



TO: House Health and Human Services

FROM: Brian Williams, President and CEO

DATE: March 1, 2024

RE: Proponent HB 2556

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony to the committee.

Labette County Medical Center, d/b/a Labette Health supports Medicaid Expansion in the state of Kansas from a humanitarian perspective as well as an economic perspective. Based upon our calendar year Medicare Cost Report our Total unreimbursed and uncompensated care cost was \$9,881,741 with the cost of uncompensated care included in this total being \$3,989,942.

Based upon the most recent estimates available, if Medicaid were expanded in Kansas, Labette Health would receive a potential benefit of between \$1,306,542 and \$2,613,084, which still does not cover the total cost of uncompensated care leaving an over \$2,000,000 deficit for a small rural hospital to figure out how they can at least break-even from operations. Hospitals are capital intensive operations that require resources to sustain themselves and replace expensive equipment and technology. At some point, a hospital running its operations at a deficit runs the risk of impacting patient safety and quality in a negative way, which is not something any of us want.

The impacts from COVID-19, inflation, and workforce shortages have had a disparate impact on many rural hospitals and communities. We live and serve in population areas that have declining population densities, fewer resources, and poorer access to healthcare than many other areas of the country. Equitable access to healthcare is an important and fundamental humanitarian responsibility for all of us. In my opinion, to assist those less fortunate than many of us is what we should do and desire to do.

Medicaid expansion would potentially go a long way to helping us sustain high quality, safe, and humanitarian healthcare in Kansas. Thank you in advance for being willing to address this issue and more importantly having the courage to make a humanitarian and economic decision rather than a political one.

March 16, 2024

Dear Committee Chair and Committee Members

Subject: Medicaid Expansion

Date: March 16, 2024

I am strongly in support of Medicaid Expansion and encourage to vote appropriately. Among the benefits of expansion:

- Hundreds of millions of dollars that leave the State would remain for the benefits of Kansans.
- Medical costs would be reduced for everyone.
- Approximately 150,000 Kansans who don't receive medical care would now receive it.
- Thousands of additional jobs in the health care industry would be created.'
- The overall health of Kansans, including mental health, would be dramatically improved.
- Many rural hospitals that are struggling financially would remain open to provide healthcare.

Caring for all Kansans should guide all of your legislative actions. Consequently, I urge you to vote "Yes" for Medicaid Expansion.

Dr. Les Lampe
Shawnee, Kansas

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Healthcare should be available to All, regardless of their economic circumstances.

- The Alliance for a Healthy Kansas has published their research showing that the 150,000 Kansans who would become eligible under expanded KanCare (Medicaid) earn ***too much*** to qualify for KanCare today, but ***not enough*** to qualify for support to buy private insurance. Medicaid expansion would help to remedy that fact.
- With Medicaid expansion, healthcare costs are reduced for everyone. When a low-wage Kansan can't get health coverage, that means more Emergency Room bills, which increases uncompensated bills for hospitals therefore increasing costs for all.
- By expanding KanCare, tens of thousands of people will be able to afford insurance coverage. That protects them from medical debt which strengthens the economy for all.
- Expanding KanCare would strengthen and sustain the rural health care system and help insure rural Kansans get the health care they need while giving a boost to their economies.

According to the American Cancer Society, a poll of registered voters in Kansas shows 72% in favor of expanding Medicaid. ***Our legislators need to follow the will of the people.***

Chris Miller, Greg Jarrett, Karen and Rod Landrum, Parsons, KS.

February 9, 2024

To the Kansas Legislature,

As an RN living in Kansas City area, Leawood Kansas to be exact, I am dismayed by the Kansas Republican legislators holding back on Medicaid expansion. The lack of Medicaid expansion has caused hospitals to close, especially rural hospitals. All hospitals in the state are in financial difficulties because of your inability to vote to expand Medicaid. Please, expand Medicaid in Kansas so no more hospitals close and those who exist do not have to cut back on more services because of your lack of Medicaid expansion.

Mary Grace Lanese
Leawood,KS.

March 15, 2024

I am the parent of an adult child with a diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia. I have experienced first hand the struggle to find good care and services that he needs to live successfully in the community. It is heart breaking and unfortunately too often ends in tragedy when access breaks down. Mental illness does not just impact one person. It affects the family, the community, our economy, public safety, and how we see ourselves as compassionate and caring human beings.

Medicaid expansion addresses the mental health crises in our state with improved access to care and medication. I urge you to support Medicaid expansion.

Jan Langley

**Testimony of Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health
to House Health and Human Services Committee
Written Proponent of HB 2556 | March 20, 2024**

Chairwoman Landwehr and members of the committee:

Thank you for allowing Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health (LDCPH) to provide written testimony in support of HB 2556, which would expand medical assistance eligibility and enact the cutting healthcare costs for all Kansans act. This bill would expand KanCare eligibility in Kansas to 138% of the federal poverty level. LDCPH serves Lawrence and Douglas County residents and works to create abundant and equitable opportunities for good health.

As of 2024, over 150,000 Kansans sit in a coverage gap for healthcare coverage.ⁱ This coverage gap includes individuals and families that do not qualify for KanCare under current state regulations, but also do not have employer sponsored healthcare coverage, making healthcare unnecessarily expensive. There is a misconception that those in the coverage gap are not working. However, according to data obtained from Alliance for Healthy Kansas, more than two-thirds of those in the current coverage gap work or are in working families, including children and adults.ⁱⁱ

According to data from Alliance for Health Kansas, Kansas has lost over seven billion dollars in tax revenue since 2014 due to not expanding Medicaid eligibility.ⁱⁱⁱ Furthermore, over 58% of Kansas' hospitals risk closure due to costs.^{iv} Medicaid expansion could help offset that burden.^v LDCPH encourages you to consider the fiscal ramifications of not passing Medicaid expansion.

The Lawrence City Commission passed Resolution #7510 in November 2023, which supports the expansion of KanCare in Kansas. The resolution notes that over 3,040+ Douglas County residents sit in the "coverage gap".^{vi} We applaud efforts to find a solution to this issue and encourage you to consider passing Medicaid expansion during this legislative session.

Thank you,



Jonathan Smith, MPH
Executive Director
Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health



200 Maine, Suite B
Lawrence, KS 66044-1396

OFFICE: 785.843.3060 FAX: 785.843.3161
CLINIC: 785.843.0721 FAX: 785.843.2930



Lawrence · Douglas County

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ⁱ *Expanding KanCare - Alliance for a Healthy Kansas 2022*. (2023, January 3). Alliance for a Healthy Kansas 2022. <https://expandkancare.com/initiative/expanding-kancare-2/>

ⁱⁱ KanCare Expansion Advocacy Toolkit. (2022). In *Alliance for Healthy Kansas*. Retrieved February 12, 2024, from <https://expandkancare.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/2022-2023-general-toolkit-Aug2023.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Alliance for a Healthy Kansas. (2024). *Medicaid expansion in Kansas*. <https://expandkancare.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/FINAL-2024-Briefing-Book.pdf>

^{iv} Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research. (n.d.). RURAL HOSPITALS AT RISK OF CLOSING. In *Rural Hospitals at Risk of Closing*. https://governor.kansas.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Rural_Hospitals_at_Risk_of_Closing.pdf

^v Kansas Hospital Association. (2023). *KanCare Expansion Generates Economic Benefits*. <https://www.khanet.org/CriticalIssues/KanCareExpansion/KanCareExpansionResources/d151275.aspx?type=view>

^{vi} Lawrence, Kansas, Resolution 7510



200 Maine, Suite B
Lawrence, KS 66044-1396

OFFICE: 785.843.3060 FAX: 785.843.3161
CLINIC: 785.843.0721 FAX: 785.843.2930

**HB 2556
SB 355
SUPPORT**

Dear Committee Members,

I want to be sure you realize that many, many farmers in Kansas are living on the edge. The suicide rate for farmers is very high. “The CDC found suicide deaths increased by 5 percent in 2021 and another 2.6 percent in 2022”.

“According to the National Rural Health Association, the suicide rate among farmers is three-and-a-half times higher than the general population.” <https://www.kwch.com/2023/08/15/farmers-not-immune-suicide-rates-increase-nationwide/>.

Many of these farmers, including some of my family members, do not have access to health care. Many of them do not meet the guidelines for the Marketplace insurance so they suffer at home with injuries to the body and to the mind.

Even those that do, now lack access because hospitals and doctors are closing or leaving Kansas for places where they can be reimbursed for the care they take of our people. This makes it hard on everyone in rural Kansas to see a doctor or have a surgery.

Expanding Medicaid will allow these farmers and their families to get the care they deserve in the Kansas breadbasket, as they feed the country and all of us here in this beautiful state. It will allow our hospitals and doctors to treat those who are uninsured and fall in the coverage gap.

Now is your chance to save so many lives, increase Kansas’ prosperity, productivity and encourage people to move home after leaving because they cannot get health insurance as an entrepreneur or small business owner. Farmers don’t have the ability to just move.

Young people leave this state every day because they cannot afford insurance and all of the states surrounding us have now Expanded Medicaid.

Please don’t let this be another example of Kansas always trailing the rest of the nation like we do in everything else. Yes, I am a native Kansan and I have seen this my entire 65 years. More than 3/4 of Kansans want to see Medicaid Expanded.

Kansas will thank you for supporting these bills and voting YES on both!

Thank you!

Lori Lawrence
321 N. Lorraine Ave.
Wichita 67214
316-516-3632

To: Members of the Kansas State Legislature
From: LMH Health Board of Trustees
Re: Testimony in support of Medicaid Expansion

In 1921, a woman named Elizabeth Watkins helped fund a hospital in eastern Kansas. In presenting her gift to Lawrence Memorial Hospital, she made one stipulation,

"No person shall be excluded on account of race, or physical, social or financial condition."

Now, 103 years later, through the expansion of Medicaid benefits, we have an opportunity to further support our [abiding commitment](#) to provide healthcare to every person who needs it. More than 4,000 residents of the Greater Douglas County community would finally have access to healthcare coverage.

In January, several of us traveled to Topeka and heard Senate President Ty Masterson tell a room full of hospital folks why that won't work. He presented us with what he called "facts on Medicaid," but we had no opportunity to respond with facts of our own that morning.

It is imperative that those on the frontlines of healthcare in Kansas are heard. We ask you to consider these facts in response to the issues raised by the Senate President on January 16.

Senator Masterson: *It is proven [in states that have adopted expansion] that Medicaid expansion doesn't save rural hospitals.*

Response: No one program will "save" rural hospitals that are struggling to remain viable in the current delivery system and in the face of shifting population demographics. However, no one solution will help more than Medicaid expansion. The expansion of Medicaid is especially important for rural hospitals where the concentration of lower income households is higher and access to physicians and hospitals is reduced.

Senator Masterson: *It has been proven that it doesn't help reduce the numbers in your ERs.*

Response: It is difficult to determine the impact Medicaid expansion will have on the emergency room alone. However, it is a fact that people with healthcare insurance like Medicaid are more likely to access primary care and medical surgical specialties they need. This in turn avoids the use of emergency departments for late interventions and chronic conditions that could have been taken care of more effectively and affordably through earlier intervention. And we also know when emergency care is required, patients with Medicaid have coverage for the costs, thereby reducing the hospital's burden for uncompensated care.

Senator Masterson: *It displaces other Medicaid users—those that need it most.*

Response: Perhaps this is in reference to limits (in some cases) on the number of Medicaid patients that can be treated by a clinic-based physician. The fact is, in Kansas, the majority of physicians are employed by hospitals. In these models, physicians are not limited on the number of Medicaid patients they can serve. Regardless, the idea that displacement would occur is a hollow argument based on assumptions about the care required by individuals who currently don't have the opportunity to seek regular healthcare.

Forty states have come to the decision that Medicaid expansion is better for their residents, their businesses, and the quality of life. No states have reversed their participation in the Medicaid expansion program.

In closing, we have an opportunity to improve the health of all Kansans without any impact to the state's general fund because Kansas hospitals will pay the State's share of matching funds.

Your vote is critical.

Each of us is willing to answer any questions you may have about how our healthcare system is funded and the challenges it faces financially. We will fight to serve the needs of all who need healthcare. We hope you join us in that effort.

The LMH Health Board of Trustees:

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Russ Johnson, President and CEO, Ex-Officio Member of the Board of Trustees

To: House Health and Human Services Committee
From: League of Kansas Municipalities
Date: March 20, 2024
RE: HB 2556 Proponent Testimony – Written-only

Chair and members of the committee, the League of Kansas Municipalities appreciates the opportunity to offer testimony in support of House Bill 2556.

This legislation would provide necessary avenues for the citizens of Kansas to better access needed medical care, help expand important mental health services and enable hospitals to obtain additional revenue and provide critical services. The failure to expand Medicaid has resulted in an increased financial burden on municipalities felt in small and large cities, alike.

What affects the health care community affects our cities. The availability of adequate healthcare for those who reside and work in cities in the rural areas of our state is vital. Where accessibility to healthcare is lacking, people are less likely to seek homes and employment.

Much of the discussion on this issue has related to hospitals, and that impact is of concern. However, there are other significant gaps in health care coverage HB 2556 would address that are having a major impact on cities. For example, many of Kansas' homeless population is dealing with mental health issues. Many cities have implemented programs to assist local centers to address the issue, but HB 2556 provides mechanisms that allow these programs to better help long-term those on the streets suffering a mental health crisis. If this help can be provided, it reduces the homeless population, which improves our cities and state.

There are other examples where HB 2556 aids, ranging from helping low-income working families to those with disabilities currently not receiving the full coverage they need. Helping these populations makes cities better, Kansas more attractive to live in as a state and takes financial burdens off the state and cities.

