margins. Many of these hospitals' patients are uninsured and do not qualify for Medicaid. This means the hospitals must treat them without adequate compensation. While the state does provide hospitals with some funds for uncompensated care, that support falls far short of the hospitals' needs. The results over the last two decades have been catastrophic: Nearly a dozen rural hospitals have closed, and many more could follow.

This is shameful. Kansas should not put its hospitals in jeopardy, and it especially should not put at risk the health and economic welfare of our most vulnerable residents. But that's exactly what our Legislature has done every year that it rejects Medicaid expansion. I urge all Legislators to reconsider their past opposition to this life-saving policy and do their part to keep our hospitals open and our residents healthy.

Sincerely,

Daniel L. Schlozman, MD
6600 Overhill, Mission Hills, KS 66208

March 13, 2024

Just a quick note to thank you for the hearing on Medicaid expansion and encourage follow through on approval of this much-needed legislation. States all around Kansas have implemented this: Oklahoma, Missouri, Nebraska, Colorado. It will be helpful for many Kansans who fall in a coverage gap with health care, helpful for the economy, helpful for rural hospitals. It is a win-win for our state.

Linda Schmidt

Subject: Testimony in Support of Expanding Medicaid in Kansas

Dear Legislators,

I am writing to you today as a concerned citizen and advocate for the well-being of our fellow Kansans. As our state faces various challenges, I would like to bring to your attention the critical importance of expanding Medicaid in Kansas. This expansion is not just a policy change; it is an investment in the health and prosperity of our communities and the state as a whole.

Medicaid expansion holds the potential to positively impact the lives of over hundreds of thousands of individuals across Kansas, providing access to essential healthcare services for those who currently find themselves without adequate coverage. Medicaid expansion will:

1. Improve access to healthcare,
2. provide economic benefits to our state's economy and to healthcare providers, creating jobs, and stimulating economic growth,
3. Improve workforce productivity as individuals who have access to healthcare are more likely to maintain their health leading to a more productive workforce,
4. Increase fiscal responsibility by leveraging existing resources to address the healthcare needs of our residents without placing an undue burden on the state budget, and
5. Enhance community resilience by building stronger, more connected neighborhoods where individuals can thrive and contribute to the well-being of the state.

Lastly, most Kansans support Medicaid expansion. I urge you to consider the profound positive impact that Medicaid expansion can have on the lives of our fellow Kansans and the overall prosperity of our state. By supporting this you can make significant strides towards a healthier, more economically robust, and compassionate Kansas.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I trust that you will prioritize the well-being of our communities as you deliberate on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Jerry Schultz

1945 Tennessee St.
Lawrence, KS 66046

March 17, 2024

Dear Chairperson and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Medicaid Expansion. I have been writing to the legislature and individual KS legislators for years now, on why we need to join the majority of our country and expand Medicaid. It is hard for me to believe that our state has still refused to do this for our own residents. I know you already know all the benefits of doing it - because we have been hearing about them for more than 10 years.

It's interesting to me that in all parts of my life, the support behind Medicaid Expansion is expressed. Even as a Realtor, we are now being encouraged to write to you all about passing this important piece of legislation. I am also a member of the Lenexa Chamber of Commerce (previously a member of Olathe Chamber of Commerce), and both of them also support the passing of Medicaid Expansion. Why is it that so many people, businesses, and organizations around us want to see this passed, but our state legislature keeps saying "no"?

I've heard the excuse that until we can properly fund our IDD community needs, then we cannot pass Medicaid Expansion. Well, the IDD community also supports passing it. I've visited with Johnson County Developmental Supports and heard directly from their mouths when I was running for office in 2018 and 2020. Holding one hostage over the other is inhumane. Acting like this is a group of undeserving Kansans is also inhumane. Representative Adam Turk told me at a legislative forum that if those are the people moving out of our state, then good. Is that really the image we want of our state? That the working poor should move away to find an option to have healthcare? I certainly hope not.

Thank you again for your consideration on this, and please do what is right for Kansans and pass Medicaid Expansion this year.

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Angela Justus Schweller (She/Hers)
Realtor w/ Thrive Real Estate KC - KW Kansas City Metro
Angela@AngelaSchweller.com
913-710-1146

March 16, 2024

To the Chairman and Committee Members:

I urge you to support Medicaid expansion in Kansas and help to improve the health of over 150,000 Kansas citizens without healthcare coverage.

In Kansas, severely mentally ill patients without insurance cannot access the care they need, until they are arrested and taken to an Emergency Department by police seeking treatment. At Advent Health - Shawnee Mission, on most nights, at least 4 ED beds are being occupied by mentally ill patients, most without the ability to pay for care. That means, the hospitals are absorbing the expense of providing care until the patient is transferred to another facility or stabilized and discharged into the community. Many destined to return when their condition deteriorates and they are again picked up by the police.

This situation increases overall healthcare costs for everyone and providing Medicare expansion can help reduce the pressure on healthcare costs, costs for our business community, insurers and law enforcement, as more people can receive the care they need.

Families having a loved one with mental illness and unable to pay or find care, live in fear that the next time their loved one is in crisis, instead of getting a call that their family member has been arrested, they get the call that the police officer feared for their life and "we're sorry to tell you"...another tragedy and fatality. I carry that fear in my heart every day.

YOU have the power to change how Kansas treats their most vulnerable citizens. YOU have the power to make the difference that Kansas citizens have made it known they want and support. YOU have the responsibility to step up and represent the majority of the citizens that are saying...."the time is NOW....for Medicaid expansion".

Sincerely,

Linda Seiner
8017 Meadow Lane
Leawood, Kansas 66206

To: Members of the Committee

From: Paula Shields

Re: Support for Medicaid expansion

I have been blessed to always have health insurance. I have never had to worry about when I am sick if I can go to the doctor. So many Kansans face this dilemma. Many small businesses can not afford to give their employees health insurance.

Also, many rural hospitals have been closed because of not having Medicaid expansion. So sad that we are one of ten states without Medicaid expansion.

Paula Shields

Legislative Testimony

John Shively

Hearing on KanCare Expansion

Wednesday, March 20th, 2024

Dear Chairperson and Committee Members,

My name is John Shively, and I work as the Executive Director of Mission at the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. However, I write today speaking only on behalf of myself as a lifelong Kansan and Catholic.

I spent my entire life growing up in Kansas, and one thing I know about the people of Kansas is that they are good neighbors. They care about one another. **We have an opportunity to demonstrate that care for one another – that is at the heart of our Christian and Kansas identity – and to put it into public practice by expanding KanCare.**

Nearly 150,000 people would benefit from expansion if we passed Medicaid expansion, which would bring Kansas tax dollars back to the state to pay for the health and well-being of our own people. Many of those who would qualify already work, pay taxes, and contribute to our state. It only makes sense that we bring Kansas tax dollars back to the state to reinvest in the health of our own workforce. **We are already paying the cost and have lost nearly \$7 billion that would have benefited Kansas Hospitals, workers, and citizens by refusing to enact expansion.**

More importantly, expanding access to healthcare is the moral thing to do. People without coverage are dying and getting sick, putting additional strain on already burdened rural healthcare facilities. My Catholic faith calls me to care for the sick. **In their 1981 Pastoral Letter, the U.S. Catholic Bishops state plainly that "health care is so important for full human dignity and so necessary for the proper development of life that it is a fundamental right of every human being."**

I urge you strongly to do what is right for the poor and medically underserved people of Kansas and pass Medicaid Expansion in committee and on the floor.

In Christ,



John Shively

Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth Associate

March 12, 2024

I admit that I have it better than many disabled people, but I still find affording doctor appointments and prescription medicine difficult. I currently have Medicare, but do not qualify for Medicaid or for Extra Help. (My income is >just< above the threshold for Extra Help). Medicaid expansion would help me greatly, and would help several of my friends who are also disabled greatly. I have considered moving to another state that has expanded Medicaid. Please pass a Medicaid expansion bill!

--David Shobe
Lawrence, KS

**Written Only Proponent Testimony on SB 355 & HB 2556
Senate Ways & Means Committee
Senate Public Health & Welfare Committee
House Health and Human Services Committee
Amber Shultz, Kansas Secretary of Labor, KDOL
Wednesday, March 20th, 2024**

Madame Chairwoman Gossage, Madame Chairwoman Landwehr, Mr. Chairman Billinger, & Committee Members,

I am Kansas Secretary of Labor Amber Shultz. Please accept this written proponent testimony for SB 355 and HB 2556. I want to begin by thanking senate and house leadership and the committee chairs for agreeing to hear these bills. Kansas workers without employment provided or affordable healthcare options are depending on you to provide them an avenue to a healthier future. The agency stands in full support of these two bills, and we ask that the legislature support working Kansans by passing this legislation that adds Kansas to the growing list of states to pass some form of expansion.

SB 355 and HB 2556 will help stabilize and grow the Kansas workforce by ensuring our small hospitals remain open, providing essential healthcare services for our rural population, and keeping high paying jobs in these areas of the state. These doctors, nurses, therapists, and other healthcare related positions keep the local economies strong and the local workforce healthy and productive.

- 86 out of 105 counties in Kansas are in nonmetropolitan areas (OEWS balance of state)
- Balance of State estimates:
 - 22,680 Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations
 - This includes 8,050 Registered Nurses, 2,210 Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses, 1,190 Pharmacy Technicians, 820 Clinical Laboratory Technologists and Technicians, and 810 Pharmacists.
 - 18,370 Healthcare Support Occupations
 - This includes 7,450 Home Health and Personal Care Aides and 7,330 Nursing Assistants

The Medicaid expansion bills this year provide incentives for employment by including a work requirement for Medicaid enrollees. And while there will be exceptions to this requirement, including for full-time students, full-time caretakers, veterans, and Kansans with medical conditions, the agency believes this requirement will help to encourage workforce participation.

