



House Health and Human Services Committee
Written Testimony submitted by Mike Larkin
On House Bill 2319
Kansas Pharmacists Association, Topeka Kansas
March 18 2015

Chairman Hawkins and Members of the Committee:

My name is Mike Larkin, and I am the Executive Director of the Kansas Pharmacists Association. The Kansas Pharmacists Association is the statewide professional association in Kansas that represents Kansas pharmacists from all practice settings. Thank you for allowing me to present written testimony today on House Bill 2319.

The Kansas Pharmacists Association (KPhA) supports passage of House Bill 2319 as written. We strongly believe that empowering the Governor to make judgments on Medicaid expansion will allow much greater flexibility in decision-making as the process moves forward.

Kansas pharmacists are in favor of Medicaid expansion for a number of reasons. Kansans have paid federal taxes to help fund Medicaid expansion in other states yet not seen any of that money returned to Kansas for the benefit of our citizens. From a pharmacy perspective, both brand and generic medications have continued to see price increases far beyond the consumer price index inflation rate. Without Medicaid coverage, many Kansans will not be able to access medications that continue to dramatically increase in cost.

KPhA has heard anecdotally that the federal 340b drug discount program is likely to have significant changes in 2016. These changes will have a profound funding impact on many hospitals in Kansas. Current 340b discounts have enabled hospitals to secure millions of dollars in funding to expand programs and treat the indigent. If this program is eliminated or changed without Medicaid expansion to help cover the costs of treatment, these hospitals may have to refuse care or drastically reduce services.

Kansans fear the closing of hospitals that provide a disproportionate amount of care to vulnerable populations in the State. Many of these hospitals are funded through federal grant money. That funding may cease if the federal government considers all Kansans to have coverage based on federal Medicaid guidelines.

As Kansas faces the challenges of healthcare in the 21st century, KPhA believes that the answer is to innovate. We are optimistic that the success of the current KanCare program can be enhanced with the implementation of KanCare 2.0. Following are some thoughts that might be considered in an enhanced Medicaid program in Kansas.

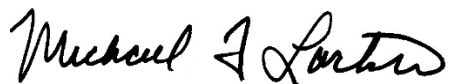
Preventive health care at an affordable price will reduce the high cost of chronic disease. Affordable medications and adherence to them is a key to keeping Kansans healthy. We believe that access to healthcare is essential to all Kansans. The health care system today is complex. Reducing the complexities of payment systems and access should drive down costs to Kansans.

KPhA applauds use of the internet to more effectively provide health care services to Kansans. Continuing to focus on the development of the Kansas Health Information Exchange (KHIE) will certainly be a step in the right direction. The inclusion of pharmacy prescription data in the KHIE will help provide all applicable health information in the exchange for providers which in turn will allow those providers to know a patient's complete medical history.

A number of pharmacists in Kansas have begun providing wellness coaching for some of their patients. A wellness coach helps motivate the patient and find the tools to reach physical and emotional health goals through better choices that fit the patient's lifestyle. Wellness coaching takes time and frequent visits to the pharmacy but if done appropriately can significantly reduce healthcare costs.

Proven programs such as Medication Therapy Management (MTM) have great potential to reduce inappropriate medication costs. KPhA recently conduct MTM training sessions around the state. Fortunately, MTM services are currently a provision of the current KanCare/managed-care organization contracts.

Thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony. Please feel free to contact me at 785-228-2327 any time if you have questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael J. Larkin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mike Larkin
Executive Director
Kansas Pharmacists Association