



February 11, 2025
Jenny Tatman, Assistant Director
Thrive Kansas
Written Testimony in Opposition to HB 2240
House Committee on Welfare Reform

Chairman Averkamp and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to HB 2240, Thrive Allen County and Thrive Kansas's mission is to ensure our rural communities have access to the resources they need to alleviate poverty and poor health outcomes- so everyone in our communities can thrive.

Thrive Allen County (TAC) and the Thrive Kansas CARES (Coordinating and Assisting Reliable Enrollment Services) with on-the-ground partner organizations assist Kansans in 45 counties with access to Medicaid enrollment through Community Health Workers (CMS Navigators) who are trained in assistance navigation, and Benefit Specialists (BSPs) who specifically enroll eligible children and pregnant women in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) . TAC is a trusted community partner and current CMS and CHIP Navigator awardee.

HB 2240 is particularly concerning to both Thrive Allen County and Thrive Kansas, as its current broad language suggests that any change, however minor, through the federal government for Medicaid waivers/plans would require the approval of the Legislature. Programs like KanCare (Medicaid and CHIP) require the ability to quickly comply with any federal changes to continue serving the Kansans accessing their services in the most cohesive and responsive way possible. Additional and unnecessary levels of bureaucracy harms these efforts and is inefficient- which is especially detrimental to moms and children who need health services immediately.

As it currently stands, how HB 2240 is written significantly hinders and slows the operations of our CMS navigators and BSPs in local communities by adding more redundant government red tape. These programs do not operate in a way where they make light of their responsibilities or the taxpayer dollars that fund them. Rather, they are uniquely qualified to adapt to ongoing federal changes and act in accordance with current applicable state law. If passed, the Legislature would be responsible for both staying up to date with these federal changes and responding to them promptly, costing additional tax-payer dollars, or risk preventing community organizations from serving vulnerable communities until the legislature convenes for their annual three-month session. Ultimately no longer allowing the Legislature to be as effective and efficient as possible during session with the already limited time given to address other issues. It is also important to highlight that HB 2240 does not attempt to explain how the process of obtaining legislative approval for new changes would occur outside of session, and how they are protecting the continuity of services provided by local organizations in our rural communities.

Wasting legislative resources on duplicative bureaucratic checks, as proposed in HB 2240, would incur greater costs than warranted by insignificant program/waiver changes. We believe in accountability, and current programs and statutes take that into account to ensure efficient and transparent use of taxpayer dollars to assist eligible Kansans.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to HB 2240, please reach out to me directly for more information and if you have any questions at jenny@thriveallencounty.org

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