

Attending Candidate Forums

It is critical that Kansans take an active role in informing candidates for legislative offices about the need and benefits of expanding KanCare. The Alliance for a Healthy Kansas encourages Alliance members and all Kansans to actively engage candidates on Kansas' health insurance coverage gap and to discuss the importance of expanding KanCare.

Candidate forums provide a great opportunity to learn about the positions that candidates for elected office have on key issues. They are an opportunity to engage your community and the candidates hoping to represent it on the important topic of expanding KanCare.

We know asking questions at a candidate forum may not be natural for everyone. To make the process easier, we have drafted the following sample questions about key issues related to expanding KanCare to ask candidates for office at forums - or anywhere you see them in your community!

KanCare Expansion, Jobs, and Economic Development

Medicaid expansion brings millions of dollars into communities to pay for health care services, increasing demand, enhancing revenue, and creating jobs. Research shows, for example, that expansion has created more than 30,000 jobs in Colorado and 18,000 in both Michigan and Louisiana. These new dollars and new jobs create economic growth and enhance state tax revenues.

- Are you in favor of creating new jobs and economic growth in Kansas by expanding KanCare?

KanCare Expansion and Taxes

Kansas has forfeited the return of more than \$2.8 billion of our federal taxes by not expanding KanCare. This total grows by \$1.8 million every day. These are tax dollars that hardworking Kansans pay to the federal government and which the federal government is offering to give back. By refusing expansion, our tax dollars instead go to states like California, Colorado, and New York, to provide health care to their residents. In addition, these dollars could replace some of the millions in local taxes that many rural Kansans pay to cover uncompensated care and support their hospitals.

- Are you in favor of expanding KanCare and returning Kansans' federal tax dollars to the state?

KanCare Expansion and Rural Hospitals

The hospital in Fort Scott just announced that it will be closing at the end of the year. This is the second rural hospital in Kansas to close in the last few years. Thirty other rural hospitals in Kansas are financially vulnerable and at risk of closure. Research shows that rural hospitals in states, like Kansas, that have not expanded Medicaid, are six times more likely to close than those in expansion states.

- Given its beneficial impact on rural hospitals and rural communities, are you in favor of expanding KanCare?

KanCare Expansion and Access to Care

Whether or not one has health insurance is a critical factor in whether one has access to health care services. States that have expanded Medicaid have reduced uninsurance much more quickly than states, like Kansas, that have not. The result is enhanced access to all services, increased use of primary and preventive care, and drops in emergency room visits.

- Are you in favor of expanding KanCare and thus reducing uninsurance and enhancing access to care in Kansas?

KanCare Expansion, Poverty, and Family Finances

Medicaid expansion has been shown to reduce debt and financial hardship, help people remain employed or get back in the workforce, and lift people out of poverty. Residents of states, like Kansas, that have not expanded Medicaid, are more likely to experience medical debt and bankruptcy.

- Given its positive effects on family finances and poverty, do you support expanding KanCare?

KanCare Expansion and Health

In states that have expanded Medicaid, beneficiaries experience enhanced health status, improved mental health, better ability to address unhealthy behaviors such as tobacco use, and are more able to stay in the workforce.

- We know that KanCare expansion will improve the health of Kansans. Do you support expanding KanCare?

KanCare Expansion and the State Budget

The federal government covers a minimum of 90% of the costs of Medicaid expansion. This means that for every dollar invested by the state, the federal government provides nine dollars in return. Because of this beneficial match, coupled with reduction in state spending for the uninsured and economic growth created by returning millions of dollars of federal taxes to the state, states that have expanded Medicaid have experienced little or no cost to the state budget. Although the number of enrollees has exceeded estimates in some states, most states have accurately forecast enrollment and costs. Rigorous analysis shows that expansion is likely to be budget neutral, or at worst, to add a fraction of one percent to the state budget.

- Given the beneficial effects of expansion and the fact that it is a low or no cost investment for the state, are you in favor of expanding KanCare?