



ALLIANCE FOR A
HEALTHY KANSAS

KanCare Expansion Advocacy Toolkit

2022-2023

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Introduction



ALLIANCE FOR A
HEALTHY KANSAS

The Alliance for a Healthy Kansas is a statewide coalition of more than 120 partners, including business leaders, doctors and hospitals, social service and safety-net organizations, faith communities, chambers of commerce, advocates for health care, consumers, and more. We work throughout Kansas to encourage people and organizations to promote policies that ensure everyone has the opportunity to attain their highest level of health.

The first and primary policy goal of the Alliance is to **expand KanCare (our state's Medicaid program)**. Expanding KanCare would reduce healthcare costs for everyone, make Kansas more economically competitive, preserve and strengthen rural healthcare, and insure 150,000 Kansans currently living in the coverage gap.

Thank you for joining us in this mission to create a healthier and more prosperous Kansas. **Nearly 8 in 10 Kansans support KanCare expansion – it's time to make our voices heard!**



Our Team

ALLIANCE FOR A
HEALTHY KANSAS



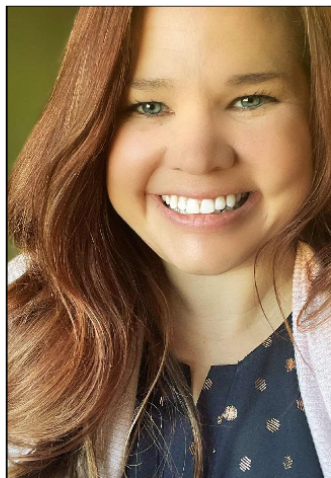
April Holman
Executive Director



Taylor Morton
Advocacy Specialist



Marissa Alcantar
Storybank Fellow



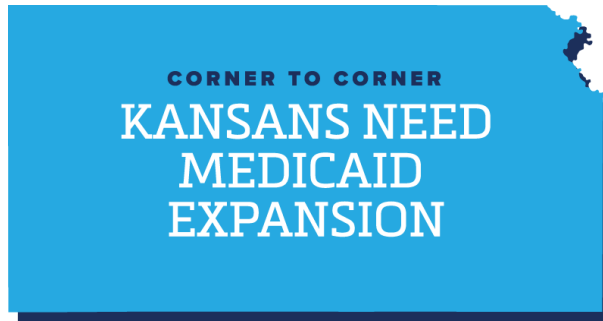
Lacey Kennett
Director of Communications



Sean Gatewood
Advocacy Consultant

Advocacy and You!

It is crucial that all Kansans take an active role in informing lawmakers about the importance of expanding KanCare. We must engage with legislators on this issue and let them know that **Kansans want KanCare expansion!**



Contacting legislators can feel overwhelming and uncomfortable at first, but it is an important part of the democratic process. Legislators represent you and your interests, and they need to hear from you in order to make well-informed decisions in office.

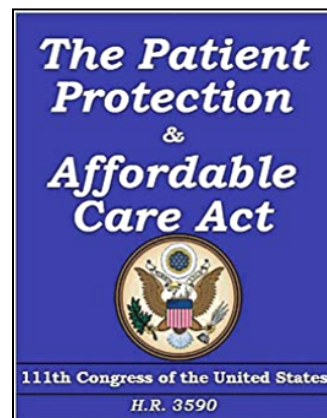
To assist you in contacting and having ongoing conversations with your legislators, we have created the **KanCare Expansion Advocacy Toolkit**. In this toolkit, you will find some general information about KanCare expansion, sample scripts for calling legislators, and other tools to aid in the advocacy process.

Thank you for your advocacy! Together, we can build a healthier Kansas.

KanCare Expansion: The Facts

Medicaid Expansion: Background

Medicaid expansion is part of the Affordable Care Act and has been optional for states since 2012. With the goal of extending health insurance coverage to low-income Americans, states could choose to implement expansion starting in 2014. As of now, **thirty-nine states have expanded Medicaid**, making Kansas one of only eleven states still holding out.



Medicaid expansion is **not a political issue**, but a **practical opportunity** to close the coverage gap, strengthen our healthcare system and bring desperately needed federal dollars into the Kansas economy.

Why Should We Expand KanCare?

★ Expanding KanCare will make Kansas more economically competitive.