As it relates to hospitals, the delivery of medicine has changed across the United States. In 2023, the Center for Healthcare Quality & Payment Reform reported that 57% of rural hospitals in Kansas are in danger of closing and an additional 26% are at immediate risk of closing. And since, that report, the municipally owned hospital in Herington closed. Many independent hospitals originally were owned by the city, and cities continue to contribute financially to sustain their community's hospital. Since 2015, ten hospitals have closed in Kansas.

When the local hospital closes, it causes a ripple effect on the city's economy. In most cases, hospital staff will leave the community resulting in an immediate decrease of the property and sales tax base. Closure of a hospital in a community can reduce per capita income and

can increase unemployment. Additionally, the closure of a hospital makes it more difficult to attract new business to the community. Companies will not locate to areas without adequate access to healthcare. To put this in perspective, due to a lack of expansion, the city hospital in Parsons loses \$3 million per year. The city hospital in Coffeyville loses \$2 million per year. These large financial losses have forced municipalities to financially supplement local hospitals in various ways in order to mitigate the economic fallout to their communities.

One concern we hear from our member cities relates to EMS and hospital funding. As such, our members have directed us, through our Statement of Municipal Policy, to support programs that encourage access to water. One of our top legislative policies states:

We support expansion of Medicaid to allow hospitals and emergency medical services (EMS) access to federal funding, helping cities maintain and provide critical services for citizens. Absent Medicaid expansion, additional state funding needs to be made available to rural hospitals to retain businesses and employees and sustain the health and lives of Kansans.

Kansas residents are paying federal taxes to help other states expand Medicaid while at the same time shouldering an increased local tax burden to maintain essential healthcare services in their communities. This increased burden is unsustainable for municipalities and taxpayers. Municipalities are faced with a choice between continuing to supplement the local hospital so the community can maintain vital healthcare services crucial to sustaining the local economy or cutting such aid for the sake of providing other essential governmental services also crucial to sustaining the local economy. This choice can potentially be avoided by supporting HB 2556.

The League supports HB 2556 and asks this Committee to recommend it favorable passage.

Date: March 20, 2024

From: Sister Victoria Perkins, SCL, Director of Leavenworth Attainable Housing

RE: HB 2556 / SB 355 Proponent testimony

Dear Chairperson and members of the committee,

Leavenworth Attainable Housing provides supportive permanent housing to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in Leavenworth. I am Sister Vickie Perkins, SCL and I am currently the Director of Leavenworth Attainable Housing and prior to that I was the director of Leavenworth Interfaith Community of Hope, which is a night shelter, day shelter and outreach to those living in poverty.

In these positions I have witnessed so many people who have no medical care because Kansas has not expanded Medicaid. There have been many times that I have driven someone to the Emergency Room because of a need for treatment and since they have no medical home the Emergency Room is the only option. That is a very expensive option, but the only one open to them. This also leaves them with an enormous bill which follows them throughout their life and becomes a major hurdle to breaking the cycle of poverty.

I have also watched a mother who lives in one of our houses struggle with renal failure. She needs dialysis on a regular basis and has no insurance. She had to get a job that included medical coverage so that she could receive the treatment she needed. The job she holds is much more than she can handle, but she continues to keep it because of the medical insurance. If she was covered by Medicaid she could get a job that would not take as much out of her and allow her to live a life with some time for her five children.

All of our residents' work, but most of them have no medical coverage. They struggle to provide for their families and are working to be productive members of their community, but they are not getting any medical treatment for themselves because Medicaid is not available to them. This causes a great deal of stress, which does not help their medical situation.

There is a long-range aspect to this because if people are not getting good health care then when they age things will be much more serious and expensive and all of us will be paying for that.

Undoubtedly, you have heard all of the reasons that Medicaid expansion is important and effects so many people. I simply wanted to let you know of some of the individual stories of real people who are suffering because of the lack of the expansion of Medicaid.

Thank you for taking time to listen to my concerns.

Submitted by Sister Vickie Perkins, SCL
Leavenworth Attainable Housing
Leavenworth, KS



To: House Committee on Health and Human Services
From: Stephanie Meyer, President & CEO, Leawood Chamber of Commerce
Date: March 20, 2024

As representatives of the business community in Leawood and the surrounding Johnson County area, we are writing to express our support for the expansion of Medicaid in our state. As a Chamber of Commerce, we recognize the vital role that access to healthcare plays in ensuring the well-being of our workforce and the overall economic prosperity of our community.

Expanding KanCare eligibility would provide much-needed healthcare coverage for thousands of working but uninsured individuals in our state, including nearly 7,500 in Johnson County. Access to affordable healthcare is a fundamental component of a thriving economy. When individuals are healthy and have access to preventive care, they are more productive in the workplace and less likely to miss work due to illness.

Furthermore, Medicaid expansion would have significant positive impacts on our local economy. By extending coverage to low-income individuals, we can reduce the burden of uncompensated care on our hospitals and healthcare providers. This, in turn, helps to stabilize healthcare costs for businesses and taxpayers alike.

A healthier workforce also translates into lower healthcare costs for employers, allowing them to invest more resources into growing their businesses and creating jobs.

We believe that expanding Medicaid is a smart economic decision. It will improve the health and well-being of our citizens, strengthen our workforce, and boost our local economy. We urge you to support Medicaid expansion and take this important step towards building a healthier, more prosperous future for all residents of our state.

13451 Briar Street, Suite 201
Leawood, Kansas 66209
(913) 498-1514
leawoodchamber.org

February 11, 2024

Dear Kansas Legislature:

Expanding KanCare is critical! Thousands of Kansans are caught in the gap without health care and every person has a right to health care.

Shamefully, 40 out of 50 states have Medicaid and Kansas is one of the ones that does not have it. Health affects every aspect of one's life and is critical for our children.

Not only is health care not available in many of our rural areas and smaller hospitals are closing but the rising costs of healthcare affect all healthcare. When healthcare is not available for people, they are forced to go to emergency rooms in crisis, which raises costs for all hospitals.

It is not right that those of you who have healthcare in Topeka, also have the power to prevent others from adequate care by your vote. Please do the right thing and support programs that help your constituents.

Thank you! You and your ministry of service are in my prayers!

Sincerely,
Sister Mary Pat Lenahan, SCL, Ph.D



The Historic Lackman-Thompson Estate

11180 Lackman Road

Lenexa, KS 66219-1236

913.888.1414

DATE: March 20, 2024

TO: Rep. Brenda Landwehr, Chair, Health & Human Services
Members, House Health & Human Services Committee

BY: Ashley Sherard, CEO
Lenexa Chamber of Commerce

RE: HB 2556 - Expanding Income-Based Medicaid Eligibility

Most health care coverage in the U.S. is provided through an employer. Businesses *want* to offer coverage because they recognize its benefits in improving workforce wellness, increasing workplace attendance and productivity, and providing a key attraction and retention tool in a tight labor market.

But health care premiums have been – and continue to be – a very real financial challenge for employers, especially smaller employers. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation’s nationwide 2023 Employer Health Benefits Survey, the average annual premium for employer-sponsored health insurance in 2023 was \$8,435 for single coverage and \$23,968 for family coverage, both a 7% increase from the previous year. Unfortunately, sizeable annual premium increases are not uncommon. To help manage these increases, many workers are being asked to contribute more towards premiums, co-pays, and deductibles. If coverage costs continue to rise, more businesses and workers are at risk of being priced out of the market.

There are many factors challenging our health care facilities and contributing to ever higher health care system costs, and no single solution will “fix” the issue – it will require considering a number of approaches. Increasing low state Medicaid reimbursement rates, as has been proposed by lawmakers, is one important step that will help financially shore up health care facilities and increase access to care by encouraging additional providers to accept Medicaid patients.

In addition, the impact of uncompensated care on health care system costs is significant. Health care for low-income uninsured individuals is generally both expensive – more likely to be costly emergency care and for more serious or chronic conditions caused by delaying care – and unreimbursed. The expense of this uncompensated care is being broadly passed on to others in the health care system through higher costs, primarily employers who provide most of the country’s health care coverage. That cost is substantial -- in FY 2022, one of our area hospital systems provided \$135.7 million in uncompensated care, while for another area system it was \$30 million. The figure statewide is \$1.2 billion. Reducing the amount of uncompensated care and its impact on health care system costs must be considered, and a Kansas solution to expanding income-based Medicaid coverage is one way to achieve that important goal along with the other benefits that come from increased access to health care.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input on this important issue for Kansas businesses and workers.



March 20, 2024

Members of the Kansas Legislature

Re: The Cutting Healthcare Costs for All Kansans Act (SB 355/HB 2556)

Dear Members:

Thank you for considering The Cutting Healthcare Costs for All Kansans Act, which would provide health insurance for more than 150,000 Kansans living in the coverage gap.

The mission of The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) is to cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease, and myeloma and improve the quality of life for the more than 1.3 million people in the United States living with blood cancer, and their families.

Medicaid expansion is one of the most important policies a state can adopt to protect its citizens' and economy's well-being. LLS urges your committee to amend this legislation to remove work reporting requirement and premium provisions that could disrupt coverage access for enrollees, and to pass a clean proposal as quickly as possible to make this life-saving coverage a reality for Kansans at last.

The evidence is clear that Medicaid expansion has important health benefits. Research suggests that states that expanded Medicaid experienced a 6.4% increase in early cancer detection compared to pre-expansion levels.¹ In Kentucky, research links Medicaid expansion to earlier cancer detection and improved survival rates.² Recent research has shown that Medicaid expansion is linked to reductions in overall cancer mortality, at least in part because patients will be able to receive a diagnosis and treatment at an earlier stage of their cancer's progress.³

Requiring individuals enrolled in Medicaid to comply with extensive paperwork and administrative burdens undermines these health benefits and will likely result in individuals losing Medicaid coverage. This holds true despite promises of categorical exemptions from work requirements.

¹ Aparna Soni, Kosali Simon, John Cawley, and Lindsay Sabik, "Effect of Medicaid Expansions of 2014 on Overall and Early-Stage Cancer Diagnoses," American Journal of Public Health, February 2018.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5846584/>

² Tong Gan et al, "Impact of the Affordable Care Act on Colorectal Cancer Screening, Incidence, and Survival in Kentucky", Journal of the American College of Surgeons, April 2019.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30802505/>

³ Justin Michael Barnes, Kimberly J. Johnson, Nosayaba Osazuwa-Peters, and Fumiko Chino, "Changes in cancer mortality rates after Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act and the role of changes in stage at diagnosis", Journal of Clinical Oncology, September 2022.

https://ascopubs.org/doi/10.1200/JCO.2022.40.28_suppl.074

This effect has already been seen in other states that passed similar measures. In Arkansas, more than 18,000 people — nearly 1 in 4 of those subject to work requirements — lost coverage over the course of just seven months. In New Hampshire, almost 17,000 people, about 40% of those subject to work requirements, would have lost coverage had state policymakers not put the policy on hold. Some 80,000 Michiganders — nearly 1 in 3 of those subject to work requirements — were in danger of losing coverage had a court not stopped the policy.⁴

Forcing patients to prove the validity of their condition or their qualification for an exemption will create burdensome administrative barriers that stand between Kansans and the care they need. Missing a deadline or the mishandling of a single form could result in a loss of coverage or access to medications lasting months — time that is not a luxury for those battling serious, chronic, or life-threatening conditions.

Additionally, it is important to note that most people on Medicaid who can work already do so.⁵ A 2018 study of Michigan’s Medicaid found that the overwhelming majority of enrollees were already employed.⁶ Notably, of the 27.6% of unemployed enrollees in that study, many said their ability to work was impacted by other health conditions, such as chronic physical or mental health conditions, underscoring the critical need for access to care.

Requiring premium payments will make it harder for individuals to obtain or keep healthcare coverage, and should also be removed from this legislation.⁷ The inclusion of premiums can also exacerbate existing disparities in access to healthcare, as they have been shown to lead to lower enrollments for Black enrollees and lower-income enrollees, compared to their white and higher-income counterparts, respectively.⁸ Premiums can be a significant barrier for individuals accessing care, and removing them increases equitable access to care for all enrollees.

⁴ Jennifer Wagner, Jessica Schubel, “States’ Experiences Confirm Harmful Effects of Medicaid Work Requirements,” Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, November 2020, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/health/states-experiences-confirm-harmful-effects-of-medicaid-work-requirements>

⁵ Rachel Garfield, Robin Rudowitz, and Anthony Damico, “Understanding the Intersection of Medicaid and Work,” Kaiser Family Foundation, February 2017, <http://kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/understanding-the-intersection-of-medicaid-and-work/>

⁶ Renuka Tipirneni, Susan D. Goold, John Z. Ayanian. “Employment Status and Health Characteristics of Adults With Expanded Medicaid Coverage in Michigan.” JAMA Intern Med. December 11, 2017. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed

⁷ Samantha Artiga, Petry Ubri, and Julia Zur, “The Effects of Premiums and Cost Sharing on Low-Income Populations: Updated Review of Research Findings,” Kaiser Family Foundation, June 2017. <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/the-effects-of-premiums-and-cost-sharing-on-low-income-populations-updated-review-of-research-findings/>

⁸ University of Wisconsin-Madison Institute for Research on Poverty, “Evaluation of Wisconsin’s BadgerCare Plus Health Coverage for Parents & Caretaker Adults and for Childless Adults 2014 Waiver Provisions.” August 2019. <https://www.irp.wisc.edu/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/BC-2014-Waiver-Provisions-Final-Report-08302019.pdf>

LLS hopes your committee will amend this legislation as outlined in our letter and welcomes the opportunity to answer any questions you might have. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dana Bacon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dana Bacon
Senior Director, State Government Affairs
The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
dana.bacon@lls.org
612.308.0479

Cities of Merriam, Mission, Prairie Village, and Roeland Park
Testimony in Support of HB 2556
March 20, 2024

Chair Landwehr & Members of the House Health & Human Services Committee:

The Northeast Johnson County cities of Prairie Village, Mission, Merriam, and Roeland Park support Medicaid expansion to provide equitable access to health care for the most vulnerable. House Bill 2556 provides expanded access to services, funded by federal funds in the beginning, and will serve as an economic benefit statewide and strengthen rural health care.

