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**Senate Public Health & Welfare Committee
Proponent for SB 45
February 13, 2023**

Chair Gossage and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of SB 45. My name is Tanya Dorf Brunner, and I am the Executive Director of Oral Health Kansas, Inc. We are the statewide advocacy organization dedicated to promoting the importance of lifelong dental health by shaping policy and educating the public, so Kansans know that all mouths matter.

Kansas is the only state with statutory language that refers to a specific year for federal poverty level for CHIP. Other programs referenced in Kansas statute do not tie the federal poverty level to a specific year. This statute is the exception, and it is time to fix it. For more than a dozen years this error in the statute has resulted in countless children losing their eligibility for CHIP.

According to a National Institutes of Health report, **CHIP enrollees did better across nearly all oral health measures than children who are uninsured.** This report finds that "enrolling eligible uninsured children in CHIP led to improvements in their access to preventive dental care, as well as reductions in their unmet dental care needs."¹

CHIP provides necessary preventive, restorative, and live-saving dental care for Kansas children. The current law in Kansas leads to eligible Kansas children being found ineligible for CHIP, even though federal regulations say they are eligible. Fixing the error in statute will ensure all children who are eligible for CHIP have access to that care. We urge the committee to pass SB 45.

I am happy to provide additional information or answer committee questions.

Sincerely,



Tanya Dorf Brunner
Executive Director
tdorf@oralhealthkansas.org

¹ National Institutes of Health, "[How Well Is CHIP Addressing Oral Health Care Needs and Access for Children?](#)" 2015