



Kansas Economic Progress Council
Suite 200
212 West 8th
Topeka, Kansas 66603

Submitted Testimony on HB 2319 (KanCare Expansion)
House Health and Human Services Committee
Bernie Koch
Kansas Economic Progress Council

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on House Bill 2319.

The Kansas Economic Progress Council is a statewide not for profit organization of businesses, trade associations, chambers of commerce, and individuals. The KEPC supports programs that advance adequate and affordable health care including KanCare expansion of eligibility and coverage for the uninsured and economically disadvantaged.

We support this expansion because we believe it is good public policy and good for the economy of the state. Medical providers, particularly hospitals, should be fully reimbursed for the services they provide. As you are aware, when the medically uninsured seek treatment at a hospital but cannot pay, the institution must ethically provide care. The only solutions to the lack of payment are to eat the loss and/or shift the cost to those who do have insurance.

KanCare expansion will help alleviate this situation. By providing insurance, these Kansas residents can receive early treatment before their condition gets to the point where they need emergency treatment. Those who are insured will not be subsidizing the care of those who are not.

The other benefit of KanCare expansion is to improve the financial health of facilities that serve rural Kansans. These facilities are necessary for the vitality of rural communities.

A long-time hospital administrator once told me that there were three basic pillars of rural communities: schools, hospitals or medical service providers, and an economic base (perhaps agriculture or some other basic industry). Should one of these pillars go away, the future viability of the community is in danger.

Some local governments in Kansas recognize this already and are subsidizing their hospitals and health care providers with local tax dollars. So an added benefit of KanCare expansion would be to help hold down property taxes in these areas.

Please consider these and other facts as you deliberate KanCare expansion.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this issue.