- Ohio Medicaid Expansion Assessment (Ohio expanded Medicaid in 2014 – this report is from 2018): <https://medicaid.ohio.gov/wps/wcm/connect/gov/71bc891a-d5b6-49f6-990a->

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401 SW Topeka Boulevard
Topeka, KS 66603



Phone: 785-296-7474
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Amber Shultz, Secretary

Laura Kelly, Governor

[7b9a7de1e585/MedicaidExpansion.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CONVERT_TO=url∓CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE.Z18_M1HGGIK0N0JO00QO9DDDDM3000-71bc891a-d5b6-49f6-990a-7b9a7de1e585-nAUQzb](https://www.kdhe.ks.gov/7b9a7de1e585/MedicaidExpansion.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CONVERT_TO=url∓CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE.Z18_M1HGGIK0N0JO00QO9DDDDM3000-71bc891a-d5b6-49f6-990a-7b9a7de1e585-nAUQzb)

- 290,000 Medicaid expansion participants (71% of respondents) got a job or increased income.
- 83.5% of participants reported that Medicaid made it easier to continue working.
- 60% of unemployed enrollees reported that Medicaid made it easier to look for work.
- Employment among expansion enrollees increased 15% from 2016 to 2018.
- 2017 study from the National Institutes of Health: [Effect of Medicaid Expansion on Workforce Participation for People With Disabilities - PMC \(nih.gov\)](#)
 - This study provides evidence that Medicaid expansion results in higher employment among individuals with disabilities.
 - 48.4% of adults with disabilities were not working in states that had not implemented the Medicaid expansion in 2014 compared with 39.7% in states that had.
 - The authors conclude that higher eligibility and earnings thresholds under Medicaid expansion allow individuals to work and earn at levels that would have previously made them ineligible for benefits.

With the federal government paying for 90% of the costs to expand Medicaid, many states pay the remaining 10%. However, with SB 355 and HB 2556, the state's 10% share is completely covered by drug rebates, a hospital fee, savings from higher reimbursement rates for existing Medicaid recipients, and additional federal funding. This means that Kansas can now expand Medicaid at no additional cost to Kansas taxpayers.

I thank the committee for your willingness to hear and work this important legislation. Our agency stands in full support of expanding Medicaid in an effort to keep our workforce healthy, productive, and growing.

March 15, 2024

I am a proud Kansan growing up in Parsons. I know small town Kansas medical care has suffered due to the lack of Medicaid availability. It is time to expand Medicaid and do the right thing for our state !

David Shuss

March 14, 2024

Hello,

I am writing to urge the Kansas Legislature to expand KanCare in Kansas.

Kansas has missed out on so much funding over many years that could have gone to help hard-working Kansans.

While my husband and I have been able to afford health care insurance throughout our lives while farming, many Kansans cannot. And most of these Kansans are hard-working, employed individuals! I cannot imagine not seeking medical attention when needed, because I had no help from insurance coverage!

And a big percentage of about 80% of Kansans support expanding KanCare! Please listen to your constituents and help this issue get out of committee and onto the floor for a vote!

Harry and Eileen Sieger, Marion



KANSAS SILVER HAIRED LEGISLATURE

The Kansas Silver Haired Legislature (SHL) was formed in 1982, created by an act of Congress in 1969. The SHL is made up of 125 representatives, one from each of the 105 counties with the exception of the larger counties having five additional. Representatives must be 60 years old and are elected from their county of residence.

Our purpose is to advocate for seniors and provide a voice at the state level with emphasis in educating our seniors and other populations about issues on bills and resolutions being proposed. The SHL gives voice to approximately 600,000 senior citizens of Kansas. We also enlighten the Kansas Legislature about issues promoted by their Silver Haired Legislators.

The Resolutions to be presented to the 2024 Legislature

- **Support Medicaid Expansion;**
- **Establish a medical cannabis advisory board to explore and make recommendations regarding the medical use of cannabis;**
- **Support voting rights of seniors and all other registered voters by ensuring accessibility to the polls;**
- **Expand the existing Grandparents as Caregivers Act to provide financial assistance to other relatives providing care to children;**
- **Support the elimination of the tax cliff and increase income thresholds to qualify for an exemption of social security benefits from state income tax.**

Executive Board Officers

President: Thomas Gordon, Wyandotte County, tgpsa1shl@gmail.com

First Vice-president: Katy Hoffman, Johnson County, kmrhoffman@gmail.com

Second Vice-president: Sherri Grogan, Leavenworth, sdr7304@gmail.com

Treasurer: Gary Scott, Johnson County, scottskufhsu@gmail.com

Secretary: Donna Lehane, Sedgwick County, stillinadream@sbcglobal.net

Officers for State Legislature

Speaker: Randall Hardy, Saline County, KS67401@gmail.com

Speaker Pro Tem: Chuck Schmidt, Sedgwick County, cschmidt3131@gmail.com

Floor Leader: Leroy Burton, Butler County, leburton@cox.net

-over-

We represent the SHL from the Planning Service Area, PSA 11, Johnson County. We are: Katy Hoffman, Chair, kmrhoffman@gmail.com; Gary Scott, Vice Chair, scottskufhsu@gmail.com; Mary L. Calhoun, Merrilee517@yahoo.com; Norman Kahn, nkahnmd@gmail.com; Mary Penrose, Penrose,mary@gmail.com; David Wood, wowowooddy@earthlink.net. We want to keep you informed! You may also visit [Kansas Silver Haired Legislature \(kansas-shl.org\)](http://kansas-silver-haired-legislature.org).

March 14, 2024

Dear Kansas Legislators:

Please pass HB 2556 and SB 355 in support of Medicaid expansion in Kansas. As a lifelong Kansan, retired former small business owner and active Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce volunteer, I see so many positives for this and NO negatives.

It won't cost my fellow Kansans and me a dime—and **over 80% of us want this to happen because we see the catastrophic results of not allowing Medicaid expansion!**

We are already paying our hard-earned tax dollars to the federal government, who is sending our dollars to the **40 other states that have already expanded Medicaid eligibility.**

It's a travesty to me that **we're penalizing our neediest neighbors, colleagues, friends and family members over purely partisan politics.** Rural Kansas continues to suffer from lack of employment opportunities, population decrease and access to good healthcare. Lack of Medicaid expansion in rural Kansas, where our poverty rates are highest, has tragic consequences.

Small hospitals are usually one of the largest employers in a town or county, but when they close because of lack of Medicaid dollars coming in to cover care, not only do Kansans on Medicaid suffer, so do all the other citizens in that community, because now they have to drive a half hour...an hour...two hours or MORE to reach a hospital. And all those **well-paying jobs for healthcare professionals go away.** And so do those skilled workers—doctors, nurses, radiology techs and more—who have to leave to earn a living.

For the sake of our small communities and our critical access hospital network—which feeds our larger regional hospitals and serves an absolutely vital function in saving Kansans' lives!—**please vote YES to expand Medicaid and bring our beautiful state up to par with the rest of the country.**

Let's stop financing good healthcare for everybody else, instead of ourselves.

Thank you,
Lisa A. Sisley
Manhattan, Kansas

4200 S. 4th
Street
Cantwell Hall
913-758-6564



SISTERS OF CHARITY OF LEAVENWORTH

OFFICE OF JUSTICE, PEACE, AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION



Date: March 20, 2024

From: Rebecca Metz, Lead Coordinator,

Office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation- Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth

RE: Proponent testimony for House Bill 2556 / Senate Bill 355

Dear Chairperson and Committee members,

I write today not only as a coordinator for the the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth's Office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation but also as a concerned citizen of Kansas. The Sisters of Charity follow in the traditions of St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac, who began the daughters of charity with a particular emphasis on serving those living in poverty. It is in the same tradition that we support House Bill 2556 / Senate Bill 355, which could provide health coverage for "A total of 151,898 Kansans, including 106,450 adults and 45,448 children . . . if Medicaid were to be expanded in January 2025."¹ The Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth have a legacy of having founded and operated several hospitals between spanning California to Kansas and are intimately aware of the struggles of every day Kansans.

I believe it is deeply immoral for that many Kansans to continue to go without care and it is beyond time to offer additional help to struggling families and individuals to provide for their basic needs.

Human Dignity and the Common Good

Catholic Social Teaching emphasizes the dignity of every individual, the common good and a preferential option for the poor. Expanding KanCare is a lifesaving measure full stop. Expansion increases access to high-quality care for those who would otherwise go without healthcare. Making sure our brothers and sisters, *our neighbors*, have access to health care is everyone's responsibility and our state is worse off for having not expanded Medicaid yet. "We answer the Gospel call to affirm that each person's life is a treasure and everyone should have the opportunity to flourish. Access to quality health care is a right and is necessary for everyone to achieve that vision."²

A Justice Issue

A lack of affordable health care coverage is an economic and racial justice issue. To date, Kansas has lost over 6 billion dollars by refusing to expand Medicaid.³ With the most recent closing of of CareArc clinic in Eureka⁴ is no secret that rural health care access is in jeopardy for some of Kansas' most marginalized. While we have continued to not accept federal dollars for Medicaid Expansion, we have *actively* seen the loss of health care access.

Finally, it is known that Medicaid Expansion is a matter of racial justice. In Kansas, those in communities of color are three times more likely than those in primarily white areas to lack any form of health insurance.⁵ As a state, we are morally obligated to reduce these disparities and to ensure communities of color have equal access to healthcare. The Governor's Commission on Racial Justice and Equity also recommended expanding Medicaid in order to reduce barriers to healthcare access for people of color.⁶

I implore you to pass Medicaid expansion in committee and on the floor, because we cannot wait any longer to give Kansans the care they so desperately need.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Metz

¹[Kansas Health Institute, 2024 Medicaid Expansion Estimates: Enrollment, Costs and Characteristics of the Expansion Population.](#)

²[Journal of the Catholic Health Association of the United States, Medicaid Expansion in Michigan Reflects Catholic Social Principles.](#)

³[Home, Alliance for a Health Kansas 2024.](#)

⁴[The Emporia Gazette, CareArc Announces Closure of Eureka Health Center.](#)

⁵[Llopis-Jepsen, Celia. "Kansas and Missouri Health Care Is Saddling People of Color with Debt." KCUR 89.3 - NPR in Kansas City.](#)

⁶[CREJ Report July 1 2021 Final - Governor of the State of Kansas.](#)

March 16, 2024

Dear Health & Human Services Committee Members:

I write in support of HB 2556, which is important to me with senior hindsight, since I am still catching up with deferred health care from my previous uninsured era.

Health care coverage is a bi-partisan issue, as Medicaid expansion will give coverage to some additional 100,000 adults of both major parties and 50,000 related children in Kansas (data per the non-partisan Kansas Health Institute). Funding for this expansion is essentially revenue neutral, even after the two years of Federal American Rescue Plan Act monies, which offset the first eight years of implementation costs. Approximately a third of the newly eligible adults are currently working a minimum of 20 hours/week, yet cannot afford coverage for themselves or their children. Others work less than 20 hours/week or are disabled. HB2556 includes a work requirement with limited exceptions.

