



House Bill 2319 – Support

House Health and Human Services Committee

Julie Wright, CEO

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Chairman Hawkins and members of the committee:

The United Methodist Mexican American Ministries (UMMAM) is a federal qualified health center (FQHC) that provides health and dental care to residents across Southwest Kansas, regardless of their ability to pay for services. We offer sliding fees for our primary health and dental services and offer enabling services such as diabetes education, school dental screenings, and cancer education/prevention services. UMMAM attempts to tear down the many barriers to primary health and dental care that often inhibit patients from seeking services.

However, UMMAM is limited on the services that we can provide for those patients who do not qualify for KanCare (Medicaid) due to the State's decision to not expand eligibility. Even though patients can access our primary care services, receiving higher cost services, such as needed sonograms, referrals to specialists, and surgical procedures are beyond their reach. This leads to conditions that could be treated and relieved becoming chronic problems that result in many trips to emergency rooms and hospital stays, thus increasing the actual costs of care throughout the state. More importantly, these patients suffer with conditions that access to higher levels of care would alleviate. They suffer from a curable lack of access, not an incurable disease.

UMMAM currently serves 400 patients in Southwest Kansas that would, based upon their family size and income, qualify for the KanCare Expansion coverage. If expansion is granted, the net income to UMMAM for these patients would be approximately \$240,000. Most importantly, however, is that this coverage will allow patients to seek medical and dental services to maintain their health instead of waiting until their situation is an emergency and in need of high cost medical services. In addition, this increase in revenue would help offset costs of UMMAM services to the uninsured across Southwest Kansas, reduce the need for emergency room visits and the costs to our local hospitals, and increase the overall health and wellness of our communities. KanCare Expansion would bring much needed medical revenue to our part of the state while reducing the overall medical costs to our community hospitals and the tax payers.

UMMAM understands that all publicly funded endeavors must involve the highest level of stewardship possible to ensure the public can trust those of us who are charged with using these funds to provide services to our residents. It is important that we work together to ensure the highest level of service can be provided for the lowest cost to the tax payers. KanCare Expansion services would meet this



public expectation. If we work together, we, as a state, can ensure all citizens have access to affordable health/dental care across the state.

UMMAM supports KanCare Expansion. Please work HB 2319 and send it to the floor for vote.

Thank you

Julie K. Wright
Chief Executive Officer
United Methodist Mexican American Ministries