



February 5th, 2026

To: Senator Beverly Gossage, Chair
Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare

From: Nathan Madden, Ph.D., Director of Health Policy
REACH Healthcare Foundation

Subject: Senate Bill 271: Income Eligibility Fix for Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

Dear Chair Gossage and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on Senate Bill (SB) 271, 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a correction in the current Kansas statute that ties eligibility for the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to outdated, year-specific language.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. Indeed, SB 271 contains the same language as the version passed in the House in 2025.

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 must 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 \$92 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.

SB 271 will provide a permanent fix for an unintended error in 2008 when the Kansas Legislature last updated CHIP eligibility levels. We appreciate the Committee’s readiness to align this with already-passed House legislation from last year and take action that will help our state’s children for years to come.

Nathan Madden, Ph.D., Director of Health Policy
Contact: 913-322-6033 | nate@reachhealth.org