Fiscal Responsibility reasons to expand Medicaid coverage include:

- * Financial savings to employers/individual patients due to the lower cost of prevention/early intervention
- * Savings to entire taxpayer base who otherwise pay for uncovered ED visits
- * Savings to entire taxpayer base who otherwise pay for uncovered health services to inmates
- * Savings to County/Local Government who otherwise pay for mandated but unfunded health services
- * Revenue generation for the retention/preservation of rural hospitals/clinics
- * Revenue generation for retention/recruitment of health care providers/adjunct staff

Community Health and Well-Being reasons to expand Medicaid coverage include:

- * Supports the health/well-being of Kansas residents who constitute your work force, your families and your future
- * Reductions in crime/safety concerns, due to accessible treatment for mental health/substance treatment
- * Enhanced Quality of Life reputation which helps attract/retain business; trained employees; and tourism
- * Increases population health resilience during contagious epidemics
- * Generation of adjunct jobs due to spin off from health care industry
- * Reassures your Constituents that you recognize/respect the 80% of Kansans who support expansion

So far Kansas has lost in the vicinity of \$7B from declining this opportunity. Please review the ten years of outcome data from the 40 States that previously expanded Medicaid, which has been analyzed by KHI.

https://www.khi.org/articles/event-recap-exploring-medicaid-expansion-experiences-in-other-states/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=sharpspring&sslid=MzlwMDA0NgZic3MDI3MA&sseid=MzIzNjA0MDM0NAUA&jobid=60559961-39a3-4f98-afc0-25ac54a35014

Regards,

Sherry G. Skillwoman

Retired Medical Social Worker

Native Kansan in Wichita

February 23, 2024

772 Hwy 40
Lawrence, KS 66049
785-841-1526
Glsloan_ks@yahoo.com

Re: Medicaid Expansion

Dear Legislators,

I am a retired Republican State Representative and current LMH Health Trustee. You have heard for years that Medicaid expansion will help local hospitals and the people of Kansas and that over 70 percent of Kansans support Medicaid expansion.

Some legislators have opposed expansion for a variety of presumed financial risks to the State. We believe risks to the State have been addressed by hospitals committing to pay for the State's required match of federal dollars. What has not been adequately explained to legislators is the financial realities being experienced by hospitals in the absence of Medicaid expansion.

LMH Health in 2023 provided \$12 million of uncompensated care to patients. Medicaid expansion would provide approximately \$3 million in additional annual revenue to the hospital, based on the additional 3,800 residents who would be covered by the program. This is crucial to our efforts to remain an independent community hospital because we had almost a \$6 million operating shortfall in 2023. Medicaid expansion will not solve all of our fiscal challenges, and we are aggressively addressing cost controls and other opportunities, but it would significantly reduce our uncompensated care costs.

I am writing with three requests: 1) that you contact our CEO Russ Johnson (russ.johnson@lmh.org) to discuss the very real financial impact that Medicaid expansion would have on LMH's ability to remain an independent community hospital; 2) that you recognize that the Governor's proposed Medicaid expansion bill requires Kansas hospitals to pay the State's share of the cost-matching requirement (this is similar to a similar program in which adult care facilities pay the State's matching requirement for other federal financial aid). We support that proposal because the increased federal funds will more than offset our contribution to the State's matching requirement; and 3) after your conversation with Mr. Johnson, that you contact other hospital CEOs in your legislative district or region about their very real financial challenges.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests. I trust that you will accept the opportunity to discuss with Mr. Johnson and other hospital CEO's the benefits to healthcare providers' (e.g., hospitals, physicians, etc.) ability to provide quality healthcare to patients locally and statewide and the willingness of these entities to financially support the State's matching requirements. Medicaid expansion will help close the "coverage gap" for those whose incomes are too high to qualify for Kansas' current Medicaid program, but too low to qualify for marketplace plan subsidies.

Sincerely,

Tom Sloan
45th District Representative (Retired)
LMH Health Trustee

P.S. In Kansas, a single mother of two only qualifies for Medicaid if she makes less than \$8,203 per year. If she works full time for minimum wage, she makes too much to qualify for Medicaid and is not eligible for a health insurance exchange incentive. Expanding Medicaid in Kansas will give families the opportunity to work and have health insurance.

March 17, 2024

I am a resident of Bourbon County and a registered Republican. My husband and I are very much in favor of the expansion of Medicaid in Kansas. We are retired educators and we are confident that our Bourbon County residents would benefit from the expansion of Medicaid in Kansas. Other states benefit from Medicaid and it is time for Kansans to choose to accept Medicaid expansion. We pay federal taxes that help provide this program and we would like our state to benefit also.

Sincerely,
Patricia Smilie
Dale Smilie

Jonathan Smith

Private Citizen

03/14/2024

HB 2556 - Expanding medical assistance eligibility and enacting the cutting healthcare costs for all Kansans act.

Written-Only Proponent testimony

Hearing Date: March 20th, 2024 1:30pm

Health and Human Services Committee

Chairwoman Landwehr, and esteemed members of the committee,

Hello, and thank you for taking the time to read my testimony today. I cannot tell you how long I have waited for Kansas to finally expand Medicaid coverage for Kansans. I implore you with my whole being, to please, PLEASE pass HB 2556 favorably. I cannot think of anything that will improve the lives of more Kansans with one stroke of the pen.

My children have been on a form of Kancare for most of their lives, it's what we've used for all of their doctor visits, all of their hospital stays, all of their dental appointments, all of their medications, all of their therapy, all of their case managers, and so on. Me and my wife do not make enough money to be able to afford real health insurance; I can barely afford insurance for me through my job. We let our kids' insurance through Kancare lapse *once*, and it *decimated* our finances. I think it cost us about \$1,700 in three months from medication and doctor's appointments. Luckily we had some money saved up in our savings, and we were able to eat that cost until they were reactivated at Kancare. Those few months probably set us back from buying a home for another year, but our children were able to stay in school without any disruptions to their medication.

But what my point is, is that Americans cannot afford health insurance or healthcare anymore. People would rather sit at home and die from an infection than risk going to a hospital to save their life and bankrupting their family in the process. We need the solace of knowing that our healthcare will be covered by the government. That the government will be able to fight these greedy insurance companies with more teeth than the American public ever could.

Finally, expanding Medicaid Coverage is covered by the federal government. It's not even going to increase our state tax burden, plus, any additional cost would obviously be covered by the healthcare cost savings on the back from Kansans not having to pay for the uninsured Kansans' healthcare across the state.

Expanding Medicaid is a sure-fire way to help more Kansan's than just about anything else I can imagine. I have been waiting so long for our state to finally catch up to the rest of the country. I wish, more than anything, for any family to be able to experience that stability, calm, order, and reliability that we were able to experience with our children on Kancare.

Please pass HB 2556 favorably out of committee, for all Kansas families to prosper more tomorrow than yesterday.

Thank you for your time,

Jonathan Smith

February 11, 2024

Dear policymakers,

I am not a Medicaid recipient and I don't need it. However, I know folks who suffer because they don't have insurance and are not well. I also believe that if folks have medical insurance they are healthier because they can see a doctor before they are sick into death. Expanding Medicaid will save the state a lot of money in the long run. Taxpayers pay for trips to the ER and hospitalizations when there is no insurer to pay. All the way around having health insurance for everyone is a win-win situation. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Sister MaryLex Smith, SCL

March 15, 2024

I'd like to submit this written testimony in support of expanding Medicaid in the state of Kansas. As a Clinical Psychologist in Kansas City, KS, I've seen first hand the extreme mental health needs of our community members. This need is evident in the rise of anxiety in our youth, the increase of utilization within our community mental health centers, hospitals, K-12 schools, and Universities and Colleges, as well as the increase in suicidality among our most vulnerable populations (our youth and our elders). Moreover, research has shown that less 50% of people who need mental health treatment actually obtain mental health treatment. A major factor impacting this horribly low treatment rate is the lack of resources to access available treatment. Expanding Medicaid in Kansas would help our neighbors, family, and friends obtain the treatment needed to live a meaningful life and, frankly, to save lives.

I implore you to vote to expand Medicaid in our wonderful state, so that all Kansans have the opportunity to live healthy and happy lives within healthy and happy communities.

Thank you,

Rev. Dr. Lynette Sparkman-Barnes, Psy.D.
Licensed Clinical Psychologist
Associate Minister, Grant Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, 2800 N.
Tremont, Kansas City, KS, 66101
(913) 909-481

March 13, 2024

To the Kansas legislature,

I strongly support the expansion of Medicaid in Kansas. I am working to develop wind power, long duration energy storage and green hydrogen projects in western Kansas and have close relationships and friendships with many western Kansans. My friends there need the expansion of Medicaid to retain hospitals and medical help for their communities.

No one who considers themselves to be “pro-life” can oppose the expansion of Medicaid. One cannot say that life is precious on one hand and then deny healthcare to hundreds of thousands of people on the other hand. All Kansans deserve access to quality healthcare.

The legislature must support expanding Medicaid to promote healthy lives in our state. We are counting on all legislators to stand up for healthy lives by voting for expanded Medicaid.

Thank you for caring for all Kansans.

Joe L Spease, CEO
WindSoHy, LLC
Overland Park, KS 66214
Mobile: 913-481-2869
www.windsohy.com
jspease@windsohy.com

Audrey Spellman

Regarding SB 355 and HB 2556

March 13, 2024

My name is Audrey Spellman, I am a college athlete at the University Saint Mary. I am testifying in favor of SB 355 and HB 2556 for the expansion of Medicaid. I am a nursing major and work as a CNA. Adults or elderly patients that do not have the funds for healthcare is a more common problem than people think. Everyone should have access to healthcare and be treated fairly. I have seen too many patients choose not to go to the hospital and choose to manage their needs on their own because they don't have insurance to pay for it.

By expanding Medicaid, roughly 150,000 more Kansans would have access to affordable health care, and it won't cost Kansas taxpayers a single cent. Nearly 80% of Kansans support Medicaid expansion, including myself. We have lost \$7 billion in federal funding while our federal taxpayers support jobs and healthcare in 40 other states. This will also be better for the economy and will create more jobs. Thank you for your consideration. Please vote yes to expand Medicaid.

Thank you, Audrey Spellman

March 14, 2024

Testimony in support of SB 355 and HB 2556.

My name is Robin St James and I am Executive Director of Papan's Landing Senior Center. PLSC is an activity center for seniors (age 60+) in Topeka and Shawnee County, Kansas. Our Mission is to provide the services that help keep seniors in their own homes for as long as possible. One of those services is ensuring that our seniors are aware of issues that affect them.

