



Chairman Billinger and Members of the Committee:

My name is Megan Skaggs, and I am representing Project Access, Health Access, and Wy Jo Care. These are nonprofit organizations that coordinate donated health care to low-income, uninsured residents of Sedgwick, Shawnee, Wyandotte, and Johnson counties. **We're submitting this written only testimony in request of your support of the \$550,000 request for our programs currently in HB 2007.**

The services we provide are not offered by any other organizations in the state of Kansas. We fill a gap for the working poor in Kansas who have no health insurance due to limited income but have a serious medical diagnosis that requires treatment from a medical specialist, such as an endocrinologist, oncologist, urologist and more. The beauty of these programs is that all medical care and treatment is **donated** by over 2000 local physicians, local hospitals, and other medical providers. Limited dental and mental health care is provided through Project Access and HealthAccess in Sedgwick County and Shawnee County. Needed prescription medication and durable medical equipment are provided to those qualifying for enrollment in these programs.

Providing medical treatment to someone who is seriously ill helps enable residents to continue working, support their families, pay their bills, pay taxes, and continue contributing to their communities. And in many cases, it saves their lives. It also decreases the unnecessary and costly use of hospital emergency departments, reliance upon public assistance, and personal medical debt that could lead to bankruptcy. Staff at Project Access in Wichita help patients improve their education with the goal of acquiring better, higher paying employment, which will increase their ability to afford health insurance.

The key gap that these programs fill, which no one else does, is specialty care. Medical issues such as heart disease, cancer or joint replacement can't be treated at a safety net clinic or an emergency room. It also can't be done by a single physician. It requires the local partnerships that Project Access, HealthAccess, and Wy Jo Care provide.

For example, when an oncologist is willing to treat a cancer patient for free, there is often a corresponding need for surgery. Surgery requires a hospital, an anesthesiologist, nurses, and other support staff. And the patient likely will need medications, which can be incredibly expensive. Our programs coordinate and bundle all this care, which is completely **donated** by our network of medical providers.

Since our programs were founded, we and our partners have served **55,257** patients and provided **\$671,741,671** million in donated health care and over **\$15,910,140 million** in prescriptions and durable medical equipment. This is a remarkable testament to the generosity of our medical communities and their desire to care for those in need.

Patients must meet income guidelines and not currently have Medicare, Medicaid/KanCare or any other health insurance. Most patients are employed but work in low-paying jobs and are simply unable to afford health insurance.

In addition to the provider partnerships, another strength of our programs is the funding partnerships. City and county governments, foundations, United Way, and individual donors come together to support our programs, helping cover administrative costs and prescription programs.

**Every \$1 of this support leverages more than \$15 in donated care, or a 1500% return on investment.**

The state has provided this support in years past and we appreciate the continued support in the Kansas Department of Health and Environment budget for \$550,000 to be split between Project Access, Health Access and Wy Jo Care. Due to the nature of the work done by our programs and the population served, there are no options for third party billing for the work done by these three organizations.

This funding would strengthen our programs and enable us to continue to provide critical and, in many cases, lifesaving care. We hope you will support this request. Those we serve are the working class that simply cannot afford to purchase health insurance, but in their time of need, we and the thousands of physicians who donate care and treatment are there for them.

Thank you for your time and please let me know if you have any questions that I can answer. I appreciate your consideration.

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