



Testimony to the Special Committee on Medicaid Expansion in Support of KanCare Expansion

From Tania Hewett-Mader, Policy Associate

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Dear Committee Members:

The mission of the Health Forward Foundation (formerly Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City) is to provide leadership, advocacy and resources to eliminate barriers and promote quality health for the uninsured and underserved. Since our inception fifteen years ago, Health Forward Foundation has dedicated over \$270 million toward health in our community. Through our funding of the safety net health system, we support nonprofits as they provide services that will produce better health, better care, and lower costs. Ensuring that low-income Kansans have access to insurance coverage is a key part of this work.

Expanding KanCare would improve health and financial security for 150,000 Kansans and increase access to preventive care.

Lack of health insurance is a serious detriment to overall wellbeing – those who are uninsured are more likely to delay necessary care, forego preventive care, receive late-stage diagnoses, and have unmanaged chronic illnesses. Expanding KanCare will provide health coverage to individuals and families who fall into the coverage gap – Kansans who work for a living but either earn too much to qualify for the current program, or too little to get financial help to buy a private plan. Expansion increases access to primary and preventive care, reduces the cost of uncompensated care, and enhances continuity of coverage, which improves health and reduces costs. Stated plainly, expanding KanCare saves lives.

Expanding KanCare will create thousands of jobs and return hundreds of millions of tax dollars to our state every year.

Expanding KanCare will inject hundreds of millions of dollars into the Kansas economy and create more than 3,800 new jobs. Under federal law, at least 90% of the costs of expanding KanCare will be funded by the federal government. If both Kansas and Missouri expand their Medicaid programs, approximately \$325 million additional dollars would flow into our six-county service area *each year* in support of health access for those most in need.

Expanding KanCare will protect hospitals and communities.

All hospitals are at risk – not expanding KanCare could limit access to health care in rural and urban communities. One-third of the rural hospitals in Kansas – more than 30 hospitals – are considered financially vulnerable. Expanding KanCare could mean the difference between staying open or closing their doors.

We respectfully urge the committee to move this issue forward and expand KanCare for the benefit of the entire state of Kansas.