Medicaid Expansion is one of those issues and is important to me because a full 75% of our participants fall into that income gap between being financially ineligible for Medicaid but being unable to afford marketplace plan subsidies. Many of our seniors do not get the medical services they need or do without something else, such as food or heat in the winter, to pay for medication or copays. When we discuss Medicaid expansion, they are very vocal and do not understand why so many other states have expanded Medicaid but Kansas has not. They ask why when the money is there, it's not available to the people of Kansas. I honestly don't know what to tell them because I have the same questions and have yet to find answers that make sense to me.

Beyond the senior citizen issue are people like our employees. As a small not-for-profit, we are unable to provide health insurance for the people who are here every day working for our seniors including me. One of our employees makes too much to qualify for KanCare, but it would cost over \$500 a month to buy health insurance for his family through his wife's employer. They are doing without because \$500 a month is a financial burden they are can not bear at this time. He is just one of more than 150,000 Kansans who fall into this healthcare gap.

SB 355 and HB 2556 could make a difference for a lot of people, be they retirees or those who are working. I ask that those who have the power to make a true, positive change, consider every Kansan and vote yes on these bills.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 355 and HB 2556.

--

Robin St James
Executive Director
619 NW Paramore Street
Topeka, Kansas 66608
785.232.1968



TO: House Health and Human Services Committee

FROM: Robert L. Olm-Shipman, President & Chief Executive Officer, South and East Regions, Saint Luke's Health System

DATE: March 20, 2024

RE: Proponent Testimony House Bill 2556

On behalf of Saint Luke's Health System, a faith-based, not-for-profit, and our over 4,200 employees who live or work in Kansas, thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in support of House Bill 2556. My name is Bobby Olm-Shipman and I am President and Chief Executive Officer of the South and East Regions of Saint Luke's Health System. I am also the current Board Chairman of the Kansas Hospital Association. Saint Luke's Health System operates Saint Luke's South Hospital in Overland Park, with additional locations in Leawood, Roeland Park, and Kansas City, and two critical access hospitals in Anderson County Hospital in Garnett and Allen County Regional Hospital in Iola. In fiscal year 2022, our Kansas hospitals provided over \$12.3 million in uncompensated care costs.

Under the *Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA)*, federal law requires Medicare-participating hospitals to ensure public access to emergency services regardless of ability to pay. Because of this requirement, hospitals often absorb the uncompensated cost of emergency department visits of those who are unable to pay. It is well established that visits to the emergency department, generally the most expensive place in the hospital to receive care, are a significant driver to the rising cost of health care in the United States. And while as providers we are committed to caring for anyone who comes through our emergency department doors, regardless of ability to pay, the neglected costs of that care end up saddled on a hospitals' bottom line and are typically passed on to private insurance holders in the form of higher health insurance plan premiums. Expanding Medicaid in the state of Kansas will not only provide access to health care for tens of thousands of hard-working Kansans who currently find themselves in the coverage gap, making too much for Medicaid coverage but not enough for subsidized coverage on an exchange plan, and improve health outcomes, but also mitigate unnecessary, expensive, last-resort emergency department visits and improve the viability of hospitals in communities across our state.

Hospitals across the country, and certainly in our State, continue to navigate a perilous economic environment, confronting increased staffing and supply costs and stagnant reimbursement, leading to razor-thin margins and deficits. 2022 National Health Expenditure (NHE) data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) show that while total healthcare spending increased 4.1% that year, hospital spending was up only 2.2% - compared to physician services (+2.7%), prescription drugs (+8.4%), private insurance (+5.9%) and the overall inflation rate (+6.5%). Additionally, according to a recent report by Syntellis Performance Solutions and the American Hospital Association, hospital labor expenses per adjusted discharge were up by 24.8% by the end of 2022 compared to pre-pandemic levels in 2019.¹ The rapid growth in labor expenses in 2022 alone were projected to increase hospitals' labor costs by \$135 billion according to a report published by Kaufman Hall in September 2022. Inflated labor

¹ https://www.syntellis.com/sites/default/files/2023-03/AHA_Q2_Feb_2023.pdf

and supply costs continue to challenge hospital finances today, as does *EMTALA*, chronic government payer reimbursement below cost, and unnecessary prior authorization and improper claim denials from commercial health plans. Without supportive public policies like expanding Medicaid, Kansas hospitals will continue to fall further behind on their balance sheets, which could lead to shuttered services, limited investment and innovation, and, unfortunately, potential closure. Given the ongoing financial hardship hospitals are experiencing, not expanding Medicaid jeopardizes improved access to health care services for all Kansans.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. We ask that the committee recommend favorably House Bill 2556.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Olm-Shipman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert L. Olm-Shipman
President & Chief Executive Officer, South and East Regions, Saint Luke's Health System

March 15, 2024

Dear Kansas Legislature:

Over the last two weeks I have attended rallies for Medicaid Expansion and Mental Health Advocacy Day at the Kansas State Capitol. Governor Laura Kelly addressed both rallies. I am writing to encourage you to expand Medicaid in Kansas.

A Long Journey

When my wife and I came to Topeka in 1972 from the east coast for me to pursue two years of Post-Doctoral Training in Clinical Psychology at the Menninger Clinic, a large billboard posted at I-70 and McVicar greeted travelers: "Welcome to Topeka, Psychiatric Capitol of the World."

How the passage of time and the transformation of health care has changed all that.

Living in a city my mother volunteered to go door to door on behalf of the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Association, and other charities to ask for modest contributions to those charities. There I was as a child at my mother's side witnessing her quest and learning about charity.

Growing up in a religious household and attending Sunday school and prayer services I learned the two most important lessons of many religions: 1) the most important "good deed" one can do is take care of and look after those less fortunate than ourselves and 2) "I am my brother's keeper."

Medicaid Expansion

150, 000 Kansans go to bed each evening and wake up in the morning with an awareness that if they develop a moderate or life-threatening illness they may not have access to life-affirming or life-saving health care. This is not right by any standard or measure.

Related Matters

During the last four years of my work at the Menninger Clinic (1972-1995) I had a unique opportunity and experience. I had spent my first 19 years at Menninger treating patients in the Adult and Children's Hospitals at Menninger. From 1991-1995 I visited with the CEOs, Medical Directors, Network Development Directors of about 100 insurance companies across America and about 200 hospitals, clinics, and doctors' offices. I witnessed first hand the transformation taking place in health care in America at that time.

Later, as Kansas made its own good faith effort to enact universal health insurance I shared some of my experiences and knowledge before several committees of the Kansas Legislature.

The Moral Imperative for Medicaid Expansion

During that era Len Nichols, Ph.D., a health care economist for the New America Foundation, reminded the Kansas legislature about the concept of “gleaning” from the Book of Leviticus in the Old Testament. Gleaning is the idea that when the farmer harvests the wheat from the field, he or she sets aside 10% of the harvest for the widow and orphan.

Nichols suggested to the legislature that a modern day interpretation of gleaning would apply to health care and health care reform. It may be our moral obligation to set aside 10% of our national wealth to provide health care for all our citizens.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ira Stamm

Topeka

Dear Kansas Policymakers,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Kansas Medicaid Expansion program, KanCare.

My purpose today is to urge the passage of KanCare expansion legislation in 2024. Kansans are paying more to take care of themselves and provide for their families. Polling shows that over 75% of Kansans want to Expand Medicaid for their hardworking family, friends and neighbors that fall in the Healthcare gap. Expanding KanCare will reduce health care costs for everyone.

Medicaid Expansion in Kansas:

- is a cost savings for all Kansans.
- will help promote a healthier Kansas by providing much needed healthcare to 150,000 individuals working in rural areas, small towns and cities that fall in the gap and cannot get health coverage.
- will help struggling rural hospitals and clinics, provide investment in our communities, and make Kansas more competitive with neighboring states that have expanded Medicaid.

Personally, I am tired of my hard-earned tax dollars going to the states around us that have Medicaid Expansion, i.e., Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, etc. It is time for the Kansas Legislature to listen to their constituents and support an open debate on KanCare expansion legislation in the Kansas Statehouse so that the voices of the 8 in 10 Kansans supporting expansion can be heard and expansion can be enacted in our state.

Sincerely,
Chris Steege
Medicaid Expansion Supporter
Lenexa, KS

March 14, 2024

Dear Kansas Legislators,

My State Legislators are Senator Pat Pettey and Representative Louis Ruiz.

As the mother of a 19-year-old college student with Type 1 Diabetes who has just aged out of Children's Medicaid, who is currently waiting for word as to whether my child has been accepted for Adult Medicaid, I urge you to vote Yes for Medicaid expansion. If my child is rejected for Adult Medicaid and needs to be on my Healthcare Marketplace plan, I know there will be copays for every doctor visit and also for prescriptions. I myself often postpone going to the doctor because I cannot afford the copay, but I know I'll have to find a way to pay it for my child who needs the lifesaving care and medications and supplies. I'm praying that we'll find out that my child can receive Adult Medicaid, because then we won't have to cut back on food to pay for healthcare.

Expanding Medicaid will be a godsend for many, many Kansas individuals and families, especially as our food costs keep going up, and property taxes are rising as well here in Wyandotte County. Having a home, food, and regular healthcare is starting to feel like an impossible dream to dream here in Kansas. You legislators can help make it possible again. Please do!

Sincerely,

Susan Stevens,
Argentine Neighborhood, Kansas City, Kansas

March 15, 2024

Below is my testimony for the House and Senate hearings on Medicaid Expansion:

I am a registered voter in Kansas and I always vote.

It is way past time that we pass Medicaid/Kancare expansion. This is what the majority of citizens want and it is time to do it.

All people deserve affordable healthcare!

Linda Stoner
913-633-2002

To: Representative Brenda Landwehr

House Health and Human Services Committee Chair

From: Stormont Vail Health

Date: February 22nd, 2024

Subject: Testimony in Support of HB 2556

Thank you, Madam Chair Landwehr and member of the House Health and Human Services committee, for allowing Stormont Vail Health to provide testimony. My name is Stacie Mason and I am the Chief Financial Officer and Senior Vice President at Stormont Vail Health system based in Topeka and Geary County, Kansas. Today, Stormont Vail is the second largest health care system in the state providing care to over 219,000 unique patients in our hospitals and over 793,000 patients in our care clinics across northeast Kansas. We employ about 5,700 team members and invest \$47 million in our community annually, not including the nearly \$79 million written off for charity, which, many times, does not fully cover the cost of care.

Medicaid Expansion presents a unique opportunity for Kansas, offering significant benefits that align with the well-being of our community. By extending health coverage, we can:

- enhance overall community health
- mitigate uncompensated care costs for local hospitals
- foster a more productive workforce

Rural hospitals, in particular, are at risk, with eight closures since 2014. The legislation not only safeguards these institutions but also creates a comprehensive strategy for rural healthcare. However, rural hospitals are not the only health care facilities at risk if Medicaid is not expanded.

