



TO: House Health and Human Services Committee
DATE: March 13, 2015
RE: House Bill 2319 – Support

On behalf of the Independence Chamber of Commerce, I am pleased to provide a letter of support for House Bill 2319, which requires the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to develop a federal Medicaid waiver for a budget-neutral managed care program known as KanCare 2.0.

Having learned of the impact on our local health care system related to the Affordable Care Act and other recent legislative and regulatory mandates, our Chamber board members and I are hopeful that our state leaders will carefully consider the benefits of KanCare 2.0. We see this legislation as an opportunity to provide some relief to an already strained health care system locally and statewide, as well as to the financially challenged residents who would benefit from expanded coverage.

Our community is located in Montgomery County, which, as you know, recently has experienced significant economic blows with the closure of major companies and the loss of nearly 1,000 jobs. Many area workers have been displaced, leaving their financial security – and subsequently, their health insurance coverage – in jeopardy.

Likewise, our own hospital, which is our community's sixth largest employer, is facing significant challenges in providing all of the needed health care services while dealing with cuts to reimbursement and the growing volume of patients who have no health care insurance. In fact, the future sustainability of our hospital is in question at this time.

In my role as Chamber president, I have the privilege of working with business and civic leaders, employees and citizens from all walks of life, and, every day, I hear the top-of-mind issues, concerns, fears and challenges of our community. Certainly, the preservation of quality health care that is affordable and accessible to all is a "must have" at the top of the list. Our Chamber is wholly supportive of any action the Kansas Legislature can take now to ensure our community citizens are covered and services are available for years to come.

Please consider the KanCare 2.0 expansion proposal and what it could mean to all communities like Independence and to thousands of our state's most vulnerable residents.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Wilson', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Lisa Wilson, President/CEO
Independence Chamber of Commerce

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