- Expanding KanCare will increase the state's economic output by \$17 billion and increase the personal income of Kansans by \$6.3 billion over the next three years.
 - Expanding KanCare will help our state compete with our neighbors, who have all expanded their Medicaid programs.
- Kansas does not save money by refusing expansion — it simply gives up the opportunity to bring tax dollars back to our state. By law, 90% of the costs of expanding KanCare will be funded by the federal government.
- Expansion is likely to be budget neutral after accounting for economic offsets and additional revenue generation.

★ Expanding KanCare will strengthen hospitals and support healthcare providers – particularly in rural parts of Kansas.

- Health centers in expansion states have higher revenue, greater operational capacity, and more financial stability than those in non-expansion states.

These centers have more sites, serve more patients, and are more likely to provide behavioral health and vision services.

- In Kansas, 70 rural hospitals are currently at risk of closing – more than any other state our size. Expanding KanCare could mean the difference between these hospitals staying open or closing their doors.
- In addition to compromising the health of rural residents, a hospital closure causes job loss, declining economic activity, and loss of vibrancy and quality of life in rural communities. In rural communities where hospitals close, access to healthcare decreases for the entire community regardless of whether a person has health insurance or not.

★ Expanding KanCare will improve health and financial security for all Kansans – including the 150,000 Kansans who currently fall into the coverage gap.

- Every Kansan is paying the price for not expanding KanCare. Inadequate access to health coverage leads to increased uncompensated care costs for hospitals. This means individuals and families in Kansas are paying more for their health care. Expanding KanCare will reduce healthcare costs for everyone.
- The current income limit to qualify for KanCare is only about \$8,750/year for a family of three. Expanding KanCare would raise the income eligibility limits from 38% of FPL to 138%, making it possible for more Kansans to get the health care they need.
- Almost half of Kansans have medical debt or know someone who does. Increasing access to health coverage by expanding KanCare will help protect Kansans from medical debt and provide them with greater financial security.
- Expanding KanCare saves lives. States that have expanded their Medicaid programs experience lower mortality.

(For more information about how KanCare expansion will benefit our state, visit

www.expandkancare.com/learn-more/)

Misinformation and Medicaid Expansion

Unfortunately, Medicaid expansion has become highly politicized, and misinformation is all too common. **It is important for us to think about how we can respectfully and effectively push back against misinformation—especially when communicating with legislators.**

The left-hand column of the table below outlines some of the more common arguments legislators make to justify their opposition to KanCare expansion that simply aren't true. The right-hand column outlines possible ways you can respectfully push back against these misconceptions and refocus the conversation.

<i>(Common misconceptions)</i>	<i>(Possible ways to push back)</i>
"Medicaid expansion will be expensive and bad for the Kansas economy."	"Expanding Medicaid will inject hundreds of millions of \$'s into the Kansas economy and reduce health care costs for all Kansans."
"Medicaid expansion will lead to more abortions."	"Low-income women who are pregnant already qualify for Medicaid in Kansas. Medicaid expansion will not impact that eligibility and is completely separate from the issue of state-funded abortion."
"Medicaid expansion will put people with disabilities at the end of the line for assistance."	"Medicaid expansion would not take resources away from programs serving people with disabilities and it would help direct care attendants for people with disabilities stay healthy and on the job."
"I don't want my constituents' tax dollars to go to someone who is able-bodied and not working."	"More than two-thirds of those eligible for KanCare expansion work or are in working families. And, access to affordable health insurance helps people maintain employment. Medicaid expansion actually supports work."

The table on the previous page is not exhaustive, but it covers some of the most common points of misinformation that often come up in conversations around Medicaid expansion in Kansas.

Below is a list of resources for fact-checking and assessing media bias. Reputable news sources ([NPR](#), [AP News](#), [PBS](#), [Reuters](#), etc.) will often publish fact-checks and/or have their own fact-checking sections. These resources can be used to better understand the nature and scope of misinformation around Medicaid expansion, along with a wide array of other topics.

