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Testimony in Support of Medicaid Expansion

Special Committee on Medicaid Expansion

Chuck Weber, Executive Director, Kansas Catholic Conference

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Chairperson Landwehr, Vice Chair Suellentrop and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on this profoundly important issue.

The Catholic desire of authentic affordable healthcare for all people, regardless of socioeconomic status is inspired by the example of Jesus, the Great Physician. He longs to take people from where they are and bring them to where they need to be. He encounters afflictions of body, mind or spirit. Moved with compassion, *He heals the whole person.*

OVERVIEW

Today in Kansas, hospital emergency rooms are all-too-often the primary access point of care for the unemployed and working poor. Hospitals are legally compelled to serve anyone who enters their doors. This paradigm contributes to inefficient care delivery. Hospitals provide uncompensated care worth millions of dollars, resulting in higher costs for all patients.

Even for those with health insurance—including government-sponsored plans—skyrocketing deductibles can lead to crushing debt.

The complex solution now under legislative consideration in Kansas—government funded Medicaid Expansion—is itself in need of healing and prompts a number of grave scientific and ethical reservations.

The horrific Kansas Supreme Court decision in *Hodes & Nauser v. Schmidt*, established a right to virtually unlimited abortion. This ruling raises the specter of publicly funded surgical and chemical abortion. The medical community, not an unfettered and unregulated abortion industry, best provides authentic healthcare for vulnerable women and babies.

MOST REVEREND JOHN B. BRUNGARDT, D.D.
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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON
MEDICAID EXPANSION

DATE 11/12-13/19
ATTACHMENT 46-1

The broad, radical language of *Hodes & Nauser v. Schmidt* emphasizing “bodily autonomy” also appears to be a legal gateway for publicly funded physician-assisted suicide or experimental, irreversible gender transition procedures including amputations and/or hormone “therapies.”

Our concerns extend beyond the nexus of Medicaid Expansion and the *Hodes & Nauser v. Schmidt* decision.

Medicaid Expansion will not significantly improve healthcare for 4500+ Kansans living with intellectual or physical disabilities, many on a multi-year waiting list. Due to low reimbursements rates, this highly vulnerable population already struggles to find doctors and other healthcare providers. Their situation may well deteriorate under Medicaid Expansion.

LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Clearly, the challenge before us is momentous. Absent any clear alternatives, our support for Medicaid Expansion is contingent upon resolution of the following grave reservations:

- Medicaid Expansion in Kansas must explicitly exclude expanded abortion services beyond current practices as covered expenses.
- In order for this exclusion to be effective, Kansas must adopt a state constitutional amendment excluding abortion as a “natural right.”
- Medicaid Expansion must include religious and professional conscience protections for healthcare institutions and individuals.

The Catholic Bishops of Kansas commend those in the Legislature seeking effective, scientifically and ethically sound solutions.

Thank you again for the opportunity to voice our comments.



Chuck Weber
Executive Director, Kansas Catholic Conference