Recent changes to the federal Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) program put Stormont Vail's hospitals at risk of losing \$25-\$30 million by losing eligibility in the 340b drug savings program. Medicaid Expansion will:

- Allow Stormont to remain in the 340b program
- Recoup reimbursement for the millions in uncompensated care we already give
- Provide patients with access to critical services that keep them healthy

Passing HB 2556 is the difference between losing \$25-30 million without Medicaid Expansion or Stormont Vail being able to conservatively invest \$7-10 million more into the community with Medicaid Expansion—at no additional cost to tax payers. Facing the rising prices of health care and the rollback of pandemic era support programs, losing \$25-\$30 million will cripple Stormont's ability to provide comprehensive care and support to communities across Kansas.

Medicaid Expansion will not only help hospitals but will also greatly contribute to the growth and prosperity of our local businesses. The financial implications are substantial. Medicaid Expansion can generate approximately 23,000 jobs and save employers up to \$80 million annually in healthcare costs.



This not only supports the health and productivity of Kansans but also contributes to a thriving community.

Furthermore, this bipartisan proposal addresses key concerns by incorporating a work requirement that both grows our workforce and streamlines administrative processes. Exceptions for students, veterans, caregivers, and those with medical conditions make it a pragmatic and inclusive approach. Recent statistics indicate overwhelming support from Kansans (approx. 80%), aligning with the vision of growing our workforce and ensuring the prosperity of our local businesses.

The financial burden on health care providers, local businesses, and communities due to the lack of Medicaid Expansion cannot be understated. Your influential support in advocating for Medicaid Expansion through HB 2556, is crucial. We urge you to support the Cutting Healthcare Costs for All Kansans Act. Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Respectfully,

Stacie Mason, MBA

Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer



Phyllis Stowell, scl

I am offering my testimony regarding the expansion of Medicaid for the citizens of Kansas. I have been a citizen of this state since my childhood and value the tradition it has of serving those residents most in need as part of its responsibilities to provide for the common good.

My family has rural roots and because of this has depended upon health services in rural areas of the state.

- I received polio shots from a clinic in Seneca.
- My sister and brother-in-law received health care at the now closed Holton hospital.
- My niece and her family must travel from their farm in Fairview to Topeka when hospital services are needed. The travel and cost of medical care and travel is extraordinary causing delayed medical attention.
- There are nearly one hundred Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth residing in Leavenworth who now have only one hospital in the city to deal with health needs, some life threatening, when a 30-45 minute or longer ambulance ride to a hospital able to provide necessary care for strokes, etc. could be critical.
- As a state that prides itself still on fiscal responsibility and respect for its citizens, it is imperative that Kansans receive assistance from Medicaid expansion.
- Accepting the federal funds to provide for the health and well-being of Kansans must not fall prey to partisan politics.

S. Phyllis Stowell, scl

March 13, 2024

Please support medicaid expansion in Kansas. It is a “win win” for all Kansans. I see no reason to prevent this assistance. Eight rural hospitals have closed since 2014 and thousands of Kansans are without medical coverage which they cannot afford.

Passing this medicaid expansion will decrease medical cost for all Kansans. When an uninsured Kansan goes to the emergency room the hospital will increase the cost of services for those who can pay to make up for short falls incurred serving the uninsured.

Most Kansas support medicaid expansion, and the state will have no additional taxpayer cost. In fact, it will bring revenue into the state. I understand Kansas has lost nearly \$7 billion in additional federal funding while our federal taxpayers support jobs and healthcare in 40 other states.

Ron and Sheila Szymankowski of Overland Park Kansas



Therapy Services LLC
1200 Graphic Arts Road, Ste 100
Emporia, KS 66801
620-208-6480
fax 620-364-2551
www.therapyservicesonline.com



KanCare Expansion Testimony
3/20/2024

My name is Gayle Taylor-Ford. I am the owner of Therapy Services LLC and an activist with the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. At Therapy Services LLC we provide outpatient and intensive outpatient substance use disorder treatment in Burlington, KS and in Emporia, KS. We also provide Home and Community Based Services for the Brain Injury Waiver to include behavior therapy and cognitive therapy, and we provide non-emergency medical transportation. I am a board member for the International Pain Foundation, Empower House Ministries, and I am on the Government Relations Advisory Committee for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

I stand before you today to share how Medicaid Expansion would affect some of the clients that I serve. At Therapy Services LLC we accept payers such as Medicaid and for those with no insurance and below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines, we can provide free treatment with State Block Grant Funding. Medicaid expansion would help to reduce the need for block grant funding.

When it comes to substance use disorder treatment, people use substances for many different reasons. For example, there are people that have resorted to purchasing marijuana to treat their chronic pain, only to get arrested for possession of illegal substances. Why didn't they just go to the doctor for a pain prescription? They did not have insurance and it was much less expensive to purchase marijuana than it was to pay for an office visit with a physician and a prescription. Medicaid expansion would mean fewer people having to rely on back-door methods to not cure, but just get by with painful chronic medical issues.

Another example is the addicted person who comes for treatment and as they have sobered up, they find that they have medical issues, such as Hepatitis C. The medical issues could easily be treated but they cannot afford to go to see a physician. As time goes on, these medical issues worsen, becoming difficult to deal with and treat. I have had clients with injured knees or shoulders in need of surgery but, since they lack insurance, that is something out of reach for them. Many have jobs but cannot afford to pay for insurance. I am talking about the working poor that do not make enough money to qualify for the affordable care act subsidy policies. People that are trying to be better in their lives and contribute to society but cannot because lack of health insurance means their medical conditions just get worse due to lack of access to treatment. These are

Other location: Therapy Services LLC 420 Kennedy Street, Burlington, Kansas 66839



Therapy Services LLC
1200 Graphic Arts Road, Ste 100
Emporia, KS 66801
620-208-6480
fax 620-364-2551
www.therapyservicesonline.com



the people that Medicaid Expansion in Kansas will help.

Medicaid expansion would not only help my clinic stay open – it would mean a more holistic wellness plan can be implemented by many more people.

In all, Medicaid expansion would help people get actual treatment rather than relying on whatever way they can to manage their health. It would help those Kansans who are working and getting their lives on track but are not there yet. Expanding Medicaid in Kansas is NOT a handout. It is a “hand-up.” Meaning that it would enable more Kansans to be healthy enough to be able to be a more productive member of our workforce society. Additionally, it would help the healthcare providers and social workers like me, who just want to support our community and help our patients. Please expand Medicaid in Kansas. Thank you.

Gayle M Taylor-Ford, LSCSW, LCAC, CCTP
Executive Director/Owner, Therapy Services LLC
Board Member/Secretary, International Pain Foundation
KS GRAC Committee Member, National MS Society
Board Member/ Empower House Ministries
620-208-6480, cell 785-221-7560

March 14, 2024

To Whom it may concern:

I am writing to urge you to support the expansion of Medicaid in Kansas. The importance of this expansion cannot be overstated. I grew up in a family without health insurance. My father was self-employed, and we just couldn't afford it. Had we had access to health care, I probably would not have lost my mother to cancer when I was a teenager. For much of my adult life, I did not work in jobs that provided access to health insurance. It was only after I went back to school that I was able to secure better employment that provided this benefit. Many of the chronic conditions I deal with would not be so severe now if I could have dealt with them when I was younger. No one should have to live this way.

Expanding Medicaid will provide accessibility to affordable healthcare, will not cost Kansas taxpayers any money, and will provide support for rural hospitals that desperately need it. Expanding Medicaid will also create nearly 23,000 jobs and help end our health care worker shortage. Kansas business owners could save up to \$80 million per year in health care costs if Medicaid were expanded. This expansion will cut healthcare costs for all Kansans. There is simply no reason not to do it.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Lillian C. Taylor
Lawrence, KS

March 4, 2024

Dear Decision Maker,

Please make decisions based on what is the best for Kansans of all ages, interests, cultures, and abilities.

Please join 41 other states expanding Medicaid: Status of State Medicaid Expansion Decisions: Interactive Map

[https://www.kff.org/affordable-care-act/issue-brief/status-of-state-medicaid-expansion-decisions-interactive-map/#:~:text=Coverage%20under%20the%20Medicaid%20expansion,%2C%20Virginia%20\(1%2F1%2F](https://www.kff.org/affordable-care-act/issue-brief/status-of-state-medicaid-expansion-decisions-interactive-map/#:~:text=Coverage%20under%20the%20Medicaid%20expansion,%2C%20Virginia%20(1%2F1%2F)

If you have not seen these reports, please review and act in the best interest of our future leaders. Healthy students will be more successful learners and become lifelong contributors to society.

"Expanding Medicaid in Kansas would strengthen families like mine"

<https://kansasreflector.com/2023/10/11/expanding-medicaid-in-kansas-would-strengthen-families-like-mine/>

On behalf of Kansas children and families of various financial situations, interests, abilities, and backgrounds, please expand Medicaid.

Former Senator Bob Dole reached across the aisle collaborating with others to move Kansas forward. If we desire "Unity in the Community," please encourage Medicaid expansion.

"Steve Morris on the need for moderate voices in the Kansas Legislature"

<https://kansasreflector.com/podcasts/steve-morris-on-the-need-for-moderate-voices-in-the-kansas-legislature/?emci=e341ebb8-bd68-ee11-9937-00224832eb73&emdi=8742d2c3-dd68-ee11-9937-00224832eb73&ceid=120554>

Respectfully,

Carmaine Ternes

Librarian, Author, Editor, Presenter

"A child who reads will be an adult who thinks!"

February 10, 2024

Dear Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services

As a retired Pastor and a resident of Shawnee County, Kansas, I want to appeal to you to support HB 2556 which provides for the expansion of Medicaid. I am a person of faith and a follower of Jesus Christ and I strongly suspect that many of you are as well. There are 23 accounts of Jesus healing people in the Gospels, not including the accounts of him delivering people from demon possession. Obviously, people's physical and mental health were of great importance to Jesus and as followers of Jesus, it should be very important to us to do all in our power to enable all, including the people who cannot afford health insurance or health care to have access to both. To me, this is a no-brainer. As a person privileged to have good quality health care as I am sure that you are as well, how can we pass up an opportunity to extend the same benefits to some who may not be as affluent as we are. There is strong evidence that Medicaid expansion would help reduce poverty, help keep health care available in rural areas of Kansas and be a blessing to countless people who now have to either try and get by without seeking health care which increases their risk of developing more serious illnesses, or be burdened with health care debt. Please support Governor Kelly in her efforts to expand Medicaid.