We believe House Bill 2556 is a bipartisan effort to address healthcare concerns for people working who are currently ineligible for affordable public health care benefits. Medicaid can be expanded to add 150,000 members while continuing to grow and retain an active workforce. HB 2556 will generate revenue, not cost the state, and the inclusion of a work requirement is a valuable step.

Without Medicaid expansion, we all share the cost for the uninsured accessing some services while at the same time the cost of uncompensated care increases. Expansion is a solution that will increase jobs and incentivize more providers, as well as stabilize rural and urban hospitals. The enhanced federal funding Kansas will receive covers the cost of expansion for several years. Expansion will actually free up funding at all levels that can be used for infrastructure, public schools, other programs and services or a tax cut. The economics of expansion benefit the state as well.

Some in the Legislature are not listening to the voices from across Kansas who support Medicaid expansion. The breadth and depth of support is reflected in polls, in our communities, and our healthcare systems. Because of the enhanced federal aid, the expanded access to services for 150,000 Kansans has innumerable benefits that forty-plus of our nation's other states have recognized, and not rejected. Because of a small group whose perspective does not reflect that of a majority of Kansans, we remain one of only ten states who are failing to address the needs of our constituents, and our healthcare systems, particularly in rural areas.

The citizens of our communities and our elected councils support Medicaid expansion. We encourage the Legislature to advance House Bill 2556 to the full House to allow our elected representatives the opportunity to vote on expansion. A fair and open debate will result in passage of the bill. That outcome is clear.

Stuart J. Little, Ph.D.
Little Government Relations
stuartjlittle@mac.com

LiveWell Northwest Kansas is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the health and well-being of the rural communities in Northwest Kansas. We have been unwavering in our commitment to this cause for over four decades, working collaboratively with smaller organizations and causes that share our vision. As a central coordinating body, we leverage our leadership and strategic partnerships to facilitate collaborations and plan and organize local and regional programs, services, and initiatives. We focus on advocating for changes in public policy and promoting evidence-based, community-informed solutions.

We strongly support the expansion of Medicaid in Kansas. Below are our reasons:

1. **Healthcare for everyone:** Imagine a single parent trying to raise three children with a single income. Despite earning an hourly rate of \$5 more than the minimum wage in Kansas, these parents cannot obtain affordable health coverage. Medicaid expansion could be the solution that will finally allow them to receive the care they need without financial stress. It is about taking care of each other and ensuring that everyone in Kansas has the opportunity to thrive.
2. **Revitalizing Rural Economies:** Small towns thrive when their residents are healthy and financially secure. By expanding Medicaid, we are not just talking about healthcare; we are talking about investing in the vitality of rural Kansas. It means more jobs at local clinics, stability for rural hospitals, and more dollars circulating in our small-town economies.
3. **Staying Healthy, Together:** I want to live in the Kansas where everyone can access preventive care and where chronic conditions are managed before they become crises. That is the promise of Medicaid expansion – a healthier, happier state where people can focus on living their best lives without worrying about healthcare bills piling up.
4. **Mental Health Matters:** Medicaid expansion is essential for mental health as it helps people facing significant life challenges. It is about recognizing the importance of mental health, just like physical health, and ensuring everyone has access to treatment, regardless of their financial status. Through Medicaid expansion, we can show individuals struggling with mental illness that they matter. It demonstrates our commitment to their mental well-being and provides support every step of the way. It is not just about policies, but it is about compassion, empathy, and building a society where everyone has equal opportunities to lead fulfilling lives without the burden of untreated mental illness.
5. **Bridging the Rural Healthcare Gap:** Rural areas face unique healthcare challenges, from provider shortages to limited access to specialized care. Medicaid expansion is a step towards bridging that gap, ensuring that rural Kansans have the same access to quality healthcare as their urban counterparts.

In summary, we believe that Medicaid expansion is critical, as it improves healthcare access, promotes economic stability, emphasizes preventive and mental healthcare, addresses health

disparities, and maximizes federal funding opportunities. It is a crucial step towards ensuring that all Kansans can access affordable and quality healthcare services regardless of where they live.



Legislative Testimony
Sarah Karns, Director
LiveWell Shawnee County
Written Proponent Testimony for Kansas Medicaid Expansion

Kansas Policymakers,

LiveWell Shawnee County is proud to lend their support for the expansion of Medicaid, giving 150,000 Kansans access to affordable healthcare. We are a coalition that works to mobilize the community in acting on health priorities so that policy, environment, and practice influences a culture shift toward health and wellness for everyone in Shawnee County. Placing the community at the center of our work with health equity as a polar star is why we exist. We imagine, as those representing Kansans and their wellbeing, you can support such a mission. Given the middle-of-the-road approach that HB2556 and SB355 offers to providing health care to Kansans, it only makes sense to pass this legislation essential to improving the quality of life for all members of our community.

Medicaid expansion:

- Cuts health care costs for Kansas families, hospitals, businesses, and jails.
- Will not cost Kansas taxpayers a single cent, it is revenue-neutral.
- It is not a partisan issue. Nearly 80% of Kansans, regardless of party affiliation, support Medicaid expansion.
- Lowers costs for everyone. When one Kansan doesn't have health insurance, other Kansans end up paying for it.
- Grows our economy and would create nearly 23,000 jobs helping with our healthcare worker shortage.
- Is affordable for our state. There is no additional cost for Kansas taxpayers.
- Improves public safety by providing relief for county jails that have been burdened with providing care for admitted inmates without expansion.

These are a few of the common-sense reasons to pass this non-partisan legislation. Thank you for your time and consideration. The coalition is confident that with your support HB2556 and SB355, we can create a healthier and more equitable Kansas.

Sincerely,

Sarah Karns
LiveWell Shawnee County Director

To: Members of the Kansas Legislature

Fr: Beth Llewellyn

Lawrence, Kansas

Re: Medicaid Expansion

My career has been in healthcare; including hospitals, a national association, a clinic for the medically indigent (Lawrence, Kansas) and public health. This is a critical moment for our State and my hometown, which is served by a single hospital system. We must expand Medicaid.

- It matters for the working poor who are left out from having an insurance plan that eases access to primary care and reduces very real financial stress. A system dependent upon charitable care creates social disparities, especially for the vast majority who work and are struggling to make ends meet. This is one bill we can eliminate at no cost or burden to the State. There is no increased tax burden. And we communicate to the work force at the margins that you belong.
- It matters for our hospitals and providers whose mission mandates care for everyone regardless of payment. This expansion is the difference to producing a bottom line to sustain their services in their communities rather than contract.
- It matters to small businesses that do not provide benefits and are dependent upon a workforce that does not have the money to purchase their own insurance, even with the marketplace – this Medicaid Expansion will fill a gap.
- It matters to the vast majority of Kansas who have said over and over again that they favor Medicaid Expansion. If citizens were the legislature, it would be a veto proof majority.
- It matters to those of us that still have hope that bi-partisan policy can happen to best serve Kansans.

We are beyond the point of shallow excuses and debate, this is the time to simply let the voice of the people and the financial benefactors who fund the State obligation, rule the day. Please take Medicaid Expansion to the floor and vote Yes.

Thank You

February 9, 2024

My Name is Mary M Long, I live in Southeast Kansas.

Obamacare has never helped me because I have always been below poverty level. Every year I apply and always denied just from the fine.

I am now 63 years old with many health issues that cannot be addressed, some hospitals have helped me to a certain point with charity. Then I have to stop medical treatment once the bills get too high.

I am currently working with Freeman Health System to get approved for a procedure that is much needed, I have blood in my bowl and need a colonoscopy as well as an endoscopy for issues inside my tummy.

I have issues with my lungs and just had a biopsy done which in turn is very costly.

Freeman Hospital is doing their best to help me, we even tried getting me on my Medicare, so far, I have been denied because I am not 65.

DCF office in Pittsburg Kansas is now fighting for me to get on KanCare so I can get the treatments I need.

I had to stop working because the job I was doing and have done for 20 years is taking a toll on my muscles, back, knees, hands, joints and so on. I had no choice but to start drawing my Social Security because they claim I am no longer eligible for disability.

Meanwhile, Kansas Senate is still holding up the expansion of KanCare for people like me. I am at a loss as to where to go from here because I do not want to move out of Kansas and at my age and my health the thought of moving to a state that will allow me to have Medicaid is just too overwhelming.

I should have to give up my home of 27 years because of my health and no help from Kansas or Social Security. I love Kansas but I am not loving the way they hold back Medicaid for people who need it. It is not like I am taking advantage of the system; I just want to be healthy again.

You would think that this State would want all their citizens healthy, at this point I feel as if they just don't care except for those who fight for us trying to get it on the table.

This should go to vote by the citizens of Kansas and not the Senate that continuously holds it up with no reason as to why.

Feeling discouraged and defeated at this moment, and fear for my health.

Thank you in advance for hearing me out.

Mary M Long

March 4, 2024

Hello,

First I want to apologize for missing the February deadline. While I feel so passionate about this issue, I am still less than a year away from the loss of my grandfather, father, and brother. I am experiencing deep grief and it's hard to talk about what medical neglect my brother endured.

With that being said, my background is in healthcare and I'm ashamed of his treatment by the healthcare system in his last 3 months of life. I have a degree in Kinesiology and Nursing. I have worked in rehab hospitals, medical surgical units and surgical floors throughout nursing school. Once completing my BSN I worked in the NICU and am currently working at an outpatient surgery center.

Back to the issue at hand, Medicaid Expansion, My brother Austin Heath Lorson was hospitalized in both March and May of 2023 at Stormont Vail Hospital in Topeka, Kansas. He was unemployed at the time and uninsured. He lost his job earlier that year due to his rapid decline in health and hasn't worked more than one job that provided insurance, but has been employed SINCE 18 years of age. He was 33 in 2023 and died on May 27, 2023.

To say that I was extremely disappointed by his treatment in this healthcare system is an understatement. The social work department handling his approval in assistance programs fell incredibly short of both ethical and competent care. I am currently in the process of writing to the hospital's CEO and head of social work to report the negligence of his care.

During his March hospitalization I had requested to speak with social workers multiple times due to financial and social barriers receiving his medications upon discharge, including crucial antibiotics. I was told that only one social worker works the entire hospital on weekends, no only a neglectful response but standard of practice if this is actually accurate. There was absolutely NO mention of resources offered to help with his substance abuse or rehabilitation programs whatsoever before his discharge in March of 2023. I know this because since social work refused to meet with me I asked the nurse to read me the most recent social work note where it stated in paraphrased terms by the nurse "Communicated with patient that he cannot have 3 vices (referring to his alcohol addiction, weed and tobacco consumption), man you really need to give up one".... he died 2 months later from hepatorenal syndrome.

Due to his loss of work from his March hospitalization and low socioeconomic status, my brother qualified and was approved for the Hospital's SCMS Health Access Program. I worked tirelessly to submit all the needed documents for approval, yet the billing department continued to send him **OUTRAGEOUS and incorrect bills**, causing him undue anxiety and stress where he would then self medicate with alcohol.

When I contacted the billing department to communicate with them about his approval into the program and to inquire about financial assistance. He was **belittled, bullied and talked down to**. It took me being on a 3 way call with him and the billing department to finally make any progress. The **ONLY** reason that this conversation was remotely productive is because I am a healthcare professional and understand medical jargon. It wasn't until after I explained I was his sister and acting as a medical advocate that she provided the necessary information to settle the confusion and correct errors in his billing statements.

5 short weeks later, Austin was found minimally responsive in his home by my oldest brother who is also a nurse. His vitals were scary - blood sugar of 10 and pulse of 200 bpm. He was in critical care for a week with every single line, tube, and monitor imaginable keeping him alive. Regardless of the high level of nursing care he was receiving, you can imagine how traumatic it is to see your loved one in that critical state - even as a once ICU nurse myself.

Where his care quickly turned neglectful was when he was **“healthy” enough** to be transferred to the step down unit in the hospital. Again, we were met with barriers and complete lack of respect or care for my brother at a basic level of human decency. He was isolated, uninsured and neglected compared to the other patients on that floor. I suspect subconscious bias, that because he was young and poor that his choices brought on these consequences.. I am not stating that he did not contribute to his poor health outcomes, but why are healthcare professionals neglecting a patient in need which is **ABUSE**. What shocks me is that these “healthcare professionals” can have this type of bias when they have the education to KNOW BETTER. **Substance abuse and addiction are diseases that stem from generational trauma and predisposition just like physical illness**

Our family had a meeting with hospital palliative care to discuss both lifelong and end of life care options. The doctors were appeasing our hopes of recovery, but the palliative care APRN/case coordinator noted that we as a family had "unrealistic expectations" for the recovery of our beloved, 33 year old brother.

I contacted several people in attempts to get his application prioritized since his health was declining so rapidly including Governor Laura Kelly's Director of Constituent Services Dawn Knudtson, Senator Moran's office, Eileen Jewell at KDHE, and Misti, a Stormont Vail administrator.

On May 25, 2023 his status changed to DNR (do not resuscitate) and he was put on comfort care measures at Stormont to ease his pain. His healthcare team anticipated his passing in the next 24-48 hours. Stormont Vail Hospital completely gave up and stopped working towards his transfer to hospice even though that was what our family wanted for our brother. On the 25th, I called Midland Hospice House and basically begged them to take my brother so he didn't have to die in the hospital and they agreed. This is after weeks of Stormont employees telling me he wasn't eligible because of his alcoholism (uninformed nurses, but nonetheless still hospital employees).

Midland Hospice house agreed to take him because of charity donations and he was transferred in the evening of **May, 26th 2023** and on the morning of **May 27th, 2023** my brother **peacefully passed away**.

