

March 5, 2025

To Chair Sen. Rick Billinger
Vice Chair Sen. J.R. Claeys
Members of the Ways and Means Committee

From: Melanie Jacobs Parent / Guardian

Chair Bueher and Committee Members,

My name is Melanie Jacobs, parent /guardian to my daughter Sandra. I feel compelled to further emphasize the urgent need for action regarding dental care in Kansas. I am writing to provide written testimony on the critical issue of access to dental care for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). As someone who previously provided oral testimony during the Special Committee on Sedation Dentistry chaired by Representative Carpenter, I respectfully request that this committee review the recommendations made by the Special Committee on Sedation Dentistry. These recommendations represent thoughtful solutions to address the barriers dentist face and improve access to care for the most vulnerable populations. This included reviewing other state's rates while planning to increase the Kansas reimbursement rates to be in line to attract more dentists. Taking these recommendations into account and implementing them will make a meaningful difference for adults with IDD who rely on Medicaid for their dental services.

As a parent of a child with Quadriplegic Cerebral Palsy and other complex medical needs it is incredibly challenging to find adult dentists. After forty-one phone calls in one day, (all listed in the Medicaid Handbook), they were either not accepting new Medicaid patients, did not do office sedation, and not one did hospital care.

We now drive an hour and half away so my daughter can have the care that she needs. Access to dental care is not a luxury. It is a fundamental aspect of health and well-being that we must ensure is available to everyone regardless of their abilities.

I urge the committee to consider these concerns in your discussions and decision-making processes, especially related to increasing the Medicaid dental rates in order for more dentists to provide care for people with disabilities.

Thank you for your attention, and commitment to improving services and supports for Kansans with IDD

Sincerely,
Melanie Jacobs
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