Sincerely and Prayerfully

Rev. Gary W. Teske
4220 SE Iowa ave.
Topeka, KS. 66609



www.802united.org

January 25, 2024

To: Kansas Legislators regarding expansion of Medicaid

From: The 802 United nonprofit educational/ advocacy organization

Re: In support of expanding KanCare

On behalf of our nonprofit organization, and as a Kansas citizen practicing medicine in our state for over 30 years, I resoundingly support the expansion of Medicaid in our state, as do hundreds of other physicians and medical organizations. We request that this issue be brought to the floor for a hearing immediately. It's past time.

The following is an excerpt of a referenced educational module from our website, The802United.org. It describes the importance of expanding Medicaid in Kansas, one of only 10 states in the nation not currently benefiting from federal funding to support our healthcare institutions and close the insurance gap for middle income Kansans:

1. Medicaid Expansion- what is it and what are the pros and cons?

Medicaid is a federal health insurance program and is offered only to specific categories of individuals for very specific purposes. The rules and regulations vary by state, and any expansion of the program must come through the state legislature and be signed by the Governor. In Kansas, the Medicaid program is administered by KanCare, and benefits are restricted to seniors over 65, low income families with children (or pregnant people), and those with disabilities. Medicaid expansion would remove the restrictions except for meeting income and employment standards, with benefits provided to all residents with a household income at or below 138% of the federally established poverty level, regardless of disability, age or having children.

To put that figure into perspective, the annual income at 138% of the federal poverty level depends on the number of people in the household:

# of Persons in Household	2023 Federal Poverty Level for the 48 Contiguous States (Annual Income)	
	100%	138%
1	\$14,580	\$20,120
2	\$19,720	\$27,214
3	\$24,860	\$34,307

In locations with expanded state health insurance, federal funding is increased alongside the state funds, resulting in a net gain to the state in direct funding, jobs created, and personal income for the residents (which can then be taxed). States that have not expanded the program have opted out of (all 10 states together) over \$43 Billion dollars in federal funding.

From Governor Kelly's office in 2021: [ICYMI: New Report Today Says Medicaid Expansion Would Create 23,000 New Jobs in Kansas - Governor of the State of Kansas](#)

Historically, there have been bills introduced in Kansas for several years (at least since 2012) to expand Medicaid and take advantage of federal designated funds, some of which Kansas is already missing out on because it has refused to expand the program. In every case, the legislature voted along party lines or a Republican Governor (Sam Brownback) refused to sign a bill which passed both the house and senate, and the proposals were voted down, usually stating that the expansion would be "too expensive". More recently, the Republican legislators tried to tie a "poison pill" (an amendment which is so unpopular it will keep an otherwise attractive bill from being passed) to the Medicaid expansion legislation, by stating they would only vote for the bill if it also contained a state constitutional amendment banning abortion from the moment of conception.

All but 10 states in the US have voted to expand Medicaid to the fullest extent allowed by the Affordable Care Act. Some of the states had to create ballot measures to force their legislators to expand Medicaid (not an option in Kansas, because there is no process in our state constitution which allows citizens to create ballot measures- this can only be done by legislators). In the states that have expanded Medicaid, health outcomes have almost universally improved in multiple areas of medicine (none worsened).

From KCUR (public radio) in December, 2022:

[Medicaid expansion in Kansas: What to know before lawmakers convene in January | KCUR - Kansas City news and NPR](#)

News story about why Medicaid expansion is critical to keep Kansans from falling through the "gap" and failing to obtain care:

<https://www.kctv5.com/2023/08/31/kansas-patients-coverage-gap-face-medicaid-issues/?fbclid=IwAR2EpMJpZXFHZA10R3DgmRqA0ZzzA4cgN5UkgwPNOD2OsC6xAE2vnuy53s>

KFF article by Guth and Ammula:

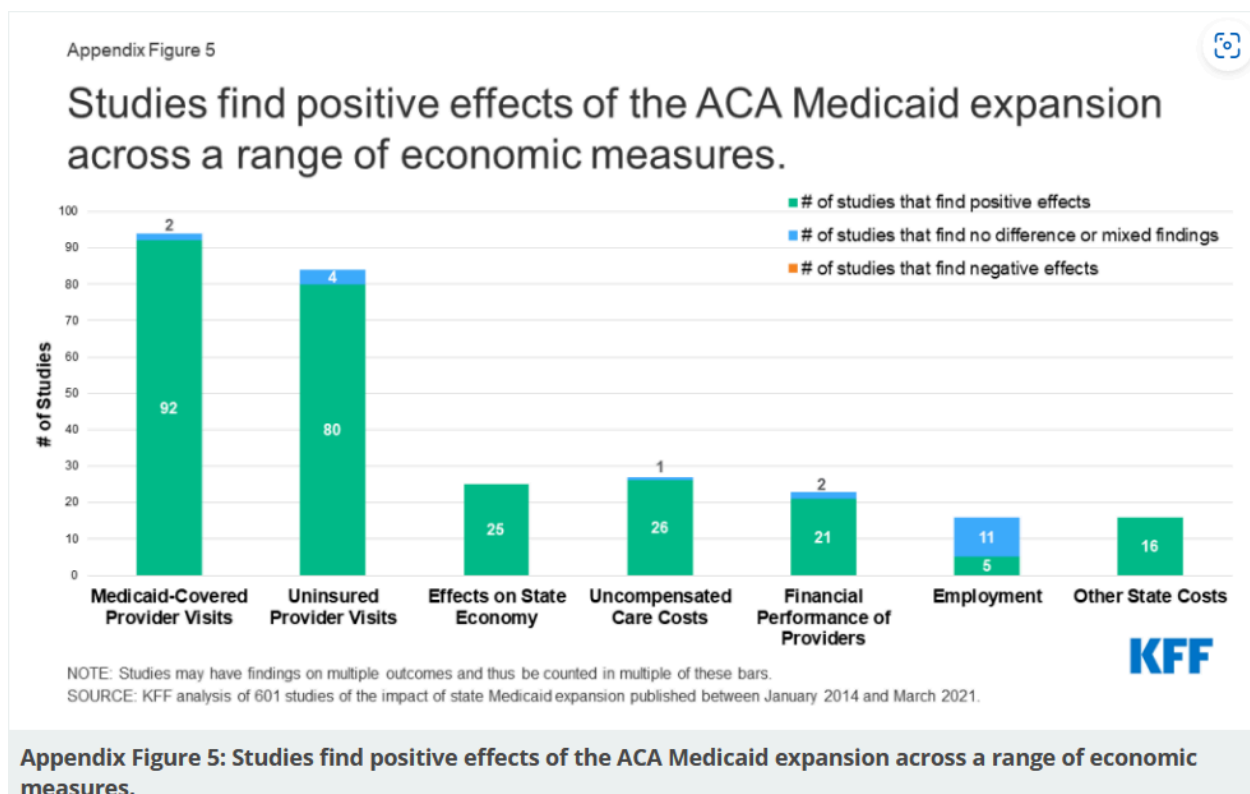
[Building on the Evidence Base: Studies on the Effects of Medicaid Expansion, February 2020 to March 2021 – Report – 9709 | KFF](#)

[The Effects of Earlier Medicaid Expansions: A Literature Review | CEA | The White House](#)

A. What is the impact on rural healthcare access of expanding Medicaid (or not)?

In the several years that lawmakers have not managed to pass Medicaid expansion, one of the sticking points is that legislators believe that hospitals would be overwhelmed by the influx of patients who would seek care once they were insured. In truth, it is the rural hospitals that have strongly recommended expanding the program, as the effect of increasing the number of insured patients (rather than the number of uninsured patients, who will still come into the hospital in crisis situations but NOT for preventive care, which would be less expensive and improve health outcomes) would improve the proportion of uninsured/ insured patients resulting in fewer uninsured cases that go unreimbursed, increase income and provide more jobs at these small hospitals.

Figure from Appendix A of the KFF article by Guth and Ammula:



Information regarding the impact on rural hospitals from the KCUR article:

“Tom Bell, former chief executive of the Kansas Hospital Association, testified in 2020 that 85% of rural Kansas hospitals were operating at a loss. Since then, operating under the strain of the pandemic, about one-third of rural hospitals nationwide are now at risk of closing in the next year, including 55 in Kansas.

Nearly 75% of rural hospital closures nationwide since 2010 were in states that have not yet enacted Medicaid expansion, or waited too long for it to make a difference, according to a report from the American Hospital Association.

By keeping hospitals open, Medicaid expansion could create jobs at those hospitals, said Don King, chief executive of Ascension via Christi, in testimony to lawmakers in 2020. Governor Kelly’s office forecast as many as 23,000 jobs could be created.”

(These statistics are from embedded hotlinks in the KCUR article, referenced above).

Rural Kansas hospitals which closed between 2010 and 2023

Kansas

Central Kansas Medical Center (Great Bend)

Horton Community Hospital

Mercy Hospital Fort Scott

Mercy Hospital Independence

Oswego Community Hospital

Herington Hospital

[State-by-state breakdown of 120 rural hospital closures \(beckershospitalreview.com\)](https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/state-by-state-breakdown-of-120-rural-hospital-closures)

January 2023 article from the same site shows that 53% of rural Kansas hospitals are at high risk of closure:

[631 hospitals at risk of closure, state by state \(beckershospitalreview.com\)](https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/631-hospitals-at-risk-of-closure-state-by-state)

Please note, to read these articles from Beckers Hospital Review, you may need to enter your email address. If you would rather not, one of the articles is quoted here, and you only need to put up with ads:

[Hundreds of Hospitals Could Close Across Rural America \(usnews.com\)](https://www.usnews.com/story/health/hundreds-of-hospitals-could-close-across-rural-america)

Therefore, the expansion of Medicaid would help the state with funding, keep rural hospitals open, and give more Kansans access to health insurance. This would encourage more preventive instead of crisis care, which has been demonstrated to improve health outcomes.

Here is a recent article regarding Governor Kelly’s take on the issue:

[More than 50% of rural hospitals at-risk of closing. Kansas governor says there's simple solution \(kwch.com\)](#)

As you know, Governor Kelly has had a lot more to say on this issue over the Fall, leading up to a compromise proposal that now includes an employment requirement. I believe that, given the opportunity for an open conversation about this proposal, our legislators would faithfully represent the more than 70% of Kansans who support expanding Medicaid, and pass the law.

Give our representatives and senators the chance to do their jobs. Schedule a hearing for Medicaid Expansion right away.