Fact-Checking and Media Bias Resources



Snopes.com



Politifact.com



Factcheck.org

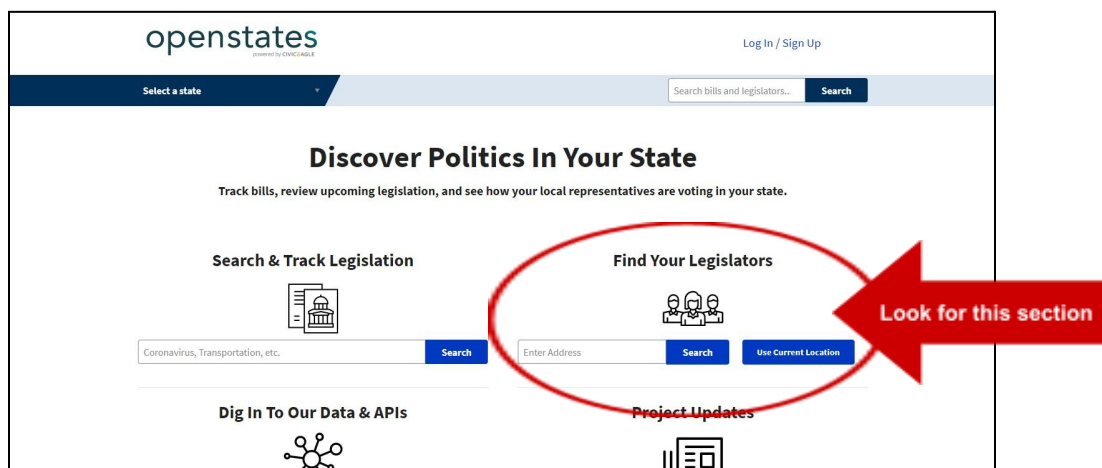


Mediabiasfactcheck.com

Contacting Your State-Level Elected Officials

Finding Your State Legislators

To find out who your state legislators are and how to contact them, visit www.openstates.org. You will see the following page.



Enter your address where it says **Find Your Legislators**. You'll then see the names of your elected officials. You can find contact information for your state representative and senator by clicking on their name. (Contact them both!)

General Tips for Contacting Legislators

- ★ Make your point clearly and concisely. Choose your words carefully and deliver your message succinctly.
- ★ Make an immediate “ask.” Tell them what you want them to do.
- ★ Tell them why the issue matters to you and to others in their district. Tell them what the issue means to you.
- ★ Finish the call by restating your “ask” and thanking them for their time.
- ★ If you speak with an aide or leave a voicemail, give your contact information and ask for your legislator to send you a response (either by email or phone).
- ★ Continue having conversations with your legislators – ongoing engagement will enhance the impact of your message.
- ★ Remember that your legislators need to hear from you in order to best represent you!

Calling Your Legislator

The following scripts can be used as a **guide** when **calling a legislator on the phone**. Calling your legislators is one of the easiest and most effective ways to advocate for a policy goal. Phone calls can be an especially effective form of advocacy if you use them to establish an **ongoing conversation** with your legislator.

Modify these call scripts as you see fit. Tailor them to best tell **your** story and communicate why **you** are advocating for KanCare expansion.

Call Script (Economic Growth)

Hello. My name is [your name] and I am a constituent from your district. I am calling to ask you to support KanCare expansion this legislative session.

Expanding KanCare will make Kansas more economically competitive. Every state that borders Kansas has expanded its Medicaid program, and Kansas is being left behind. Kansas doesn't save money by refusing expansion – we're merely giving up the opportunity to bring tax dollars back into our state. KanCare expansion will increase our state's economic output, and boost our economy overall.

Given the positive financial impact it would have on our state, do you support expanding KanCare? *(wait for a response, thank or push back)*

(Thank the respondent for their time and wrap-up, reiterating your “ask” that they support expansion. If leaving a voicemail or speaking to an aide, ask for a follow-up/response—either by phone or email—from the legislator.)

Call Script (Strengthening Hospitals and Healthcare)

Hello. My name is [your name] and I am a constituent from your district. I am calling to ask you to support KanCare expansion this legislative session.

Expanding KanCare will allow hospitals and health centers to be more financially stable and help them to serve more patients at lower overall costs. 70 rural hospitals in Kansas are at risk of closing – more than any other state our size. Expanding KanCare will help these hospitals to stay open.

Expanding KanCare will help hospitals and providers and improve healthcare access in our state – and in your district. Are you in favor of KanCare expansion? *(wait for a response, thank or push back)*

(Thank the respondent for their time and wrap-up, reiterating your “ask” that they support expansion. If leaving a voicemail or speaking to an aide, ask for a follow-up/response—either by email or phone—from the legislator.)

Call Script (Improving Health & Financial Security for Kansans)

Hello. My name is [your name] and I am a constituent from your district. I am calling to ask you to support KanCare expansion this legislative session.

Expanding KanCare will reduce healthcare costs for everyone. Inadequate access to health coverage leads to increased uncompensated care costs for hospitals, which means all Kansans are paying more for their health care. Expansion will also increase access to primary care, help reduce medical debt, and improve continuity of coverage for those with chronic illness.