His KanCare application was approved shortly after his death.

I know this is probably a lengthy explanation of what occurred, but expansion of Medicaid is extremely important - people are dying without adequate support and care in this current healthcare system.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sophie Lorson

March 16, 2024

I am writing to ask you to support Medicaid expansion in Kansas.

Thank you for accepting testimonies. I believe it is absolutely shameful that Kansas is still among the very few states that have not already expanded Medicaid. You have the opportunity to correct that. It will cost us nothing, Kansas taxpayers will not pay a single penny. Instead expanding Medicaid will bring in about \$700 million dollars of federal funds to our state annually. The current bonus will bring another \$450 million dollars in the first two years. No Kansas family would leave money on the table, Kansas lawmakers cannot afford to leave money on the table either. We're practical people, and you must be too. Expanding Medicaid in Kansas is the practical, responsible decision.

There are 150,000 Kansans struggling because of very low income who would gain access to medical care when we expand Medicaid. It's obscene to neglect our most vulnerable neighbors when we can so easily help them so much. Lives are on the line. Expanding Medicaid is the responsible decision.

Kansans can be protected from crushing medical debt. Expanding Medicaid is the practical, reasonable decision.

By expanding KanCare tens of thousands of Kansans will be able to afford health insurance coverage. Every Kansan deserved to be cared for when they're sick or injured. By expanding Medicaid healthcare costs for all Kansans will be reduced. Right now emergency rooms treat Kansans who have no means to pay for the care they need, raising the costs of health care for everyone. As workers gain insurance through expansion this uncompensated care will decline, reducing rates for all Kansans. Helping the least of us is always the right thing for all of us. Expanding Medicaid is the responsible, practical decision for Kansas.

Marketplace premiums are 7% lower in states that have expanded Medicaid compared to non-expansion states (like Kansas). Expanding Medicaid is the responsible, practical decision.

We have a mental health crisis we need to address. We see it in our schools and communities. Teachers like me feel the impact of this deadly, costly mental health crisis. We all see it in the work of our law enforcement officers. The world saw it on our streets at the Chiefs Super Bowl Parade. Please, expand Medicaid to help address the mental health crisis with improved access to care and medication for Kansans in need. Expanding Medicaid in Kansas is the long overdue, responsible decision.

Medicaid Expansion won't cost Kansans taxpayers a single cent. The bills being heard next week, HB 2556 and SB 355 deserve your action. Be a responsible, reasonable, practical voice for the people of Kansas. Expand Medicaid in Kansas.

Brenda Ludlow
Olathe, Kansas

March 15, 2024

Dear Chairman and committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Medicaid Expansion in Kansas.

Medical debt is a national problem that also affects Kansans, especially as we are one of the few states who have not chosen to expand Medicaid. We should take advantage of these federal dollars for the benefit of ALL of our citizens - improving the mental health and financial well-being of our residents. I work in healthcare and the finances of cancer care are top of mind for almost all of my patients; it is cruel that a person is forced to worry about debt instead of focusing on recovering from what can be a devastating disease.

Please support your constituents and vote to Expand Medicaid for Kansans.

Sincerely,
Margaret Lund
Prairie Village, KS

March 16, 2024

Julie Lyon, Director of Economic Development

Proponent Written-Only Testimony

SB 355 and HB 2556

Members of the Committee:

My name is Julie Lyon, and I am writing to you today to offer my support for the expansion of Medicaid in the state of Kansas. As a resident, owner of multiple small businesses, former Mayor, and Economic Developer in this state, all in RURAL Kansas, I have witnessed firsthand the struggles faced by individuals and families who lack access to affordable healthcare. I have been following both sides of Medicaid Expansion for the past few years and feel with the current proposal, it only makes sense to pass this legislation now.

By expanding Medicaid, you have the opportunity to extend healthcare coverage to over one hundred thousand hardworking Kansans who currently fall into the coverage gap. These are individuals who earn too much to qualify for traditional Medicaid but earn too little to afford private insurance. They are our neighbors, our friends, and our fellow citizens who deserve access to the care they need to thrive. I encounter so many people that are working multiple jobs to make ends meet, but do not have insurance because they are limited to 30 hours a week by an employer who is strategically avoiding insurance coverage, not because the employee is lazy. When we have people who do not have coverage and cannot afford medical bills, it costs the rest of us to pay the consequences. With the interest of all hard working Kansans, it only makes sense to pass this legislation now.

This year, expanding Medicaid makes economic sense for our state. Studies have shown that states that have expanded Medicaid have experienced significant savings in healthcare costs, as well as boosts to their economies through job creation and increased consumer spending. By drawing down federal funds to cover the costs of expansion, Kansas has the opportunity to strengthen its healthcare infrastructure and improve the overall well-being of its residents. With a revenue neutral plan, it only makes sense to pass this legislation now.

But perhaps most importantly, expanding Medicaid is the right thing to do morally and ethically. While studies show that almost 80% of Kansans are in support of Medicaid Expansion, it seems that this is the first time our elected officials will finally get to take actions on it. It seems that this should not be a partisan issue, and I encourage you to not let it remain one. I understand the divisiveness and although I am a fairly conservative Republican, I have worried that I will be unfairly labeled as a "Liberal", a "RINO", or even terminated from my job because of my stance. I do however believe in doing what is right and standing for what I believe in, regardless of the consequences. However, I do not want my efforts to be in vain, as it makes sense to pass this legislation now.

In closing, I urge you to support Medicaid expansion in Kansas. Let us stand on the side of compassion, fairness, and logic. Let us ensure that every Kansan has access to the healthcare they need and deserve. Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julie Lyon". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Julie Lyon
Director of Economic Development
620-474-9537

March 17, 2024

This is a "know brainer"it is a win- win for everyone.Come on Kansas get er done.
It is the right thing to do.

William Mace
Overland Park, Kansas

I am writing as a resident of McPherson County and as a member of the Outreach Team at the Church of the Brethren in McPherson to share our concern for the 150,000 Kansans, including nearly 500 people here in McPherson County, who currently do not have access to affordable health insurance. They are mostly persons who are employed but they make too much to qualify for KanCare, meaning they fall into the health insurance coverage gap.

When low-wage Kansans can't get health insurance it leads to more ER bills, hospitals that have uncompensated care, putting smaller hospitals at risk of closure, and to people with untreated physical and mental health needs. Kansas has the highest percentage of rural hospital at risk of closure in the nation,

There is a solution to this problem which is for Kansas to expand the KanCare program raising the income eligibility levels. Since 2014, 40 states plus the District of Columbia have expanded Medicaid, including all the states that border Kansas. None of those 40 states have changed their mind and rescinded the expansion.

Medicaid expansion is not a political issue as over 80% of Kansans believe that everyone in the state should be able to get affordable health insurance, and a recent survey showed that a majority of Republicans, Democrats, and independents approve of expanding Medicaid. Nationwide both Democratic and Republican Governors and Legislators have passed expansion. This is a moral issue that should concern us all, no matter our political persuasion.

This issue has directly affected our church community as a much-loved member of our congregation recently passed away. Despite being employed, she fell into the coverage gap, leaving her without affordable health insurance. She consequently delayed preventative care which could have led to an earlier diagnosis of the condition which ultimately took her life. She is just one example of our fellow Kansans who have been negatively impacted by our failure to enact Medicaid expansion.

It is time to take action to expand Medicaid to close the coverage gap and see that all Kansans have access to health care coverage, our hospitals have less uncompensated care, and no one has to live with untreated physical or mental health needs.

Nancy Magnall
1212 S. Ash Street
McPherson, KS 67460
319-296-8307



Wednesday, March 20, 2024

Michael Poppa
Executive Director
contact@mainstream.vote

House Committee on Health and Human Services
Representative Brenda Landwehr, Chair

Proponent Testimony, Written-only

HB2556 – Expanding medical assistance eligibility and enacting the cutting healthcare costs for all Kansans act.

Chair Landwehr and Committeemembers,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB2556. Fortunately, I am able to coordinate hand-delivery of the required five (5) hardcopies of this testimony. However, that is not the case with every Kansans wishing to participate in the democratic process. Those voices, unfortunately, will go unheard. Respectfully, I urge you to update the conferee guidelines and remove the unnecessary mandate for hardcopies. As elected officials, it is expected that you would champion the highest level of public participation.

For much of the last decade, Mainstream has been testifying and educating in favor of Medicaid expansion. We affirm that all Kansans have the right to access quality affordable healthcare without discrimination based on socioeconomic status or geography. We uphold this right of Kansans to health, safety, and peace of mind in their personal lives, in their civic communities, and in wider society.

Medicaid expansion is not a partisan issue. It is a practical solution to help healthcare consumers, providers and communities by closing the coverage gap, reducing uncompensated care costs and bringing desperately needed federal dollars into the Kansas economy. Forty states have adopted Medicaid expansion, including all of Kansas' neighboring states. It's time for us to join them.

Medicaid expansion will improve health outcomes for the Kansas children and adults who would receive care and also for every resident of Kansas. Independent studies have shown that closing the Medicaid gap in Kansas would create thousands of jobs, protect rural communities, and help to control escalating insurance costs that threaten health care for every Kansan.

HB2556 expands Medicaid, lowers health care costs, and gives 150,000 Kansans access to affordable health care.

★ MAINSTREAM

- It won't cost Kansas taxpayers a single cent. It's revenue-neutral, so Kansas' surplus can go toward tax cuts, public schools, and infrastructure.
- It's a commonsense, middle-of-the-road approach to providing health care to working Kansans.
 - It builds on previous compromises to include a work requirement that grows our workforce but prevents administrative barriers to healthcare.
 - Legislators who continue to stand in the way of expansion show that they're simply thinking about politics – not about their constituents.
- It protects rural hospitals, supporting jobs and health care in rural communities.
- It cuts health care costs for Kansas families, hospitals, businesses, and jails.
- 8 rural hospitals have closed while we've waited for expansion, devastating surrounding businesses and costing communities thousands of jobs.

HB2556 is a carefully crafted bipartisan compromise that has found support from both sides of the issues.

- Work requirements - This helps to keep our workforce strong while providing appropriate exceptions:
 - As a condition for eligibility, an individual applying for Medicaid under expansion must submit proof of work or community engagement at the time of entry. Then that individual must be able to provide proof at the time of renewal, 12 months later, to remain eligible.
 - There will be exceptions for students, veterans, caregivers, and people with medical conditions, and others.
 - This will be less administratively burdensome than other work requirements, which often require proof of employment on a monthly basis.
- Fiscally responsible – This will be revenue-neutral – there will be no additional cost for Kansas taxpayers. We can definitely afford it.
- Comprehensive support for rural healthcare – Medicaid expansion isn't a silver bullet, it's part of a larger solution. This proposal would also create a group to chart a path forward for rural healthcare.
- Improves public safety – This provides relief for county jails that have been burdened with providing care for admitted inmates without expansion.

It is time to get it done. This bipartisan proposal shows that Governor Kelly is serious about working across the aisle to get Medicaid expanded. However, a few extremists in the Kansas legislature are still blocking Kansas children and families from accessing affordable quality healthcare. It is time to stop listening to partisan ideologues and pass Medicaid expansion for your constituents.

On behalf of Mainstream and our statewide network of bipartisan advocates, I respectfully urge you to support HB2556.

March 14, 2024

Hello-I can't contribute much or provide any details however I did work with the Medicaid program for a number of years as a caseworker. The Medicaid program in its present form or at least the form I worked with was a program that could be inaccessible to many. Resource limits, disability requirements, deductibles, provider issues and such would exclude many from insured health care.

Often, virtually always, those excluded would not have access to private insurance.

Unfortunately, there were many who put off a checkup or did not follow up on a strange cough or unusual symptom until it was too late. Others had their condition worsen to the point that they did become permanently disabled. Timely healthcare would have allowed many to overcome an illness and become productive again and for others, timely healthcare would have allowed them to go on living.

The failure to expand Medicaid has allowed this situation to continue and should be remedied as soon as possible.

Thank You.
Mike Marian

March 15, 2024

Hello,

My name is Isidro Marino. I'm a 24-year-old first-generation Mexican-American, and I reside in Garden City, Kansas. I work full time at the Tyson Fresh Meats packing plant while finishing my bachelors degree in social work via online at Fort Hays State University.

I'm an active member of my community, where I love to advocate for community members on a broad spectrum of issues such as immigration, voting rights, environmental justice, labor rights and most importantly for this issue - healthcare expansion.

Last year, my father was diagnosed with Parkinsons Disease which was a tough realization for my entire family. My fathers diagnosis worried not only himself, but the whole family because he already has Type 2 Diabetes, High blood pressure and works a fulltime job feeding cows on a feed lot 6 days a week. I'd like to say my father, and our family has it easier compared to others health and along with it, financial burden, because my father has health insurance. My father sometimes pays up to \$1000 a monthly solely on medications, treatments and appointments. I thank god I am able to provide some money to help with my fathers ever-growing financial burden because of healthcare costs. As a family we all pitch in to help one way or another but it shouldn't be like that. I feel guilty that the healthcare financial burden is much worse for other families in my hometown of Garden City. I know for a fact that hundreds to thousands of families in Southwest Kansas are struggling to receive adequate healthcare and especially receive medical coverage. I largely blame the Kansas state legislature for failing to pass Medicaid expansion a longtime ago, which would have already helped the financial burden of healthcare costs for thousands of Kansans and ensure that we dont leave our residents abandoned. therefore, I am here writing to you to urgently pass. Medicaid expansion! It is crucial that Medicaid expansion be past this legislative session. It is imperative that Medicaid expansion passes this legislative session as thousands of canons cannot wait any longer because the consequences for those people are dire. Again I plead that you hear the calls from the thousands of people who are waiting for you all to do your job.