Thank you for your time,

Elizabeth Wickstrom, MD FACOG

Board member of The 802 United

www.802united.org info@802united.org 1430 SW Woodhull St #4262 Topeka, Kansas 6604
(785)251-0803

March 13, 2024

Hello,

I am writing to provide support for Medicaid expansion in the upcoming KS state hearings. I am the president of the board of directors for the Overbrook Rural Health Initiative, a rural non-profit organization working to provide medical education and access to 2,500+ residents in Osage County (NE Kansas). A few notes I'd like to share:

- The Overbrook Rural Health Initiative (ORHI) is a bipartisan organization working to provide quality care to our neighbors and community
- Osage County is one of the largest KS counties without a hospital.
- Many of our residents travel 30+ minutes for emergency medical care; the difference between life & death in some cases!
- Our county has existing healthcare buildings and amenities that can be further or better utilized to provide expanded healthcare if Medicaid was expanded to include our community population
- The expansion of Medicaid would make rural healthcare an attractive business opportunity to larger hospital networks in neighboring Topeka, Lawrence, and Kansas City which directly benefits our communities' access to care.
- Medicaid expansion would provide employment opportunities to a significant part of our population who are trained & certified nurses commuting long distances for work away from home.

Rural Kansas represents a landscape of blue-collar workers supporting the backbone of America but quite literally, the backbone of our communities are breaking without access to quality healthcare. This initiative is a common sense bi-partisan issue that supports our state's fiscal responsibilities, creates opportunity for private-sector growth and employment, protects large employers already established in our state, reduces the burden of healthcare costs for our community, and - most importantly - shows the impact of a bipartisan approach to legislature that benefits ALL constituents.

We respectfully request support for HB2556 in the House and SB355 in the Senate.

Sincerely,
Katie Moon
President, The Overbrook Rural Health Initiative, Inc.
www.orhi.org

March 15, 2024

I am writing to support Medicaid expansion.

Our 31 year old daughter has autism and most recently was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy. She is disabled according to Social Security, however, she receives no cash payments because she works. She has insurance with an out-of-pocket maximum of \$6000 per year.

Over the past 6 years, she has had five major surgeries and she has reached her out of pocket maximum of \$6000 almost each year.

She earned \$14,695 dollars in 2023 because she was not able to work due to her long recovery.

Let me do the math. \$14,695 per year before taxes - less \$6000 in out of pocket medical expenses is \$8695. Divide that by 52 weeks a year. She has \$167 a week to pay for the basics of transportation, groceries, utilities and rent. How can anyone live a decent life on \$334 dollars each month?

The reason she is not living on the streets is because she has two living parents with an extra bedroom.

My husband, who is in his seventies, had cancer and a quadruple heart bypass last year. I am 69. We will not live forever.

Autism and Cerebral Palsy are not curable. She will never be able to find a job where she can earn enough money to leave poverty.

She isn't lazy. She is disabled with little to no resources.

There is no public transportation to her job. There is no assistance for housing, even if it existed. She doesn't qualify for SNAP.

Our family is NOT asking for a handout. We need relief from medical bills so maybe, just maybe, some of that \$6000 out-of-pocket medical expenses could be saved for a downpayment on a place for her to live after we are gone.

Respectfully,
Randi Thimesch
242 N Woodchuck St
Wichita, Ks.
316.371.4320

March 15, 2024

There are several excellent reasons to expand Medicaid in Kansas: it will help people struggling with medical bills, it will help people who have to choose groceries over medical treatment, and it will bring federal dollars into the state.

Thank you for listening!

Marian Thomas

March 13, 2024

I have been serving the poor in Garden City and Finney County for 27 years. There are so very many stories I could tell that are heart breaking.

One group of stories would be of those who make \$100 a month too much to qualify for Medicaid. When they or their children get sick, they go through the agony of "Can we ever be able to pay for this service and still put food on the table and pay the rent?" I know two children whose dad put off going to ER because he had not finished paying the last health bill. He died in ER and hour after he finally went because he had waited too long.

Another group are our elderly who have a little too much resources even though they have worked all their adult life. They either do not go to the doctor on time or they live in anxiety over how to pay this bill and whether they will need to go to the doctor again. Some even skimp on their medications and so risk their health.

Then there are the small rural health providers and hospitals who are left with so many unpaid bills that they either have closed or are at great risk for doing so. PLEASE look up a map of the hospitals in the state of Kansas and note that some counties no longer have a hospital and the citizens who voted for you are having to travel further all the time even for a doctor's appointment.

PLEASE FOR THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF ALL OF US YOU REPRESENT,
EXPAND MEDICAID!

Sincerely,
Sister Janice Thome

March 17, 2024

Dear Chairman and Committee Members,

I'm writing to implore you to vote in favor of expanding Medicaid eligibility as envisioned in the Affordable Care Act. 40 states have already done this. Their people are better off for it.

Expansion of the KanCare eligibility guidelines would allow approximately 150,000 Kansans to finally be able to have the peace of mind that comes with having a way to pay for unforeseen medical expenses. As it now stands, they fall into the so-called "coverage gap", meaning they make too little money to get subsidized coverage under the ACA, but too much to qualify for Medicaid.

The main reason cited by opponents of this expansion is the concern that it would be a burden on the state's finances. This bill, however, is revenue neutral. It is not revenue neutral for our critical access hospitals, especially in rural areas. Many of these hospitals are at risk of closing, in part due to the burden of caring for patients who lack the resources to pay for the care they desperately need. Providing these patients with Medicaid would give them a way to pay for that care. Covering those expenses with federal dollars that Kansas is currently leaving on the table would have the added benefit of reducing the cost shifting that makes health care more expensive for those of us who do have health insurance.

It is high time for Kansas to capitalize on the federal resources that are available to us. Please vote to expand Medicaid.

Thank you,

Bryan Thompson
Salina, KS 67401
71st House District
24th Senate District

March 17, 2024

Thank you! I'm so happy that you are considering expanding Medicaid! I am the mother of a child who benefited from Medicaid. He was severely disabled and the medical bills would have ruined us both financially and emotionally. Medical bills can ruin even our wealthier families who have their own insurance. Families who are struggling often cannot even afford the price of an office visit. I know how this is, too, as our other kids were not on the Medicaid program. We had insurance, but a bout of ear infections could destroy our budget.

In a just society, everyone would have access to good health care. Medicaid expansion would help accomplish this. And it would make insurance premiums lower for everyone. Marketplace premiums are 7% lower in states that expanded Medicaid compared to non-expansion states like Kansas **Here are some other bullet points:**

- **About \$700 million in annual federal funding would flow into the state.**
- **Federal law provides a signing bonus for states that haven't implemented expansion.** This would result in Kansas seeing up to an additional \$450 million in new dollars during the first two years.
- **Medicaid Expansion won't cost Kansans taxpayers a single cent.** The bills being heard next week, HB 2556 and SB 355, are revenue neutral.
- **Addresses the mental health crisis** with improved access to care and medication.
- **Preserves and strengthens rural healthcare.** Rural hospitals face high levels of uncompensated care; 59 of the remaining 102 rural hospitals in Kansas are in danger of closing.
- **Makes Kansas more economically competitive.** Expanding KanCare will not only improve the health of Kansans, but it will also help our state compete with our neighboring states, who have all expanded eligibility for their Medicaid programs.

Please vote for Medicaid Expansion!
Thank You,

Cynthia Thompson
Salina

March 13, 2024

Please expand medicaid into Kansas. We've already lost several hospitals because of clinging to some invisible and indefensible principle or simple stubbornness to accept a program supported by Obama. We need the money, especially for our uncared for poor. Compassion should be our principle, not political conformity.

Clarence Thomson
Overland Park KS 66213

March 13, 2024

Please expand Medicaid for Kansas. It is insane the our state has not done this. We are throwing away hundreds of thousands of federal dollars. All citizens need access to affordable health care. We have much more to gain than we lose!

Thank you,
Pat Thomson

THRIVE ALLEN COUNTY

February 9, 2024

Re: Testimony to support KanCare Expansion

From: Lisse Regehr, CEO, Thrive Allen County

Thrive Allen County is a nonprofit organization located in Iola that focuses on improving health, wellness, recreation, and education conditions in our county. Our vision is that Allen County will become the healthiest rural county in Kansas, and we do this through supporting and encouraging programs, policies and resources that promote access to healthcare, healthy lifestyles, and positive community conversation.

This testimony is submitted in support of expanding Medicaid in the state of Kansas. As an organization that works intensively “on the ground” in rural Southeast Kansas we have seen firsthand the extraordinary need for Medicaid expansion--as well as the opportunity it holds to bolster our county’s healthcare system.

Thrive participates in the Allen County Rural Health Initiative, which consists of all of the safety-net healthcare providers in Allen County, including Allen County Regional Hospital. Uncompensated care is a major concern of our county’s hospital. Medicaid expansion would provide significant new revenues, ensuring the continued financial stability of our hospital. For those concerned about property taxes this means a lower likelihood that the hospital will require infusions of cash from the county’s general fund. Keeping the hospital from becoming a property tax burden for our small businesses and families is an economic imperative of our community.

Beyond the hospital, Thrive’s staff includes certified Navigators, who work with community members from Allen and surrounding counties to navigate the Federal Health Insurance Marketplace. Our staff has worked with thousands of individuals over the past five years to get them health insurance through the Marketplace. From August 2022 – February 2023, our care coordinators enrolled 953 people in Medicaid and another 2,472 people in health insurance through the Marketplace. Care coordinators have reached out to over 3,700 people across Kansas who were at potential risk to losing KanCare coverage due to the Unwinding, and have been able to assist over 250 people with renewing their KanCare or enrolling in Marketplace insurance.

” Many more, who are not included in this 24%, made phone calls to Thrive during the open enrollment periods, where our Navigators pre-screened them and let them know they would not qualify for health insurance because they made too little money. Most of these individuals falling into the Medicaid Gap work at least one job; many more hold two or three jobs. We live in a rural community where wages are lower than metropolitan areas.

Our working class families are doing everything they can to keep their families afloat. They come into Thrive excited that they will finally have health insurance, many for the first time in their adult lives, only to be told that under the current system in Kansas they are too poor to be

able to receive care. The most unfortunate part of this is how many of these people already expect this answer; they have been denied services their whole adult lives and feel it is just their lot in life to be discarded and looked over.

If Medicaid were expanded in the state of Kansas, these individuals would be able to receive preventive care, instead of using the hospital emergency room as their primary care center, which in turn reduces indigent costs at Allen County Regional Hospital. They would be able to receive the prescriptions they need to better function and contribute even more fully to the workforce and our communities.

