

House Committee on Health and Human Services

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Written Testimony in Support of HB 2386

Chair Carpenter, Vice Chair Bryce, and Members of the Committee:

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2386, a bill that will ensure continued access to the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for thousands of children across our state.

At Children's Mercy, we serve thousands of Kansas families who rely on CHIP through KanCare to access vital medical services. CHIP is a lifeline for working families who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but still struggle to afford private health insurance. It ensures that children receive regular visits, prescriptions, and critical treatments for chronic conditions like asthma and diabetes.

Unfortunately, Kansas remains the only state in the nation that ties CHIP eligibility to an outdated 2008 federal poverty level (FPL), leading to an unintended erosion of eligibility over time. In fact, without temporary budget fixes, the eligibility threshold has steadily declined over the years—shrinking from 250 percent of FPL in 2008 to as low as 225 percent by 2021.

HB 2386 would fix this issue by permanently aligning CHIP eligibility with the annually adjusted FPL, just as every other state does. This simple change ensures that Kansas families are not subject to arbitrary coverage losses and that children can access the care they need without interruption.

HB 2386 simply ensures that eligibility rules keep up with the cost of living. It is a common-sense fix that removes outdated language and prevents the need for an annual budget proviso. It provides stability for families, predictability for the state budget, and better health outcomes for children.

**We urge this committee to support HB 2386 and ensure that Kansas children have the same health protections as children in every other state.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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