Are you in favor of supporting KanCare so that thousands of working Kansas families can access affordable health care? *(wait for a response, thank or push back)*

(Thank the respondent for their time and wrap-up, reiterating your “ask” that they support expansion. If leaving a voicemail or speaking to an aide, ask for a follow-up/response—either by email or phone—from the legislator.)

Writing a Letter to Your Legislator

The following format and samples can be used as a **guide to writing a letter to a legislator**. Physical letters tend to receive more attention than emails and are an especially effective tool when conducting advocacy around a general issue (like KanCare expansion).

You can send a letter to your legislators as an individual, or on behalf of a group/coalition/organization. If sending a letter as a group/coalition/organization, all members can sign, or your Executive Director/leader can sign on your group's behalf.

The following format and sample can help you as you write a letter to send to your legislator. **Tailor your message** to best tell **your** story and communicate why **you** are writing a letter advocating for KanCare expansion.

Try to keep your letter to approximately 1 page, single-spaced (around 500 words).

Basic Format: Letter to a Legislator

[Your Name and Address]

[Date]

[Legislator Name and Address]

Dear [Representative or Senator First and Last Name],

First Paragraph: Introduce yourself and tell the legislator why you are writing to them.

- Tell the legislator your name and that you are a constituent in their district.
- Limit the letter to one specific “ask” (i.e. “I am writing to urge you to support KanCare expansion this legislative session.”)

Second Paragraph(s): Give them the facts.

- Support your position with relevant facts, statistics, and other information that illustrates the importance of the issue.

Third Paragraph: Tell them why the issue is important to you.

- Be personal and tell the legislator how this issue affects your life. Tell them about an experience you have had—personally or professionally—that has influenced the way you think about the issue.
- Relate the issue back to their district.
- If writing as a group/coalition, relate the issue to your specific cause/goals.

Fourth Paragraph: Restate your position and reiterate your “ask.”

- Summarize the position you have taken in your letter.
- Ask them again to support your position.

Fifth Paragraph: Thank them and ask for a response.

- Thank the legislator for taking the time to read your letter.
- Respectfully ask them to respond to your letter by email or phone.

Sincerely,

[Your Signature and Name]

[i.e.]

Signature

First and Last Name

Sample Letter to a Legislator

[Your Name and Address]
[Date]
[Legislator Name and Address]

Dear [Representative or Senator First and Last Name],

My name is [First and Last Name] and I am a concerned constituent in your district. I am writing to urge you to support KanCare expansion this legislative session. Sadly, this issue has become politicized in our state. In reality, Medicaid expansion is a practical policy that will make Kansas more economically competitive, support hospitals and healthcare providers, and improve the health and financial security of all Kansans – including the 150,000 Kansans currently in the coverage gap.

Kansas does not save money by refusing to expand Medicaid – we’re simply giving up the opportunity to bring tax dollars back to our state. Expansion is likely to be budget neutral after accounting for economic offsets and additional revenue generation. Expanding KanCare will increase our state’s economic output by \$17 billion and increase the personal income of Kansans by \$6.3 billion over the next three years. Every state that shares a border with Kansas has already expanded its Medicaid programs, and Kansas is being left behind. Expanding KanCare will help our state compete with our neighbors and thrive economically.

Additionally, Kansas hospitals and health care providers are struggling, and expanding KanCare would support these crucial institutions. Health centers in expansion states have higher revenue, greater operational capacity, and more financial stability than those in non-expansion states.

In Kansas, 70 rural hospitals are currently at risk of closing – more than any other state our size. In rural communities where hospitals close, access to healthcare decreases for the entire community regardless of whether a person has health insurance or not. Expanding KanCare could mean the difference between these hospitals staying open or closing their doors.

Kansans in your district are paying the price for not expanding KanCare. Inadequate access to health coverage leads to increased uncompensated care costs for hospitals. This means individuals and families in Kansas are paying more for their health care. Expanding KanCare will reduce healthcare costs for everyone. This is especially important when you consider that nearly half of Kansans have medical debt, or know someone who does. Increasing access to health coverage by expanding KanCare will help protect your constituents from medical debt and provide them with greater financial security.

Once again, I want to strongly urge you to support KanCare expansion this legislative session. This is an opportunity for our state to become healthier and more prosperous. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, and I look forward to hearing back from you soon.

Sincerely,
[Your Signature and Name]

[i.e.]