Thank you,

Isidro Marino (he/him/his his)
Garden City, Kansas

March 14, 2024

Testimony the House Health and Human Services Committee

NAME: **Leslie D. Mark**

TITLE: **Kansas Citizen / Voter**

EMAIL ADDRESS: **ldmark61@gmail.com**

BILL NUMBER: **HB2556, *An Act expanding medical assistance eligibility and enacting the cutting healthcare costs for all Kansans.***

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: **Proponent**

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: **Written Only**

Chair Landwehr & Members of the Committee,

No doubt you have been well prepared with a slew of testimony for Wednesday's hearing. I know the preponderance favors passage of this act. More than 80% of the country has already decided to expand affordable healthcare to their poorest citizens. At least 150,000 Kansans will obtain access to affordable health care under this law

I have volunteered for a decade plus pushing boulders uphill, since the passage of the federal ACA, to help fellow Kansans strengthen our health delivery networks and secure our communities — particularly in rural counties. Keep in mind that HB2556

- builds on previous compromises to include a work requirement, as Governor Kelly agrees, enabling our workforce to grow while preventing administrivia from barring access;
- won't cost Kansas taxpayers a single cent, since it is revenue-neutral. Today's budget surplus can go toward balanced tax cuts, public schools, and expanding infrastructure;
- protects rural hospitals as well as thousands of jobs and access to health care in rural communities (8 rural hospitals have closed while we've waited for expansion);
- cuts health care costs for Kansas families, hospitals, businesses, and jails;
- is a commonsense, middle-of-the-road approach to providing health care to working Kansans.

Looking forward to robust and expansive debate this week and ultimately passage of HB2556.

Leslie D. Mark

Mission Hills,

HD 25 / Sen 7

March 14, 2024

As a retired health professional, occupational therapist, I understand the need of good health for overall well being.

Individuals have the need to get the care they require to lead a satisfactory life. Also, good health positively impacts a person's ability to lead a productive life.

We are occupational beings doing our best with purposeful, meaningful activities with which to engage. Poor health derails this.

The need for expansion of Medicaid is paramount to the individuals in Kansas.

Alison Marsh

March 14, 2024

Kansas has for many years failed to pass a bill to expand Medicaid to 150,000 needy Kansans. Many Kansas citizens have needlessly died as a result. It has been confirmed from independent sources that expanding Medicaid will not cost the state of Kansas a cent. The Federal government covers 90% of the cost and the rest will be more that recovered from the economic benefits derived from Medicaid Expansion.

Numerous Kansas hospitals have closed and others are in danger of closing. Medicaid expansion would provide the funds to keep these rural hospitals open for Kansans that depend on them. The argument that there would not be enough doctors if more people had access to healthcare is probably the very lamest of arguments. If anything it would attract more medical professionals as funds would be available to cover their costs.

There are more reasons to pass Medicaid Expansion now and a main one is around 80% of Kansans support Medicaid Expansion. The legislature needs to quit playing political games with access to health care for their constituents and pass Medicaid Expansion now!

Mel Marsh
Mission, KS
816-582-6618

March 13, 2024

I am a Kansas resident.

I support expanding Medicaid in Kansas.

Please do so.

Mrs Marshall
Leavenworth

March 14, 2024

From the great State of Kansas, This is a unhealthy place to be, not safer than many places in the Union. I don't feel that my home State, KS, cares about its own residence, the neighbors we live next, or the children who have been suffering because adults are not respecting the basics of humanity. What are those basics; Food, Water, Shelter, Care for the whole body. We cannot care for one hair and let the body die and expect the hair to grow. If we cannot figure out how to take care of the PEOPLE here, what is the point of our Government even existing. If the answer is a few, that will not last and WE will not allow our loved ones to suffer for the FEW. Hope that our representees act on the people will for the sake of the State.

IMHO [USMC active duty 2005-2015, American 1986-now]

VR

Raymond

He/Them

760-805-5708

March 17, 2024

Dear Chairman and committee members,

I appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony in support of Medicaid expansion in Kansas. Expanding access to health is an issue that is critical to address right now for uninsured Kansans, Kansas hospitals, and for Kansas as a whole.

For the 150,000 Kansans who do not have health insurance because they do not qualify under the existing rules, expansion will provide them protection from significant financial risk. It will also help ensure they get care for health issues (including behavioral health issues) before they become critical and more expensive to treat. For Kansas hospitals struggling to stay afloat because are having to write off uncompensated care, expansion would help ensure their doors stay open. We know this is especially critical for the rural communities in Kansas where the medical choices are already limited. For Kansans in general, Medicaid expansion will mean health care savings overall.

I am privileged to have had health care insurance through my employer but I have friends who have not had that benefit. They have had to make difficult health care choices, often delaying care.

I sincerely hope you will vote for Medicaid expansion that will bring so many benefits to Kansas. Thank you for your careful consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Donna Martin
Leawood, KS

March 17, 2024

Alliance for a Healthy Kansas, Committee Chairs, and members:

My husband Dr. Philip Martin (internist) and I are voters in Bonner Springs Kansas. We urge you to support the Medicaid Expansion bill by Gov. Laura Kelly that ensures health care for all Kansas.

We could give you numerous reasons to vote for medicaid expansion but I'm pretty sure you've heard them all. My husband and I have been involved in health care for most of our adult lives and yet we do not understand why Kansas doesn't NOT expand medicaid. Oklahoma got smart, why not Kansas?

I know we are talking about millions of dollars in federal funds that Kansas continues to deny accepting but we wonder where our portion of paid federal taxes that should go for medicaid expansion goes?

Prevention is the low cost, life saving step that is currently NOT available to all Kansans. Please know that your decision on this bill could not only save a Kansas life, save money by preventing a health crisis but also support our battered healthcare system in rural Kansas.

Lastly, remember **the majority of Kansans support the expansion of Medicaid.** You represent us, can you at least listen to your constituents?

Please vote to support access to healthcare for both urban and rural Kansans. The vibrancy and well-being of our state depends on it.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Philip E Martin and Susan J Martin
210 Lake Forest
Bonner Springs, KS
913 636 3529

To members of the Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare and the House Committee on Health and Human Services,

Please allow a discussion and vote for KanCare Expansion in Kansas.

I'm a retired medical social worker and have seen first hand the number of people who are working hard to make ends meet, but cannot afford their own health care or health care insurance. Many people I saw were working more than one job. They were contract staff for a roofing or cleaning company, day care providers, house cleaners or care providers for my Mom.

I grew up on a farm in central Kansas and we employed part-time farm help who I know did not have health insurance. I'm also concerned about the hospital in Abilene, where I was born. Eleven rural hospitals have closed in Kansas since 2005. Rural communities need our support to keep health care affordable and accessible.

Studies show health outcomes for rural residents in states that have expanded Medicaid are markedly better than states that have not expanded. The Center for Healthcare Quality and Payment Reform reports 59 of Kansas rural hospitals are in jeopardy of closing - 59 communities are at risk of having even more limited health care. Expansion dollars covering a portion of the cost for those currently without health insurance would be a significant financial boost to our rural hospitals.

Expansion will help approximately 150,000 people across our state have access to health care. I'm tired of my federal tax dollars going to 40 other states (and all that surround KS) when we have such a need in Kansas. Studies from the 40 states also show when more low-income families have better care for their physical and mental health needs, there are significant drops in numbers of children in foster care and mental health calls for police response.

There are so many logical reasons to accept the federal government's 90% coverage for medicaid expansion, it's hard to mention just a few in a letter to your committee, but allowing time for a good discussion and a vote on the House and Senate floor is well over-due. Your constituents are hopeful you'll listen to our concerns and expectations for expansion to finally happen this year.

Respectfully,

Cathy Matlack
2140 West 89th Terrace
Leawood, KS 66206

March 14, 2024

Medicaid expansion in KS impacts me both personally and professionally.

My younger brother worked for the same small business for three years. The business was too small to offer an employee health plan, and he could not afford the high premiums to cover his family on the healthcare marketplace. This is one of the reasons for his recent move to Colorado. They are now covered, and my brother can get long overdue checkups and preventative care.

I work for the foster care system, and I see many children come into care and reenter into care after reintegration because parents are not able to afford healthcare and mental healthcare for themselves. As you know, parental mental health conditions and substance use disorders are major risk factors for children entering foster care. Expanding Medicaid would help more parents to be covered and increase the availability of badly needed MH and SUD services in KS.

Thank you,

April Matthews
Lawrence, KS

March 15, 2024

I support Medicaid Expansion because everyone deserves access to affordable health insurance. My husband and I were small business owners in the state of Kansas from 2008-2012 (we owned a brick-and-mortar retail business) and he currently owns another small business in Kansas and it's been both challenging and very expensive for us to get health insurance for our family of six. We've made it work, but I know there are many people in the state of Kansas who cannot make it work with their yearly income. It's absurd that a single parent with two children that makes more than ~\$9,800 would not qualify for Medicaid.

Expanding Medicaid for Kansans makes economic sense on many levels -- reducing healthcare costs for everyone, ensuring uniform access for all Kansans no matter their race or where they live, and helping Kansas be economically competitive with surrounding states who offer expanded Medicaid coverage.

Please get this done for our state and our residents!

--Kristen McClain

March 13, 2024

HB 2556 and SB 355 expands Medicaid and lowers health care

costs. • It gives **150,000 Kansans** access to affordable health care.

• It **won't cost Kansas taxpayers a single cent.** It's revenue-neutral, so Kansas' surplus can go toward tax cuts, public schools, and infrastructure.

• It's a **commonsense, middle-of-the-road** approach to providing health care to working Kansans.

o It builds on previous compromises to include a work requirement that grows our workforce but prevents administrative barriers to healthcare.

o Legislators who continue to stand in the way of expansion show that they're simply thinking about politics – not about their constituents.

• It **protects rural hospitals**, supporting jobs and health care in rural communities. • It **cuts health care costs** for Kansas families, hospitals, businesses, and jails. • **8 rural hospitals have closed while we've waited for expansion**, devastating surrounding businesses and costing communities thousands of jobs.

This is not a partisan issue. **Nearly 80% of Kansans – regardless of party – support Medicaid expansion.** Only a few extremists in the legislature stand in the way of expansion.

Medicaid Expansion Lowers Costs for Everyone

• When one Kansan doesn't have health insurance, other Kansans end up paying for it. If an uninsured Kansan goes to the emergency room and can't pay for care, the hospital must raise prices for other patients to cover the costs.

• Expanding Medicaid could also **reduce taxes.** Without expansion in Kansas, counties and hospital districts have had to send more tax dollars to their local hospitals. **Expanding Medicaid would allow that money to be spent on schools, roads, or even be put back in Kansans' pockets through tax cuts.**

Medicaid Expansion Strengthens Rural Healthcare

• 8 hospitals have closed since 2014, when Medicaid Expansion became an option to the state. Even more are at risk of closing.

• Too many Kansans drive hours to receive basic care, and our doctors, nurses, and hospital staff are leaving for higher pay in neighboring states, exacerbating our health care workforce shortage.

• Expansion would also improve the patient experience -- including for Kansans who are already insured. Medicaid expansion makes it easier and faster to see your doctor.

Medicaid Expansion Grows Our Economy

• Kansas has lost nearly \$7 billion in additional federal funding while our federal taxpayers support jobs and healthcare in 40 other states.

• Medicaid expansion would create nearly 23,000 jobs and help end our health care worker shortage.

- Kansas business owners could save up to \$80 million per year in health care costs if Medicaid were expanded.

From a life-long Kansan. I love my state.

Sincerely,

Deborah McDaniel
8901 S Fawn Trail
Derby, KS 67037

March 16, 2024

Dear Chairman and committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Medicaid Expansion.

I believe healthcare should be available to all no matter how much income one makes. People tend to avoid preventative care because they cannot afford to see a doctor or take the medication they need to stay physically or mentally healthy. This puts an even greater burden on the industry as it can lead to emergent health situations or mental health crisis.

Our family has personally benefited from Kancare when my husband was in-between jobs and we did not have health insurance provided through employment. My children were “bumped into” the Kancare program for which I am extremely grateful. During that time one child needed tooth extraction surgery and another had a severe concussion leading to an MRI. This would have devastated us financially had our children not been insured through Kancare.

Every parent should feel at peace when a child becomes ill, knowing they can receive the care they need without having to make huge financial sacrifices or decisions on what other necessities may have to be overlooked to cover medical expenses. And every child should have no fear when a parent becomes sick, knowing they too can receive the care they need to live long and healthy lives.

With your support for Medicaid Expansion, Kansans of every age can live healthier and that is good for everyone.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my experience and provide testimony for the Expansion of Medicaid.

Kathy McDonald
Overland Park

March 15, 2024

For years I have been in favor of Medicaid Expansion. More access to affordable healthcare is needed.

Please stop referring to the people who would benefit from this as adults who are lazy, not working, able-bodied.

These generalities are inaccurate and insulting.

Thank you,
Representative Nikki McDonald, HD 49

2/23/24

To Kansas State Legislators,

I so wish that you could see what I see and hear what I hear when I am in the exam room with a patient who is sick and struggling to access the basic care they need because of lack of money and lack of insurance.

If you could just see and hear what I see and hear, then I feel confident that your concerns about politics, cost, ideology, expansive welfare states, slippery slopes to socialized medicine, diversion of care from the most vulnerable, etc..... would fade.

Instead, those worries would be replaced by a profound concern for the wellbeing of the person sitting in front of you.

You have the power to make a significant, life changing difference in the lives of many vulnerable people. I hope you have the courage to expand Medicaid despite the imperfections inherent in legislation of this size and scope. It is the right thing to do.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Sheila McGreevy MD

March 15, 2024

Medicaid expansion will benefit patients and hospitals in rural areas saving lives. In addition more doctors, nurses, and medical staff will benefit entire communities with an increased residential revenue for schools, roads, and commerce. Increased revenue is a win-win for all of Kansas! Pass Medicaid Expansion today!

