



ALLIANCE FOR A HEALTHY KANSAS

Bob Bethell Joint Committee on HCBS
and KanCare Oversight
Written Testimony Only
April Holman, Executive Director
Alliance for a Healthy Kansas
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Chairman Hawkins and Members of the Committee –

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony in support of KanCare Expansion.

My name is April Holman and I am the Executive Director of the Alliance for a Healthy Kansas. The Alliance for a Healthy Kansas is a broad-based statewide coalition of organizations and individuals that have come together to improve the health of Kansans. Our first policy goal is to improve access to care by expanding KanCare, the Kansas Medicaid program. Alliance members include business leaders, doctors and hospitals, social service and safety net organizations, faith communities, chambers of commerce, advocates for health care consumers, and others.

Since I joined the Alliance in August I have had the opportunity to visit with people across the state at community forums on healthcare. I have met Kansans who lack health coverage because they fall in the coverage gap between earning too much money to qualify for KanCare and too little to qualify for market-based insurance subsidies. I have met community leaders struggling to find healthcare solutions for their neighbors after the local hospital closes, and I have met providers ranging from hospital CEO's to pediatricians to substance use disorder counselors. What I have learned is that there is overwhelming support in our state for KanCare Expansion. This appears in form of polling on the issue and in the 100 organizations and thousands of individuals that have signed on to support KanCare Expansion.

Here are some of the reasons that so many Kansans support expansion:

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

- Kansas forfeits \$1.8 million every day that expansion is not in place.
- To date, the state has forfeited more than \$2.9 billion in federal funding by not expanding KanCare, a total that will climb to more than \$3 billion by the start of the 2019 Kansas Legislative Session.
- Expanding KanCare will inject hundreds of millions of dollars into the Kansas economy and create more than 3,800 new jobs.
- Kansas does not save money by refusing expansion — it simply gives up the opportunity to bring tax dollars back to our state. Nearly all the costs of expansion are covered by the federal government. By law, at least 90% of the costs of expanding KanCare will be funded by the federal government.
- Expansion saves money for states. Other states that have chosen to responsibly expand Medicaid are seeing substantial savings in budget expenditures on services for the uninsured.

Expanding KanCare will protect hospitals and communities

- 30 percent of Kansas hospitals – mainly in rural areas - are considered financially vulnerable.
- Expanding KanCare could mean the difference between staying open or closing their doors.

Expanding KanCare will help low-wage working people climb out of poverty.

- Kansans who receive coverage under expansion will see reduced medical debt, better credit scores, and an improved chance of finding and keeping employment.
- A long body of research proves the important role of Medicaid as a support for work.
- A study of Ohio's Medicaid expansion population found that the policy improved their employment status and prospects.

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

- Expanding KanCare will provide health coverage to individuals and families who fall into the coverage gap – Kansans who work for a living but either earn too much to qualify for the current program but too little to get financial help to buy a private plan.
- Expansion increases access to primary and preventive care, reduces the cost of uncompensated care, reduces medical debt, and enhances continuity of coverage and care for chronic illness.
- Expanding KanCare saves lives. States that have expanded experience lower mortality.

At least 34 states have passed Medicaid Expansion already. As a testament to the success of expansion across the country, no state that has already adopted expansion has reversed course even though that is fully permissible under federal law. We urge you to provide Kansans with the job creation, economic development, hospital support, family economic security and access to healthcare that come with expansion. ***Please support KanCare Expansion in the 2019 Legislative Session.***