Signature

First and Last Name

Sending an Email to Your Legislator

The following format can be used as a guide to writing an email to your state legislators. Physical letters tend to draw more attention from legislators than emails but take longer to receive. Email can be a quicker way to reach your legislators, while still communicating the same information as a physical letter. An email can also be an effective way to introduce yourself to your legislator and initiate an ongoing conversation.

The format for writing a longer advocacy email is similar to that for writing a letter to your legislator (see the sample letter on the previous page). Be sure to **tailor your message** to best tell **your** story and communicate why **you** are advocating for KanCare expansion. And, always end any email to your legislator with your contact information (email address and phone number) so they know how to reach you. Giving your address can also lend credibility to your email, as it demonstrates that you reside in your legislator's district.

You can send an email to your legislators as an individual, or on behalf of a group/coalition/organization. You don't have to sign the email with your handwritten signature, but if you choose to do so, print your name after your signature in the same font used throughout the email. If sending an email as a group/coalition/organization, all members can sign, or your Executive Director/leader can sign on your group's behalf.

Try to keep your email to 500 words or less.

Basic Format: Email to Legislator

Dear [Representative or Senator First and Last Name],

First Paragraph: Introduce yourself and tell the legislator why you are writing to them.

- Tell the legislator your name and that you are a constituent in their district. Give your address, as this will lend legitimacy to your email and prove that you reside in the legislator’s district.
- Limit the email to one specific “ask” (i.e. “I am writing to urge you to support KanCare expansion this legislative session.”)

Second Paragraph(s): Give them the facts.

- Support your position with relevant facts, statistics, and other information that illustrates the importance of the issue.

Third Paragraph: Tell them why the issue is important to you.

- Be personal and tell the legislator how this issue affects your life. Tell them about an experience you had—personally or professionally—that has influenced the way you think about the issue.
- Relate the issue back to their district.
- If writing as a group/coalition, relate the issue to your specific cause/goals.

Fourth Paragraph: Restate your position and reiterate your “ask.”

- Summarize the position you have taken in your email.
- Ask them again to support your position.

Fifth Paragraph: Thank them and ask for a response.

- Thank the legislator for taking the time to read your email.
- Respectfully ask them to respond to your email. Provide your contact information (email address and phone number), either at the end of your email or after your signature.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Contact Information]

How to Write an Op-Ed or Letter to the Editor

An Op-Ed (Opinion-Editorial, named for when these pieces appeared in the Editorial or Opinion section of the newspaper) or Letter to the Editor can be a very effective way to present a clear point of view with supporting evidence to a larger audience.

Tips for Writing an Op-Ed

- ★ Keep the piece short, between **500-800 words** total.
 - ★ Make sure you have a **clear opinion** and point of view, and express the opinion early in the piece.
 - ★ Your Op-Ed should always **include credible research**, preferably from unbiased, non-partisan sources. Examples of research that can be used include facts, quotations, citations, or data.
 - ★ You can generally be **less formal when writing** an Op-Ed since the goal is to have a strong, unique voice. Be conversational and, when appropriate, authoritative. Use this to hook your reader at the beginning and to reiterate your point at the end.
 - ★ Do not try to include too much in your Op-Ed.
-

Basic Format: Op-Ed

Opening: Hook your reader.

- This might include a surprising fact, an unexpected statement, or an illustrative story.

Middle: Clearly state your topic and theme.

- If possible, give context to why this is important to you.
- Give your audience reasons why they should care about the topic.
- Provide some research, data, and/or facts to support your position.

Closing:

- Bring the data and arguments back to your opening.
 - Reiterate your overarching argument.
 - End with a call to action for your audience.
-

Additional Resources for Writing an Op-Ed:

- ★ *How to Write an Op-Ed or Column*, Harvard Kennedy School of Government:
https://projects.iq.harvard.edu/files/hks-communications-program/files/new_seg1_in_how_to_write_an_oped_1_25_17_7.pdf
 - ★ *Writing Effective Op-Eds*, Duke University:
<https://communicators.duke.edu/writing-media/writing-effective-op-eds/>
 - ★ *Tips for Aspiring Op-Ed Writers*, The New York Times:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/25/opinion/tips-for-aspiring-op-ed-writers.html>
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Sample Social Media Content

Social media can also be used as an advocacy tool in conjunction with calls, letters, and emails to legislators. You can raise awareness of an issue generally—or often engage your legislators directly—on social media. Most legislators have a presence on at least one of the following social media platforms: **Twitter, Facebook, Instagram**. To find their handle, search their name. You should be able to find an official account.