Cheryl McIntosh

March 15, 2024

Testimony in favor of Medicaid Expansion

Having worked as a health care executive serving Kansas Counties, I urge an affirmative vote on Medicaid expansion. If we want healthy hospitals and healthy people, this Medicaid expansion is sorely needed. Rejecting this federal support is the classic “cutting off your nose to spite your face”. It punishes both people and our health care delivery system when people are denied access to health care and health care providers are denied payment. It’s time to just do it.

Submitted by:

Elaine McIntosh

4301 W 112 Street

Leawood, KS 66211

Lucy McIntyre

Regarding SB 355 and HB 2556

March 15, 2024

My name is Lucy McIntyre. I live in Leavenworth, KS. I am a parent to nine beautiful children that I adopted from foster care. I am a Social Worker that teaches at The University of Saint Mary. I am providing testimony in favor of SB 355 and HB 2556 to expand Medicaid in Kansas. As a social worker, I see how vital access to healthcare is for children and families that I have had the privilege of working with. As an adoptive parent, I am very fortunate that my children were able to retain their Kansas Medicaid after we finalized their adoptions. It has helped us out financially, as we do not have to obtain health insurance for them through our employers which would impact the amount of money we have to support our family's other needs. Medicaid has also opened many doors for our children as it relates to mental health services. One of my children has severe mental health needs and has had to utilize residential services, which are covered through his Medicaid. This service isn't as affordable when using private insurance.

The biggest reason I am submitting testimony today is on behalf of my mother-in-law, who lives with me. She is 64 years old. She has worked in a variety of jobs since I have known her, most of which did not provide her with health insurance. She has been uninsured for most of the time I've known her. This has forced her to make very difficult decisions regarding her medical care. She has chosen not to go to the doctor for annual wellness exams, has avoided being treated for various illnesses, and has avoided getting treated for hip pain that she has been dealing with for years because she cannot afford to. Currently, she has no income, but is still ineligible for Medicaid since she is a single adult under the age of 65. On February 26, she suffered a stroke. She delayed going to the hospital initially due to the fear of the financial burden it would create. She was afraid of an ER bill if it had turned out to be something less serious. This delay cost her the ability to receive medication that could have prevented her stroke from progressing. She is now facing the reality of thousands of dollars in medical bills, the stress of which is impacting her recovery. I keep thinking that maybe this stroke could have been prevented if she had health insurance. Would she have uncovered underlying medical issues that could have been treated and prevented her stroke?

My mother-in-law gave me her permission to share her story. Her and I both are passionate about making access to healthcare a reality for everyone, regardless of circumstance. Around 80% of Kansans support expanding Medicaid. I urge you to consider the will of the people. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully, Lucy McIntyre



Jennifer B. McKenney, MD, FAAFP

1525 Madison Street, Suite 3

P.O. Box 576

Fredonia, Kansas 66736

Phone: (620) 378-3700 Fax: (620) 378-3536

March 15, 2024

Dear Kansas Legislators,

I am a business owner and family physician in my rural hometown of Fredonia, Kansas where I have owned and managed my private practice since 2009. I am also the owner of The Oasis Medical Spa, a small business also located in Fredonia. Additionally, I own The Remote Scribe Company, another small business that provides much-needed medical documentation assistance to Kansas doctors. As the owner of three businesses, I know that Medicaid expansion would help businesses in Kansas to thrive.

In each of these businesses, there are hard-working employees who would benefit from Medicaid expansion. I believe in providing healthcare benefits to my employees, and for most businesses, healthcare costs are a large part of our operating expenses. Medicaid expansion would allow me to grow and expand my businesses and serve even more people in Kansas. Medicaid expansion would also help with my employee satisfaction and retention, keeping high-quality employees in rural Kansas.

Some may not realize the disparity between rural and urban wages. One of my excellent medical assistants who has worked for me for over two years is a 20-year-old mother of two small children. Her spouse is a self-employed 24-year-old. Both she and her family would qualify for Medicaid under expansion, providing her spouse with health care coverage and providing her with better coverage than what I am able to provide her through commercial medical insurance. Additionally, without Medicaid expansion, my medical practice still cares for her spouse but writes off his costs. This is just one example of how Medicaid expansion can impact small rural businesses and their employees in various ways.

I ask that we expand Medicaid in Kansas to help businesses, employees, and their families thrive!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'J B McKenney' in a cursive, flowing script.

Jennifer B. McKenney, M.D.

Owner, Fredonia Family Care

Owner, The Oasis Medical Spa

Owner, The Remote Scribe Company

March 13, 2024

I gave birth in November and it made me realize how important rural hospitals are. The closest non-rural hospital would have been 40 or more minutes away!

Please expand Medicaid. It costs Kansans nothing but helps us immensely. Studies have shown rural hospitals are closing much more often in states that refuse expansion.

Jessica McNally



TO: House and Senate Committees

FROM: Tanner Wealand, CFO/Interim CEO

DATE: March 12, 2024

RE: Proponent HB 2556/SB 355

On behalf of McPherson Hospital, Inc., we appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2556/Senate Bill 355.

Unlike many other industries, Kansas hospitals cannot turn patients away regardless of their ability to pay. Therefore, when a patient presents in our Emergency Department we are required to treat them. This creates unique challenges for our hospitals financially at a time when reimbursement rates from public and private payers remain stagnant and operational expenses have continued to increase.

The estimated impact of Medicaid Expansion with 150,000 beneficiaries could provide \$865,552 in new revenue, with a net benefit of \$765,901 for our hospital.

Hospitals remain committed to serving the communities we care for each day across our state. We are an economic driver of local economies and one of the largest industries in the state.

Expanding Medicaid would create \$5,022,000 in new annual health care spending in McPherson County, boosting our economy and creating new jobs in our community.

This bill comes at a time when the healthcare industry in Kansas is providing almost \$1.2 billion in uncompensated care to our state. At our hospital, to date we have provided \$2,830,340 in uncompensated care this fiscal year.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. We ask that the committee recommend favorably HB 2556/SB 355.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tanner A. Wealand'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'T' and 'W'.

Tanner Wealand
CFO/Interim CEO

March 5, 2024

I am so sorry we do not care for our citizens. I am a retired physician and I worked for over 10 years at the Marian Charity Clinic in Topeka basically caring for the 8,000 or so Topeka residents who had NO health insurance. Most of our patients WORKED as much as they could and often suffered needlessly from untreated illnesses like diabetes or high blood pressure that impacted their ability to hold a job! It is clear from studies of States that have enacted Medicaid for the poor, if you could provide health insurance to as few as 830 adults gaining health insurance you can prevent 1 death per year! That implies that getting the 150,000 Kansans without health insurance coverage you would potentially save nearly 180 Kansans per year! That means that over the past 10 years our legislators have **caused nearly 1800 needless deaths** in Kansas. And worse, during the pandemic the mortality rate **for maternal deaths of women of color** rose in Kansas to a level matching the mother and baby death rates of some of the poorest third world countries. All because these women were denied health care because they could not afford it and the healthcare industry wouldn't provide it. So sad that the Republican legislative leaders don't understand they are **morally responsible** for these unnecessary deaths!

Richard Meidinger MD

Dear Chairperson and committee members,

I am writing to encourage you to support Medicaid Expansion in Kansas. Thank you for holding a hearing and allowing for public input on this topic. As a private citizen, who currently has private insurance, I am a huge proponent of Medicaid Expansion in our state because it provides needed health insurance to those without coverage and because it is financially prudent for our state economy.

From 2009-2014, I worked at the Kansas Health Institute as a policy analyst. Previous to that I worked in the Office of the Inspector General for the federal Department of Health and Human Services. As an analyst at the federal level, we monitored fraud, waste and abuse in the Medicaid program. I became very familiar with the federal guidelines, rules and regulations related to Medicaid. At the Kansas Health Institute, I worked with legislative research to create a Medicaid Primer and additional policy documents for legislators and state officials about the impact of new federal guidelines, like Medicaid Expansion, on the state.

As an analyst in both jobs, my role was to gather facts, data and policy information, without advocating for any legislative bill. Now, as a private citizen, armed with facts and information about the impact of Medicaid expansion on the state, I wholeheartedly advocate for and support Expansion.

Looking at KHI's most recent analysis, expanding Medicaid would result in about 150,000 new Medicaid enrollees in Kansas. (<https://www.khi.org/articles/2024-medicaid-expansion-estimates/>) The benefits to our fellow Kansans far outweigh the risks or costs of expanding Medicaid. Forty other states, many conservative-leaning, have expanded Medicaid. We can be sure now, years later, that the expansion does improve access to healthcare, but also doesn't balloon costs for states.

Expanding Medicaid not only is the right thing to do to help those who are uninsured, it is also the right thing to do for our state economy. KHI estimates Kansas would save more than \$500 million over two years if Medicaid were expanded under the terms of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) — offsetting the equivalent of approximately eight years worth of net expansion state costs. <https://www.khi.org/articles/2024-medicaid-expansion-estimates/> This benefits all of us by adding more payers to the pool of those receiving medical treatment, spreading costs that hospitals and other providers have to pass along. In addition, it benefits hospitals and clinics, particularly those in rural areas and those who treat uninsured or at-risk patients.

The majority of Kansans support Expansion, it benefits our state financially, and it is just the right thing to do. Please finally pass Medicaid expansion, like so many states have done. Thank you for your service to our great state.

Sincerely,

Emily Meissen-Sebelius, private citizen

Prairie Village, Ks.



Commitment, Quality, Community
511 NE 10th Street, Abilene, KS 67410
(785) 263-2100

TO: House and Senate Committees

FROM: Harold Courtois, CEO, Memorial Health System

DATE: March 12, 2024

RE: Proponent HB 2556/SB 355

On behalf of Memorial Health System, we appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2556/Senate Bill 355.

Unlike many other industries, Kansas hospitals cannot turn patients away regardless of their ability to pay. Therefore, when a patient presents in our Emergency Department we are required to treat them. This creates unique challenges for our hospitals financially at a time when reimbursement rates from public and private payers remain stagnant and operational expenses have continued to increase.

Medicaid Expansion would benefit our hospital with \$700,000 in funds that we currently write off due to lack of coverage. We currently have 500+ citizens who fall out of coverage due to income levels just above the Medicaid coverage level.

Hospitals remain committed to serving the communities we care for each day across our state. We are an economic driver of local economies and one of the largest industries in the state.

Medicaid Expansion would bring nearly 20 new jobs to Abilene and create more than 2.2 million per year in additional local health care spending. Medicaid Expansion will create a positive impact on the local economy and will improve access to healthcare in Dickinson County.

This bill comes at a time when the healthcare industry in Kansas is providing almost \$1.2 billion in uncompensated care to our state. At our hospital we have provided \$2.5 million in charity care and bad debt.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. We ask that the committee recommend favorably HB 2556/SB 355.

Sincerely,

Harold Courtois, CEO
Memorial Health System
hcourtois@mhsks.org
785-263-6610 – Work
785-263-6622 - Fax

March 12, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I have been a healthcare professional in Wichita for 24 years. I feel strongly that the Kansas legislators need to listen to Kansans and actually vote to expand eligibility for KanCare. We have allowed the working poor to go without healthcare options for too long. This expansion will reduce healthcare costs for everyone and protect Kansans from medical debt.

Please take this request seriously and vote to expand Medicaid. Thank you for your time.

Natalie Merten



Metro Organization for Racial and Economic Equity

Lora McDonald
Executive Director
Written Testimony in Support of Medicaid Expansion
Kansas Legislature

Dear Kansas Legislators,

I am writing on behalf of the Metro Organization for Racial and Economic Equity, a faith based non-for-profit which includes a dozen Kansas congregations standing in support of Medicaid expansion. When we say, "Medicaid Expansion saves lives," we ask you to contemplate what it means to continue to not expand Medicaid.

As we talk to voters all over the state about what expansion means and who it is for, Kansans overwhelmingly stand with us. Many know that rural Kansans are driving further and waiting longer for hospital care. But, often, ordinary Kansans have no idea that expansion is for working people who just don't earn enough to qualify for the exchanges, and their employers are, for whatever reason, unable to offer them insurance. Working Kansans want other working Kansans to have health care coverage. It's that simple.

We know you are aware of the state of hospitals, how this impacts the economy, and even that your own insurance rates will improve when you pass this bill. We know that you have the statistics, that this coverage would mean access to health care for 150,000 people who are in the gap. We want you to know that, as we continue to educate voters, we want to be able to tell them that you stood up for working people and voted yes. We want to educate people on eligibility and access, not about which legislators blocked the coverage that could save lives.

We respectfully request that you vote YES and affirm the right to access health care for Kansans.

Lora McDonald
Executive Director

Covenanting Congregations and Organizations

AIRR, All Souls Unitarian Universalist, Bethel AME, Blue Valley Christian, Community Christian, Country Club Christian, Crossroads Church (Kansas City), Disciples of Christ Regional Ministry, First Baptist Church of Kansas City, KS; First Baptist Church of Kansas City, MO, G.I.F.T., Grandview Park Presbyterian, Holmeswood Baptist, Individual Members Caucus, Kansas City United Church of Christ, Keystone United Methodist Church, Latinx Education Collaborative, Linwood United Church, Metropolitan Missionary Baptist, Midwest Innocence Project, Neosho Valley Missionary Baptist, The Oasis Church, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church, Overland Park Christian, Peace Christian Church United Church of Christ, Pleasant Green Baptist, Prairie Baptist, Rainbow Mennonite; Rime Buddhist Center, St. Francis Xavier, Second Baptist-Olathe, St. James UMC, St. Stephen Baptist, Swope Parkway United Christian, Trinity UMC, United Missionary Baptist Church, What U Can Do

March 16, 2024

The state should not be sending money to the federal government and then refusing to take it back. Our state needs to expand Medicaid, so that rural hospitals do not close. Medicaid needs to be expanded to help people who are falling in the gap and cannot afford insurance. It is Kansas money coming back to Kansas. Kansas is one of the few states that have not expanded it and all of the states that have not expanded it are suffering because of the refusal to expand. Look at the data. Put people before party. The people opposed to expanding Medicaid have no good reason for their position.

