

HELLO!



LITTLE CHOMPERS
PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY

Senators of the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Dr Rob Kiser. I am the owner of Little Chompers Pediatric Dentistry in Leavenworth, Kansas. We are committed to treating the children of Kansas. We see patients from Hiawatha, Horton, Effingham, Atchison, Meriden, McLouth, Tonganoxie, Basehor, Leavenworth, Lansing and surrounding cities in Kansas. Patients will drive for hours to see us because we are one of the few providers to accept Medicaid. Our patients from Kansas Medicaid programs represent nearly 40% of our patient load. From Jan 2024 to date we have seen 2,811 patients who participate in Healthy Blue, Envolve, UHC and Aetna.

As a dental provider, I see firsthand the impact that accessible, high-quality dental care has on Medicaid patients, many of whom would otherwise go without necessary treatment, leading to worsening health outcomes and higher long-term medical costs.

I've been practicing for over 10 years in Leavenworth. It is my experience that I've been one of the few experienced dentists who have been committed to treating children with Medicaid. A new practice starts up, needs patients, accepts Medicaid- because it's better than nothing. As soon as it's possible my colleagues drop Medicaid for more lucrative insurance reimbursements. It makes financial sense when reimbursement rates are nearly 30% lower than private insurance and 50% lower of our set fee. I've committed to continue to see children with Medicaid, because if not me then who?

Kansas currently lags behind many other states in Medicaid dental reimbursement, creating a significant barrier to care, with less than 30% of dentists even accepting Medicaid. The current rates do not adequately cover the cost of delivering quality treatment, making it increasingly difficult for providers to continue serving this population. As a result, patients often face long wait times, fewer provider options, and delayed treatment that leads to more complex and costly health issues.

I've stayed committed to accept all insurances, even Medicaid because of my mission. I am expanding my dental offices to reach more children but because of the reimbursement rates I chose to build my second practice in North Kansas City, Missouri as the reimbursement rates is nearly 30% higher in Missouri. My 10-year goal is to have 5 practices which care for, bless, engage and educate 100,000 children a year. Three future locations are not set in stone but if Kansas continues to provide lower fees it will not be attractive to attract future dentists and due to financial restraints, I will be forced to choose Missouri. It's extremely hard to keep and incentivize doctors, many of whom graduate with large student loans, to come to a rural community where they can make 30% more by going across the river. Not to mention the stress of employing over 30 people when profit margins are 15-20% lower than the cost of doing business.

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— PEDIATRIC DENTISTRY —

Improving reimbursement rates to be more in line with other states would not only ensure that patients receive the care they need, but it would also incentivize more providers to participate in the Medicaid program—expanding access and reducing the burden on emergency rooms for preventable dental issues. Proper funding is a necessary investment in both public health and the fiscal responsibility of our healthcare system. When Missouri raised their rates in 2022 and implemented a Dental Medicaid Facilitator program, their provider network increased by 450, saw 80,000 more patients and cut the number of rural counties without a Medicaid provider in half. I am one of those dentists that choose Missouri over Kansas. Kansas has started a Dental Medicaid Facilitator program; it just lacks attractive reimbursement rates for dentists.

I urge you to support an increase in Medicaid dental reimbursement rates to reflect the true cost of care and to ensure that Kansas families have the same level of access to treatment as those in other states. Our patients deserve better, and we are committed to providing them with the highest standard of care—if given the necessary support.

The special Committee on Sedation Dentistry recommended an overall dental rate increase. It will take \$16.9 million SGF, which is a total of \$44.3 million with the federal match to raise the rates in Kansas in a way to meaningfully increase the dental provider network.

Thank you for your time and attention to this urgent matter.

Dr. Rob Kiser