The following samples can be used to advocate for KanCare expansion on social media. **Please modify these samples as you see fit.** Tailor them to best tell *your* story and communicate why *you* are advocating for KanCare expansion.

Be sure to use **#ExpandKanCare** when posting! When trying to reach a state legislator—especially during the legislative session—it may also be helpful to include **#ksleg** in your tweets.

Sample Tweets/Facebook Posts

@OfficialHandle, are you in favor of economic growth in Kansas? Expanding KanCare will bring millions of dollars into our communities and create new jobs. Will you support the Kansas economy by supporting KanCare expansion? #ExpandKanCare #ksleg

@OfficialHandle, by failing to expand KanCare, Kansas has forfeited more than \$3.7 billion of our federal tax dollars. Are you in favor of expanding KanCare and returning Kansans' federal tax dollars to our state? #ExpandKanCare #ksleg

@OfficialHandle, are you aware that the federal government will cover 90% of the cost of KanCare expansion? Given that it is a low- or no-cost investment in our state's health, will you support KanCare expansion? #ExpandKanCare #ksleg

@OfficialHandle, are you in favor of supporting working families? 150k working Kansans fall into the coverage gap and can't access healthcare. Will you support KanCare expansion to help Kansas families? #ExpandKanCare #ksleg

@OfficialHandle, did you know Kansas has more rural hospitals at risk of closing than any other state? Expanding KanCare will allow these hospitals to keep saving lives. Will you help our hospitals by supporting KanCare expansion? #ExpandKanCare #ksleg

@OfficialHandle, are you in favor of saving lives and improving health in Kansas? Did you know states that have expanded Medicaid have lower mortality and better health outcomes overall? Will you support KanCare expansion? #ExpandKanCare #ksleg

Additional Resources for Social Media Engagement

You can find visual resources to accompany these posts at the following:

- [Unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com) - freely usable images
- [Snapstock.io](https://snapstock.io) - copyright-free images
- [Pexels](https://pexels.com) - copyright-free images
- [Pixabay](https://pixabay.com) - copyright-free images
- [American Association of Health and Disability YouTube](https://www.aahd.org/youtube) page
- Kaiser Family Foundation's [Faces of Medicaid](https://www.kff.org/medicaid/faces-of-medicicaid/) videos

Other social media resources:

- Community Catalyst's [Medicaid Makes the Difference](https://www.communitycatalyst.org/medicaid-makes-the-difference/) toolkit
 - Kaiser Family Foundation's [Status of State Medicaid Expansion Decisions: Interactive Map](https://www.kff.org/medicaid/status-of-state-medicicaid-expansion-decisions-interactive-map/)
 - Tennessee Justice Center's [Medicaid Expansion Digital Toolkit](https://www.tjcenter.org/medicaid-expansion-digital-toolkit/)
 - [#IamMedicaid Toolkit](https://www.lamc.org/lam-medicicaid-toolkit/)
-

Share Your Story

Storybanking is an important part of the Alliance for a Healthy Kansas' advocacy efforts. **Kansans who share their experiences help advocate for the 150,000 Kansans currently in the coverage gap.** The Storybank Project brings together Kansans from all walks of life who have been impacted by a lack of access to health insurance.

Whether you are in the coverage gap yourself, have a friend or family member in the gap, or work with those in the coverage gap, sharing your story is important. Sharing your experiences and speaking up for Kansans in the coverage gap is an incredibly impactful way to advocate for KanCare expansion!

If you have a story to share, we invite you to **join the Storybank Project**.

- Reach out to **Marissa Alcantar** (marissa@expandkancare.com)
- Or, visit expandkancare.com/share-your-story/

Use your voice. Share your experiences. Speak up for the 150,000 Kansans living in the coverage gap who need KanCare expansion.

Update Us on Your Advocacy Efforts!

We hope the resources provided in the KanCare Expansion Advocacy Toolkit are helpful in guiding you through the process of contacting legislators. Now that you're a KanCare Expansion Advocate, we want to hear about your experiences engaging with legislators!

Please contact us after you have reached out to your legislators and let us know how it went!

Email or call **Taylor Morton** to update us on your advocacy! Also, feel free to reach out with any questions or if you want to connect further!

Taylor Morton

Advocacy Specialist | Alliance for a Healthy Kansas

Email: taylor@expandkancare.com

Phone: (785) 861-7890

Connect with us on social media!

Twitter: @ExpandKanCare

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ExpandKanCare

Instagram: @ExpandKanCare

TikTok: @ExpandKanCare

Check out our website: www.expandkancare.com
