



To: Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee

From: Marissa Alcantar, Policy and Advocacy Specialist, Alliance for a Healthy Kansas

Date: March 5, 2025

RE: Medicaid Expansion

Thank you Chairman Billinger and members of the Committee for allowing me to submit testimony in support of Medicaid expansion today.

My name is Marissa Alcantar and I am the Policy and Advocacy Specialist for the Alliance for a Healthy KS. The Alliance is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization focused on improving access to affordable health care for all Kansans. I represent a coalition of over 130 organizations and thousands of advocates that have come together to advocate for Medicaid expansion so more low-wage, working Kansans can access affordable health insurance.

Kansans are struggling with the rising costs of basic needs. Health care costs are also rising, even for Kansans that have insurance. Medicaid expansion is a policy that will help Kansans access much needed health care. Medicaid expansion will also:

- Keep money in your pocket. Higher costs for health insurance and medical care means less to pay for other things, like food or utilities. Medicaid expansion will provide affordable health care for Kansans who don't have health insurance and bring down health care costs for those who do have health insurance. This means more money in your pocket.
- Shield you from medical debt. Everyday Kansans have to make impossible choices between getting the health care they need or paying for basic necessities. Sometimes they have to take out loans or file for bankruptcy because of medical debt. Having access to affordable health insurance protects Kansans from this debt.
- Remove barriers to work. Nearly every industry in Kansas has workers that would be covered under Medicaid expansion. The people who would benefit the most are cashiers, cooks, bus drivers, construction and retail workers. Having

access to medical care means you can be healthy enough to stay in or re-enter the workforce.

- Boost our economy. Forty other states, including all of our surrounding states, have already expanded Medicaid. This means they receive federal tax money that Kansas is missing out on. Medicaid expansion means Kansas would also get a boost for our state and local economies.
- Defend rural communities. Kansas has more hospitals at risk of closing than any other state our size. When rural hospitals reduce their services or close, Kansans must drive further to get the care they need. Medicaid expansion is an additional stable revenue stream for rural hospitals, making it less likely that they have to reduce services or close their doors permanently.

In addition to the other benefits that expansion would bring, there is a federal “signing bonus” that would bring substantial resources to the state. These resources could offset the state match for expansion or be used for any spending priorities lawmakers identify. The Governor’s budget recommendations anticipated this signing bonus would generate \$112.5 million in FY 2026 if Medicaid expansion is enacted in January of 2026. This would generate \$78.3 million in revenues to support other state spending in addition to \$34.2 million in SGF to pay for expansion in FY 2026.

Spending cuts at the federal level are coming, including attempts to reduce Medicaid services in the upcoming year. Some possible changes include things like block grants and spending caps that would put Kansas at a permanent disadvantage with our neighboring states due to our refusal to expand Medicaid eligibility. This makes Medicaid expansion more urgent in 2025 than in previous years.

I respectfully ask the committee to move forward with Medicaid expansion and to provide an appropriation supporting that in the FY 2026 budget.