Karen Metz
Prairie Village, KS



<http://www.marc.org/Emergency-Services-9-1-1/MARCER>

To: Senate Committee on Public Health & Welfare and the House Committee on Health & Human Services

RE: Support for Medicaid Expansion

From: Jeff Boss, Chair MARCER, EMS Battalion Chief Med-Act,
Jeff.Boss@jocogov.org

Date: February 22, 2024

MARCER supports the expansion of the Medicaid program in Kansas. MARCER has supported Medicaid Expansion for Kansas for several years and we submit this testimony to reaffirm our ongoing support for this critical initiative.

Mid-America Regional Council Emergency Rescue (MARCER) is the Kansas City bi-state regional EMS Council. As a subcommittee to the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), MARCER consists of over 35 area EMS agencies and 20 hospitals that collaborate on various pre-hospital emergency medical care issues such as communications, disaster planning, hospital diversion, time critical diagnosis, group purchasing, and other policy initiatives.

MARCER believes that providing additional health care insurance coverage for Kansas citizens will increase their productivity and happiness as well as provide tremendous benefit for the Kansas health care system that frequently provides care without financial remuneration.

Ambulance services in Kansas provide services to everyone regardless of ability to pay. Many of our patients have no insurance and either struggle to pay for the services or do not attempt to pay thus shifting the burden to local governments which subsidize ambulance operations. The hospitals we partner with are in a more difficult position as they rarely have a local government to provide additional financial support.

While ambulance service finances are not comparable with hospitals, doctors, and other aspects of health care, the evidence is clear regarding the financial benefit to ambulance services regarding Medicaid expansion. Analysis of a mid-sized ambulance service in Missouri shows an almost 6% growth in the number of Medicaid patients with a substantial decline in those patients without any insurance coverage. This one agency had an increase of revenue of \$1.2 Million related to the increase in the number of patients on Medicaid and the decline in

the number of patients listed as “private pay”.

Nationwide citizens who have some sort of primary health insurance have more successful and healthy lives. The health care system is more fairly compensated for the services it provides, and in much of rural Kansas there will be a stabilization of the rural hospitals critical to much of Kansas.

Presently only 10 states have failed to benefit their citizens with the expansion of Medicaid. The neighboring states of Oklahoma, Missouri, Colorado, and Nebraska have all taken advantage of this life saving program, and we hope that Kansas will move forward to adopting Medicaid Expansion.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

March 15, 2024

Please, be practical and humane; expand Medicaid NOW.

Marilyn Milhon

March 13, 2024

I find it hard to fathom the resistance to Kancare in the legislature.

Money for finding is being sent to Washington and we are getting nothing back on our investment.

It's long past time for lawmakers to really vote their constituents views. When over 75% of voters in Kansas are pro Kancare, it's obvious that party politics are controlling the legislature.

In this election year, I'm encouraging everyone to vote against legislators who do not back Kancare.

If it's good for 41 states, why isn't it good for Kansas.

Hoping this will be read and considered by somebody who cares to make a difference in individual lives and small town medical care.

Gary L Miller

Kindra Miller

March 20, 2024

Proponent Written Testimony: HB 2556 Cutting Healthcare Costs for All Kansans Act
Health and Human Services Committee

Dear Chairwoman and Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony in support of Medicaid Expansion. There are so many wonderful, positive, and proven reasons to expand Medicaid in our state, including the following:

- 150,000 low-income Kansans would gain access to medical care.
- Healthcare costs for everyone would be reduced.
 - Emergency rooms are treating Kansans without the ability to pay, which raises health care costs for everyone.
 - Marketplace premiums are 7% lower in states that expanded Medicaid compared to non-expansion states like Kansas.
- Medicaid Expansion won't cost Kansas taxpayers a single cent.

I also want to take the time to let you know how not expanding Medicaid in our state has affected me personally. A single, hardworking mother raised me. My mom raised 5 children by herself and sometimes worked 3 jobs to keep us fed, clothed, and sheltered. My mom worked hard and never let her kids go without. Since my family was very poor, all my siblings and I were enrolled in state health insurance. Access to this much-needed healthcare was essential and helped my mother tremendously as this was one less financial burden she had to worry about. However, when I turned 18, I was taken off of state insurance. Since my mother worked low-wage jobs that did not offer health insurance (or if they did, she couldn't afford the rates), I had no available option to obtain affordable health coverage. My mother always encouraged her kids to do great things, so I started college soon after graduating from high school. Being a first-generation student and coming from a low-income family, I worked full-time all throughout my time in college, and sometimes even working 2 jobs at once. Despite working 40 hours a week, I was still unable to access healthcare as the jobs that I was qualified to work at did not offer health insurance or they did, and it was not affordable. I went without health insurance for my entire time in college. This affected my mental and physical health greatly. I held off on going to regular preventative care visits and seeking treatment when I was ill. I even carefully calculated my decisions so as not to put myself at risk of an accidental injury that would surely bankrupt me and take away from my dreams and aspirations of completing college and becoming a social worker.

All of this is to say that if the Kansas State Legislature had done the right thing and expanded Medicaid, it would have helped me, a hardworking citizen of Kansas. I would have qualified for Medicaid in our state after turning 18 if Medicaid had been expanded. My physical health would not have constantly been put at risk, and my mental well-being would have benefited as well as I would not have to constantly worry about the what ifs; what if I have a medical issue and I cannot obtain treatment in time because I can't afford it, what if I am seriously injured and I become medically bankrupt.

Not having access to health insurance is a human rights and public health crisis. When you deny the people you serve a means to access much-needed and deserved healthcare, you demean them, and you send the message that they don't matter. It shows them that legislators who were elected to serve the

people of Kansas care more about political ideologies than enhancing the well-being of Kansans. I am begging you to please expand Medicaid for our state and do the right thing.

Your consideration of these matters and solutions is very much appreciated.

Written Statement In favor of MEDICAID expansion
For SB 355 and HB 2556 on MEDICAID EXPANSION
BY STEPHEN F MILLER MD
Commissioner for Kansas Commission on Disability
Concerns (KCDC)

Thank you for allowing me to share a written testimony on SB 355 And HB 2556. KCDC is an advocate for improvement for disabled people. We work to help the governor, legislature and state agencies on opportunities to improve the lives of those saddled with disabilities.

I am a disabled Viet Nam Veteran and a retired surgeon who practiced in my hometown Parsons Kansas. I volunteered for 18 years and helped run the free PARSONS COMMUNITY CLINIC for the uninsured and underinsured the working poor. It was extremely rewarding volunteering free care for people but very frustrating because of our tiny budget which came from donations. Our all volunteer staff of retired people, nurses and doctors became too old to actively continue our mission.

People in the population we cared for are without access to health care. These patients with no family doctor have to put up with pain and suffering until it becomes unbearable and then go to our local Emergency Room at Labette Health. This type of crisis health care is extremely expensive to provide. The hospital usually gets no reimbursement. Mr. Brian Williams the CEO at Labette Health has told me and other volunteers that expanding MEDICAID would help a large number of our indigent patients. This would help the hospital recover some of the moneys spent providing care that currently has no reimbursement. Most important is that many patients with DISABILITIES already have difficulty accessing health care. MEDICAID EXPANSION is a help in the right direction for poor KANSANS in need. Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of SB 355 and HB2556. Dr Stephen Miller MD,508 Maple Crest Dr, Parsons KS. 620-423-9040

February 28, 2024



To House Health and Human Services Committee,

On behalf of Minneola Healthcare, we extend our gratitude for the opportunity to present our testimony in support of House Bill 2556.

Unlike many other industries, Kansas hospitals operate under the mandate to provide necessary care to all patients, regardless of their ability to pay. Consequently, when individuals seek treatment in our Emergency Departments, we are obligated to attend to their needs. This obligation presents significant financial challenges for our hospitals, especially considering the persistent stagnation in reimbursement rates from both public and private payers, coupled with escalating operational expenses.

Expanding Medicaid in Kansas is not only a matter of fiscal prudence but also a crucial step in ensuring equitable access to healthcare for our residents. By extending Medicaid coverage, we anticipate several direct benefits to our hospital and the broader community.

With your support of Medicaid expansion, Minneola Healthcare could benefit an estimated \$175,000 annual increase in revenue from Medicaid. This increase could potentially assist in reducing the tax burden of the Minneola Hospital District.

Moreover, Medicaid expansion has the potential to catalyze transformative change within our communities. Improved access to preventive care and timely medical interventions can lead to better health outcomes, reduced reliance on emergency services, and enhanced productivity among residents. This, in turn, fosters stronger local economies and bolsters the overall well-being of our state.

Minneola and Clark County, KS are in a situation where emergency transportation is very limited. Adding coverage to additional Kansans will allow them access to the preventative care and routine appointments with their primary care providers they need, and in turn, could aid in the reduction of emergency transportation within our very limited and rural communities.

At present, the healthcare industry in Kansas shoulders an immense burden, providing nearly \$1.2 billion in uncompensated care statewide. At Minneola Healthcare, we have contributed significantly to this effort, having delivered \$449,780.13 in uncompensated care.

In light of these considerations, we urge you to support HB 2556. By endorsing this legislation, you have the opportunity to alleviate the financial strain on our hospitals, enhance access to vital healthcare services, and foster the prosperity of our communities.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our perspective. We respectfully request that the committee recommend favorably on HB 2556.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debbie Bruner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Debbie Bruner
CEO
Minneola Healthcare
debb@minneolahealth.com

Saturday, March 17, 2024

To: Info@expandkancare.com

Attn: Committee Chairs,

Sen. McGinn and Rep. Landwehr:

Re: Medicaid Expansion Testimony

My name is Wandra Minor and I am a voter in Johnson County, KS and a member of the League of Women Voters, Voter's Rights Network of Wyandotte and Johnson County NAACP. I urge you to support the Medicaid Expansion bill by Gov. Laura Kelly that ensures uniform access to healthcare for all Kansas.

Both HB 2556 and SB 355 expand Medicaid and lower health care costs. Enacted, these bills would give 150,000 Kansas taxpayers a cent. It's revenue-neutral, so Kansas' surplus can go toward tax cuts, public schools, and infrastructure.

Expanding Medicaid reduces health care costs for everyone. When low-wage Kansans can't get health coverage, that means more in emergency room visits and crisis treatment for physical and mental health needs. When hospitals and health care providers aren't compensated for services they provide, a portion of those additional costs are passed on to everyone through higher prices. The result is that we all pay more out of pocket and through insurance premiums.

Lower income Kansans who live in urban areas frontier counties and in the southwest part of the state are more likely to live in the coverage gap. Expanding Medicaid allows all lower-wage Kansas access to affordable health care, regardless of their race, how much money they make, or what their Zip code is.

Increased and expanded healthcare preserves and strengthens our rural communities. For Kansas in outlying communities, accessing health care when and where they need it is becoming significant challenge. When hospitals in rural communities close, not only do residents struggle to get the care they need while also boosting their local economies.

Further, Medicaid Expansion supports a healthier work force. Most Kansans in the coverage gap work at least one job, but either aren't offered employer-based health insurance, or can't afford it. Those who are not working are often caretakers/givers or are unable to work because of their own health conditions.

Kansas has lost nearly \$7 billion in additional federal funding while our federal taxpayers support jobs and healthcare in 40 other states. Expanding Medicaid would create nearly 23,000 jobs and help end our health care worker shortage. Please vote to support additional access to healthcare for Kansans. Our state, its economic vitality and prosperity, count on it.

Respectfully submitted,

Wandra L. Minor

Wandra L. Minor

March 15, 2024

I am writing to voice my support for the expansion of Medicaid in the state of Kansas. My husband and I have excellent health care, but have seen the effects on people in Kansas who do not have any health care benefits at all. We feel this is totally unacceptable that people are denied healthcare simply because they can't afford it. It's a disgrace to the state of Kansas that this is happening to people in our state. It's time to rectify this and pass a Medicaid bill. We urge our legislators to do this now.

Sincerely,
Mary Minshull
1950 West 139th Terrace
Leawood, KS. 66224
816-719-7434

Date: March 20, 2024

From: Sister Marie M. Mollis, SCL

RE: HB 2556 / SB 355 Proponent testimony

Dear Chairperson and members of the committee,

As a member of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, I ask you very sincerely to consider Medicaid Expansion (KanCare) as soon as possible so those who cannot afford healthcare can be served as the rest of us are! We all deserve the same access.

Sincerely,

Sister Marie M. Mollis, SCL

Topic: Testimony for Medicaid Expansion

Position: Proponent

Form: Written Only

Date: March 14, 2024

Forty-one states have expanded Medicaid, but Kansas has not. Our failure to expand Medicaid has so far cost Kansas seven billion dollars, which was mostly our money as we paid it in Federal taxes. But the greater cost is that 150,000 of our working citizens do not have health insurance. This has greatly hurt our working poor, our hospitals, and our medical care providers who are often not paid for their services. This has hit rural hospitals particularly hard as they do not have the resources to make up for lost revenue. Rural hospitals and clinics have been forced to close, and it is estimated that 30% more are at risk.

