



March 3, 2025

To: Will Carpenter, Chair
House Committee on Health and Human Services

From: Brenda Sharpe, President and CEO
REACH Healthcare Foundation

Subject: House Bill 2386: Income Eligibility Fix for Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

Dear Chair Carpenter and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill 2386, which would make a correction in the current Kansas statute that ties eligibility for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to outdated, year-specific language. Kansas is the only state in the country that ties CHIP eligibility to a specific year's federal poverty level (FPL), in this case 2008.

The REACH Healthcare Foundation supports legislators' efforts to update the statute to adapt eligibility to annual FPL adjustments, allowing qualified children to secure the healthcare and mental health services they need.

CHIP covers routine doctor's visits, prescriptions and treatment in hospitals. Importantly, CHIP programs cover dental care, which often is not included in private coverage plans or has to be purchased separately. CHIP also covers outpatient and inpatient mental health services, helping children and young people receive treatment and assistance with issues that can interfere with their education, social interactions, and ability to thrive in and out of school.

The REACH Foundation's core mission is centered around ensuring that children and adults have access to quality, affordable and timely health care like that provided under CHIP. Since our start in 2004, REACH has invested nearly \$85 million in health, mental health and oral health services, health education, health care navigation and enrollment assistance to strengthen the health care safety net, and close coverage gaps that leave families without affordable insurance options.

HB 2386 will provide a permanent fix for an unintended error in 2008 when the Kansas Legislature last update CHIP eligibility levels. We appreciate the Committee's readiness to review this needed change and take action that will help our state's children for years to come.

Brenda R. Sharpe, President and CEO

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