Thrive believes that expanding Medicaid will better our community's physical and mental health, increase workforce productivity, and create more security for families. We strongly encourage and support the expansion of Medicaid in Kansas.

Sincerely,

Lisse Regehr
President and CEO
Thrive Allen County



February 9, 2024

Re: Testimony to support KanCare Expansion

From: Lisse Regehr, CEO, Thrive Kansas

Thrive Kansas is an organization committed to advocating for programs and systems that promote healthy rural Kansas communities. Our mission is to give a voice to all 105 Kansas counties at the state level. Thrive Kansas leads innovative programs that serve Kansas communities, such as KansasCares, which provides health insurance enrollment assistance for low-income individuals and also connects those in need with vital community resources. The Zero to Thrive coalition educates and advocates for early childhood education services and policies. Thrive Kansas is also the lead organization in the Southeast Kansas Recovery Resources coalition, which offers resources to those struggling with substance misuse such as removing barriers to treatment and offering peer support for those in recovery and reducing stigma through community education.

We believe that many of the individuals served by Thrive Kansas programs would greatly benefit by expanding KanCare to more Kansans who fall in the current coverage gap. As hospitals are forced to close, rural Kansans struggle to find local healthcare providers. As inflation rises, they struggle to afford basic necessities such as food, utilities, and rent. Many rural Kansas parents struggle to find safe and affordable childcare. All of these struggles have a huge economic impact on our state, and we believe that KanCare expansion would help to ease at least one of these burdens for many Kansans; the struggle to access affordable health insurance.

In 2023, Thrive Kansas participated in community conversations on the future of rural health care in Atchison, Dodge City, Colby, Hays, and Pittsburg. The events brought together community members, local and state leaders, businesses, and health care providers. The top issue raised was Medicaid expansion. We heard stories about how strict income limits to qualify for Medicaid, less than \$4.75 an hour for an uninsured single parent with two children, prevent hardworking rural Kansans from getting care. One farmer could not afford to seek treatment for his diabetes and lost his foot. Another community member who was forced to put off care, resulted in a missed cancer diagnoses that had devastating impacts.

Thrive Kansas, and the rural communities we serve, support KanCare expansion and ask you to consider the impact it will have on our state if we do not utilize federal funding to help our most vulnerable community members have access to health insurance, so they can receive the care that they need.

Sincerely,

Lisse Regehr
President and CEO
Thrive Kansas

9 S. Jefferson Avenue | Iola, KS 66749 | 620-365-8128 | info@thriveallencounty.org

March 15, 2024

I am writing to voice my support for the expansion of Medicaid in the State of Kansas. For far too long, hardworking Kansans have fallen into the coverage gap of making too little to afford health insurance, too much to qualify for assistance on the Marketplace and too much to qualify for Medicaid. By expanding Medicaid, our state has the opportunity to provide affordable health insurance to Kansans who need it.

The unnecessary burden of medical debt could be reduced by people being able to have health insurance coverage. This will lessen the likelihood of people seeking emergency care that is often uncompensated to hospitals and takes away money families need for housing, food and other necessities.

As a practicing health care provider, I have seen patients who neglect basic health care services because they don't have insurance or the means to pay. Expanding Medicaid will improve the health of Kansans by increasing access to preventative services and encouraging people to seek care in private offices and clinics instead of waiting until it's an emergency and accessing the healthcare system in an urgent way. This scenario often leaves providers and hospitals with uncompensated care, which is not good for business.

Lisa Thurlow, DDS

Overland Park, KS

March 13, 2024

First and foremost, my thanks to the Kansas House and Senate for your scheduled upcoming hearings on Medicaid expansion.

I'm retired and appreciate the health insurance provided by Medicare so Medicaid expansion won't impact me personally. But I believe it will have significant impact on thousands of my fellow Kansans and our state as a whole.

Being one of only a handful of states which have not taken this step reflects poorly on Kansas. It not only implies a series of economically bad decisions, it also implies a lack of empathy for our citizens who need the help it offers.

In your hearings and as you hopefully are given the chance to vote, please consider your fellow Kansans and vote to expand Medicaid.

Thank you,
Marsha Ticehurst Oliver (R)
17 SW Pepper Tree Ln
Topeka, KS 66611

March 14, 2024

It is obvious that there is overwhelming support for expanding Medicaid in Kansas. Why have the majority of states already done this? That's what their constituents' want. I'm convinced the Kansas legislators don't care to represent their constituents'.

We think it is way past time to get this done. Expanding Medicaid would help a tremendous amount of Kansans. Isn't that who the government represents? IT SHOULD Be.

Leann and Jerry Toews
Goessel, KS



Topeka Independent Living Resource Center

785-233-4572 V/TTY • FAX 785-233-1561 • TOLL FREE 1-800-443-2207
501 SW Jackson Street • Suite 100 • Topeka, KS 66603-3300

**House Health and Human Services Committee
Rep. Brenda Landwehr, Chair**

Testimony in Support of Medicaid Expansion

March 2024

Topeka Independent Living Resource Center

Topeka, KS 66603

785.233.4572

Ami Hyten, Executive Director

ahyten@tilrc.org

The Topeka Independent Living Resource Center (TILRC) is a civil and human rights organization. Our mission is to advocate for justice, equality and essential services for a fully integrated and accessible society for all people with disabilities. TILRC has been providing cross-age, cross-disability advocacy and services for over 40 years to people with disabilities in Shawnee County and across the state of Kansas. Our agency has been particularly interested in and committed to assuring that people who require long term services and supports have access to information, services and supports that offer choices; choices that promote freedom, independent lifestyles and dignity, including the dignity of risk.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information about how people with disabilities would be impacted by expansion of Medicaid in Kansas.

Health insurance coverage for all Kansans IS a disability rights issue.

A substantial number of the people who would benefit from Medicaid expansion are people with disabilities. Currently, Kansans with disabilities can only obtain Medicaid by establishing both that there is a disability, and that the person is incapable of “substantial gainful activity,” essentially that the person is unemployable. Medicaid expansion would allow people who have a disability to secure health insurance coverage and care without having to remove themselves from the workforce.

Advocacy and services provided by and for people with disabilities.

Medicaid expansion has been shown to boost employment, most specifically for people with disabilities. People who have been determined to be disabled by social security may be capable of working and interested in doing so, but not at the peril of losing health insurance coverage. A University of Kansas study showed a direct correlation between increased employment for people with disabilities and Medicaid expansion. (“Medicaid Expansion Boosts Employment”, July 19, 2018. <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/07/180719165043.htm>).

People with disabilities who use Home and Community Based Services rely on the labor of Direct Support Workers, most of whom are paid less than \$10.00/hour, and none of whom have access to employer-provided benefits such as health insurance. As a matter of the freedom and choice for people with disabilities to live in their own homes and communities, extending a benefit that would serve Direct Support Workers is critical to maintaining the workforce we rely on.

Medicaid expansion will benefit disabled people in Kansas; political efforts to make Medicaid expansion come at the cost of other services and supports for people with disabilities perpetuates segregation and discrimination against people with disabilities by forcing us to leave or remain out of the workforce, and by failing to support the direct support workforce we rely on to maintain our places in the community. We support the effort to expand Medicaid with no barriers, no limitations, no premiums, and no delays.

March 13, 2024
Testimony to Support Expansion of KanCare

My name is Jim Torres. As the Manager of Health Insurance Services at a federally qualified health center with multiple clinics in the Kansas City area, I am dedicated to assisting individuals in accessing vital health insurance coverage. Our team serves both Kansas and Missouri residents, affording me a unique perspective on the significant impact of Medicaid expansion.

The difference between the two states is striking. Since Missouri expanded Medicaid, the number of uninsured residents has seen a remarkable decrease. The majority of individuals seeking assistance in securing coverage are Kansans. It is disheartening to witness hardworking individuals, striving to provide for their families, unable to qualify for KanCare.

Many of these individuals are hesitant to seek necessary medical care out of fear of burdening their loved ones with medical debt. One poignant example stands out: a patient came to our clinic to work with me to apply for Medicaid. As we were talking, he disclosed that he had been told that he was at very high risk of having a heart attack or stroke and should go to the emergency room. Aware of his heightened risk for a cardiac event, he delayed seeking emergency care to avoid potential financial strain on his family. Despite my urging, he insisted on completing the Medicaid application first. We did, and I advised him that it was likely he would qualify. He then went to the ER, and he was having a cardiac event.

This man risked his health and his life with his family's future in mind. Because he was a Missouri resident, he qualified for expanded Medicaid coverage.

This story underscores the critical need for Medicaid expansion in Kansas. Countless Kansans face similar difficult decisions, balancing their health needs with financial concerns. Ensuring access to affordable healthcare not only preserves individual well-being but also bolsters economic stability by keeping people healthy and productive.

I know that there are plenty of Kansans making the same type of decision. There's a huge economic benefit in keeping people healthy and working, and keeping families whole.

No matter what side of the state border my neighbors live on, I want them to have the chance to stay healthy, keep working, and take care of their families. Please expand KanCare.

Jim Torres, Manager
Health Insurance Services

March 15, 2024

Dear Chairman and Committee Members,

Thank you for the work you do for the health and well being of Kansans. I encourage you to support the Medicaid Expansion. Every Kansan will ultimately be winners with this action.

150,000 low income Kansans would gain access to medical care.

Healthcare costs for everyone would be reduced.

About \$700 million in annual federal funding would flow into the state.

Preserves and strengthens rural healthcare. Rural hospitals face high levels of uncompensated care; 59 of the remaining 102 rural hospitals across Kansas could close.

My husband and I recently traveled through Western Kansas for a short getaway. When we returned, I mentioned to him that I did not see one hospital. I appreciate the value of Western Kansans and want them to have better access to medical services.

Availability of medical care is essential to improving a standard of living.

Please support the Medicaid Expansion on behalf of all Kansans.

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Deborah Turner, retired KS teacher

Lenexa

March 16, 2024

Hello,

In 2022 and 2023, I helped my disabled elderly family member try to obtain medical and mental health services. He was living in a broken down RV on under \$13,000 a year. His income was too high, according to the State, and he was approved for Kancare with a \$7500 annual deductible/spend down. How is that even humane? He needed thousands of dollars in medical, dental, and mental health services, but would never be able to pay the exorbitant deductible. The waiting list for "medically needy" services was 3 yrs. I know he is one of thousands of Kansans who paid taxes from a good paying job all his life and then a mental and physical disability took that away. Kansas turned his back on him. Please expand Medicaid now!

Stacie Turner
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