Here are the reasons that Kansas should expand Medicaid:

- It would provide medical care coverage to 150,000 low-income working Kansans who cannot otherwise afford it. They are caught in the middle as they do not have enough income to receive subsidies from the Affordable Care Act, but make too much to qualify for the present KanCare system.
- It would inject \$5.3 billion into our economy in just the first 10 years. Those funds would have a multiplier effect on consumer spending, business activity, jobs, personal income, and state tax revenue.
- It would create jobs. A study by George Washington University found that expanding KanCare would create 3,500 – 4,000 new jobs in the next five years.
- It would cut the unpaid bills for emergency services. Emergency room care is very expensive compared to preventive care. Emergency rooms are required by law to treat everyone, and those without medical insurance often wait until they are very sick and then go to the emergency room for care.
- Unreimbursed emergency room costs drive up costs for everyone and endanger the financial stability of medical care providers and hospitals.
- It would cover preventive medical care and greatly reduce the spread of communicable diseases.
- It would reduce bankruptcies. Many of us are just one major accident or illness away from bankruptcy. A Harvard study found that about 50% of all bankruptcies in the United States are caused by illness and unpaid medical bills. Bankruptcies affect everyone because the health providers, banks, businesses, and credit card companies who lose money in bankruptcy pass the cost on to the rest of us.

- It would improve everyone's health. Your family's health depends on the health of everyone in your community. You and your family will likely come into contact with thousands of people during this next year. People without health insurance are much less likely to receive immunizations and preventative care - and are much more likely to have untreated communicable diseases.

A study by the [Brooking Institute](#) found that all of the first 37 states to expand Medicaid were satisfied with the results and none wished to withdraw from the program. Further delay will cost Kansas about another \$665 million over the next 10 years. It is time we tapped into the Federal funds available and made health insurance available to the 150,000 working Kansans who are without healthcare coverage.

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. Jesse Moore

717 W. 4th St.

Haysville, Kansas 67060

316-558-7848



Morris County Hospital
600 N Washington
Council Grove, KS 66846
(620) 767-6811-Ext 121
Fax (620) 767-5611

TO: **House and Senate Committees**

FROM: Kevin A. Leeper, CEO Morris County Hospital

DATE: February 28, 2024

RE: Proponent HB 2556/SB 355

On behalf of Morris County Hospital, we appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2556/Senate Bill 355.

Unlike many other industries, Kansas hospitals cannot turn customers/patients away regardless of their ability to pay. Therefore, when a patient presents in our Emergency Department we are required to treat them. This creates unique challenges for our hospitals financially at a time when reimbursement rates from public and private payers remain stagnant and operational expenses have continued to increase.

The mostly Federally funded program of expanding Medicaid coverage to more Kansans is just the right thing to do to bring in millions of new dollars to our States economy. With the turnover of those dollars and because of the tight margins experienced by 2/3s of our Kansas hospitals, expansion will help to retain or create countless healthcare jobs that we are now at risk of losing to other industries which are attracting healthcare workers for higher wages and/or less stressful work routines. No, it **won't** make up for all of our hospital's current deficits, but it **will** keep Kansas paid tax dollars from continually flowing to other States which have invited this program into their States. The program should increase Morris County Hospital's net revenues by just south of \$100K annually, which is only .6% of our annual net revenues, but a positive boost to funding replacement equipment which helps sustain our future.

Hospitals remain committed to serving the communities we care for each day across our state. We are an economic driver of local economies and one of the largest industries in the state.

Morris County is buffeted by having a lower percentage of uninsured residents than other Counties, but our number has grown over the last 18 months of high inflation. Again to turn over the \$100,000 of new income into our County (six-fold as a common multiplier) makes a significant cash infusion in to our small County.

This bill comes at a time when the healthcare industry in Kansas is providing almost \$1.2 billion in uncompensated care to our state. At our hospital we have provided over \$600,000 annually to the indigent / bad debt book of business (4% of our net revenues).

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. We ask that the committee recommend favorably HB 2556/SB 355, and at least move it out of Committees for full slate consideration.

Kelsey Morris

Regarding SB 355 and HB 2556

March 14, 2024

Greetings! My name is Kelsey Morris, and I am a concerned college student who resides in the state of Kansas. I am testifying in support of SB 355 and HB 2556, that would expand Medicaid in Kansas, allowing roughly 150,000 Kansans the opportunity to obtain health insurance and access healthcare with reduced financial burdens. I think that healthcare is an essential part of life and should be accessible for everyone.

I want to thank you for taking time out of your day to read my testimony and hear my voice, it is appreciated greatly. I hope you consider the voices of Kansas and vote in support of expanding Medicaid. All that you do is much appreciated.

Best,

Kelsey Morris

March 14, 2024

TO: Members of the KS House and Senate

FROM: A concerned family needing Medicaid expansion ASAP

RE: KS Medicaid expansion

I am writing this letter trying to explain my granddaughter's situation. At 2 1/2 years old, she was fit with a cochlear implant. She previously tried a hearing aid but it did nothing for her hearing. Then, when in high school, she was fitted with another implant in her other ear. Her doctor and audiologist thought it would improve her capabilities of hearing. She had years of special classes, many interpreters, and extra equipment when it no longer worked or was broken, and a couple of surgeries. All of this was covered under her Medicaid. We are forever grateful she is able to hear and live a life as a hearing person. Any payment from us was minimal.

She is now turning 24 years old in May, works as a hearing impaired teachers' assistant, and cannot qualify for Medicaid by a few hundred dollars. The other problem is her present equipment is "old" and "replacement parts" are not available. She is struggling to continue with her hearing and then, that will soon not allow her to work. Bottomline...if she cannot work, she will qualify for Medicaid. That's not what she wants!

Finally, she will never hear on her own. Why does a person when turning 21 years old, is not covered for implants through Medicaid? How can implants be termed as a prosthetic because that's not what an implant is? We can't even find an insurance company to help us. Medicaid was so helpful in her early years but now, she is discarded and help is not available. Please discuss expanding Medicaid because she needs the equipment but still wants to work at a career helping other youngsters learn and live as a normal child. So many other states have grown their Medicaid; so therefore, why can't Kansas?

March 17, 2024

This is Diana Morriss, a resident and retired nurse who has lived in Fort Scott, Kansas 66701, for the past 47 years. We have lost our hospital and recently our ER. in this community. Medicaid Expansion might very well have helped to prevent this loss from happening! I definitely support Medicaid expansion!!! It is time to stop losing out on this source of income to our state.

Thank you,
Diana Morriss
1021 Horton St, Fort Scott, KS 66701

Testimony In Support of Expanding Medicaid in Kansas

Gary Morsch, MD

March 15, 2024

I am a Family and Emergency Medicine Physician who is the founder of Docs Who Care (DocsWhoCare.com), a 30-year old company that provides Physician and Advanced Practice Provider staffing to rural hospitals across Kansas, all of which are Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs). We staff Emergency Rooms, provide inpatient Hospitalist services, as well as outpatient Clinic coverage. Because of the significant and growing shortage of physicians in rural America, our group is increasingly called upon to provide short and long-term staffing to these hospitals.

Our medical group staffs about 30 rural hospitals across Kansas each month, and, over the course of the year will provide staffing to 50 Kansas CAH's. Over the past 30 years I have personally staffed over 25 different rural hospitals in Kansas---from Hiawatha to Hugoton, Sedan to St. Francis, and multiple hospitals in between. I doubt that no other physician in Kansas has worked in more rural hospitals than I have. Over the past nearly 30 years, I have worked in over 120 rural hospitals throughout the Midwest. Believe me, I know the challenges that CAHs face.

Docs Who Care also assists CAHs with physician and APP recruiting. In fact, we allow hospitals to recruit our providers without charging any recruiting fees. We are the only company in the country that provides recruiting services without charge.

As serious as the shortage of physicians and providers is across Kansas, the greatest threat to Kansas CAHs is financial! Because of the higher incidence of Medicare, Medicaid, and uninsured patients in rural areas, rural hospitals deliver care at reimbursement levels that are inadequate to sustain their operations. Year after year, rural Kansas hospitals are closing due to their inability to raise enough revenues to offset their costs of delivering healthcare.

I would respectfully ask that the Kansas legislature expand Medicaid coverage to the approximately 150,000 additional Kansans who would qualify for coverage, many of whom live in rural Kansas. I understand that nearly \$7 billion of unreimbursed medical services have been provided by Kansas hospitals since Kansas rejected the opportunity to expand Medicaid, as 40 other states have done. With approximately 130 hospitals in Kansas, this means that, on average, each hospital in Kansas has forfeited \$53 million each over these many years. As a federal tax payer, I am offended that my tax dollars have gone to 40 other states, while my own state, Kansas, has refused to accept the federal dollars Kansas taxpayers have provided.

The lack of initiative by the Kansas legislature to expand Medicaid is hurting rural hospitals in Kansas. This is an avoidable tragedy, which you now have the opportunity to address.

I beg of you to put aside your ideological positions in order to support Kansas CAHs that are literally dying because of a lack of Medicaid expansion.

2024 Testimony for Medicaid Expansion

Wael S. Mourad, MD
17305 Stearns Street
Overland Park, KS 66221

Expansion of KanCare is the right thing to do for 2 reasons: 1. Health is critical for a growing economy and to increase the state's GDP as it competes with other states. 2. It is the morally correct step to help our fellow citizens lead a happy and healthy life.

Sincerely,

Wael S. Mourad, MD, MHCM, CHCQM, FAAFP
Medical Director of Care Coordination | SSM Health - St. Mary's Hospital (Jefferson City)
Clinical Professor | University of Missouri Kansas City School of Medicine



NAMI
National Alliance on Mental Illness

Kansas

March 20, 2024

Medicaid Expansion Hearing

Prepared and Presented by:

Itzel Moya, NAMI Kansas AOT Director and lifelong Kansas Resident

My name is Itzel Moya, and I am writing in support of Medicaid Expansion.

NAMI Kansas is the state organization of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, a grassroots organization whose members are individuals living with mental illnesses and their family members who provide care and support. Our goals at NAMI Kansas include advocating for non-discriminatory access to healthcare.

NAMI Kansas supports Medicaid Expansion as it would help improve access to healthcare for Kansans. A large body of research shows that Medicaid beneficiaries have substantially better access to care than people who are uninsured and are less likely to postpone or go without needed care due to cost.¹ Access to care due to cost is a serious issue many Kansans face and Medicaid Expansion would help alleviate this burden.

Medicaid Expansion supports our commitment to improve the quality of life of many vulnerable Kansans. Overall, the impact of Medicaid Expansion would be a gain for the State of Kansas. As a lifelong Kansas Resident and on behalf of NAMI Kansas, I urge you to pass Medicaid Expansion.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony.

Sincerely,

Itzel Moya, LMSW
PO Box #734
Cimarron, KS, 67835
itzel@namikansas.org

¹ Rudowitz, R., Burns, A., Hinton, E., & Mohamed, M. (2023, June 30). 10 things to know about Medicaid. KFF. <https://www.kff.org/mental-health/issue-brief/10-things-to-know-about-medicaid/#:~:text=Medicaid%20facilitates%20access%20to%20care,needed%20care%20due%20to%20cost>.

Date: March 20, 2024
To: Chairwoman Landwehr & the House Committee on Health and Human Services
From: City of Overland Park
Re: Written Testimony in favor of HB 2556

Thank you for allowing the City of Overland Park to submit testimony in favor of HB 2556. The City supports the expansion of Medicaid eligibility that is proposed in the bill.

Kansas is one of ten states that has not expanded Medicaid eligibility under the Affordable Care Act. It is estimated that expansion would provide Medicaid coverage to over 150,000 Kansans who currently earn too much to qualify under existing income thresholds but do not have access to an affordable healthcare solution.

In January 2024, Overland Park's Mayor and City Council adopted a legislative program that includes support for Medicaid Expansion that addresses future funding so that, if federal funding is discontinued, there will be no increased burden to taxpayers. As a major medical hub for the State of Kansas, the City supports a renewed bipartisan solution regarding the expansion of Medicaid. Such a solution would allow hospitals and emergency medical services (EMS) access to federal funding, helping cities maintain and provide critical services for residents.

Thank you for allowing the City to testify on this legislation. We respectfully request that the Committee advance HB 2556 to the full House.

March 14, 2024

I am writing about the Cutting Healthcare Costs for All Kansans Act, Medicaid Expansion Act, **HB 2556 and SB 355**. This is my testimony for the upcoming public hearings in the House and Senate. I have been a Kansas resident for 60 years. I believe there is widespread support in our state for expanding Medicaid so that 150,000 more Kansans will be able to get affordable health care. It will help support our hospitals and health care workers too, and literally save the lives of many Kansans.

Our family has been seriously impacted by the rejection of these federal aid funds to our state. Allow me to tell you about my granddaughter, who was an outgoing, energetic young woman, and has spent most of her life helping others, volunteering in many organizations and charitable programs to provide aid all over the world in many ways. She chose to get a university degree in social work so she could help others, and had a bright and promising future working in a career she loved. She worked for three years in the field before the disaster of the pandemic stole her health and the dreams she had for her life.

In 2000 while in another country she contracted COVID-19 in its original virulent strain and became very ill. When she got back home to Kansas she never fully recovered from this horrible virus, and her health kept deteriorating, with many new symptoms and illnesses developing over the next three years. There were no vaccines or treatments then, and little understanding of long haul covid. She was physically unable to go back to her job, and has no source of income. She has little energy, and it is very difficult for her to get out of bed and care for herself.

She has applied for help, but has repeatedly been denied, and has become overwhelmed with the hopelessness of her situation and the realization she will probably never be able to go back to the life she had. She sees no future the way things are now and fears becoming destitute, homeless and unable to care for herself, get medical care or pay the bills. If my granddaughter could get Medicaid medical insurance it would make a world of difference in her life and allow her to get lifesaving treatment.

Please pass the Cutting Healthcare Costs for All Kansans Act, Medicaid Expansion Act. So many adult disabled Kansans have been omitted from assistance programs because they do not have children. Many are unable to afford health insurance, have disabling health conditions that make them unable to hold a job and have low or no income. They have desperate needs for assistance with basic survival. If we care about our citizens how can we withhold the help that has been given to our state by the federal government?

The Medicaid Expansion Act for Kansas will help disabled people like my granddaughter get assistance and have hope for the future. Please pass this legislation.

Respectfully yours,
Susan Myers
Prairie Village