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Healthy People Build Strong Communities

**House Committee on Health and Human Services
Testimony on HB2319
Relating to expansion of the Kansas Medicaid program
March 18, 2015**

Representative Hawkins and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on HB 2319 related to expansion of the Kansas Medicaid program.

The Kansas Association of Local Health Departments (KALHD) is a nonprofit association dedicated to strengthening local health departments for the purpose of improving and protecting the health of all Kansans. KALHD's membership consists of 99 of the 100 local health departments in Kansas.

We support expansion of the Kansas Medicaid program, which will complement counties' efforts in public health by bringing federal dollars to Kansas and reducing the number of uninsured Kansans.

Expansion of Medicaid would provide healthcare coverage and access to preventative services to nearly 80,000 uninsured Kansans who currently have incomes too low to receive premium tax credits toward the purchase of private insurance yet whose incomes are too high to qualify for Medicaid under the current eligibility requirements.

Key to this bill is the provision to provide access to health care coverage options for newly eligible individuals while employing personal responsibility through cost sharing and rewarding healthy outcomes and responsible health choices.

Chronic disease is one of the largest drivers of healthcare costs in the United States today, and preventative services are key to not only improving health outcomes but also to reducing costs. Expanding Medicaid coverage to low-income Kansans gives them access to these services and will result in an overall healthier population in the long term.

Michelle Ponce
KALHD Executive Director



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