



Unified Government of
Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas
Mark R. Holland, Mayor/CEO

TO: House Health and Human Services Committee

FROM: Mayor Mark R. Holland
Mayor/CEO of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas

DATE: March 12, 2015

REGARDING: HB 2319 – Support

On behalf of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, I am pleased to write in support of 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. KanCare 2.0 would provide access to healthcare coverage for newly eligible individuals while employing personal responsibility through cost sharing and rewarding healthy outcomes and responsible health choices.

The Unified Government has an obligation to foster development and promote the health of its citizenry. When the health indicators for Wyandotte County were published in 2009 our county least healthy in the state, I was a Unified Government Commissioner on the team that drafted an initial health improvement plan. Now, as Mayor, I have made advancing the health of county residents one of the signature priorities of my administration and am actively promoting initiatives that will positively affect health outcomes in the county.

Wyandotte County is home to 5% of the state's population and 10% of the state's uninsured. The Affordable Care Act has the ability to cut that number in half and the expansion of Medicaid would cut that number in half again. In the last two years, Enroll Wyandotte has worked hand in hand with community groups, my office, safety net clinics and hospital partners to enroll more than 9,000 individuals in healthcare plans and the percentage of uninsured in our community dropped from 26% to 18%.

The expansion of Medicaid is not only critical for our low-income residents, but would bolster our two award winning hospitals, Providence Medical Center and the University of Kansas Hospital. Just last year, KU Hospital alone lost \$30,000,000.00 in unreimbursed care directly associated with the lack of expansion of Medicaid. Imagine the quality of care that our hospitals could provide if they had that money available to expand their services. These hospitals are also some of the largest employers in our county; their continued success and growth is vital to our economic stability.

I urge you to expand KanCare by 2016. Expanding Medicaid is not only economically advantageous for Kansas City, Kansas and our state, it's the right thing to do to improve the overall health and wellbeing of those residents in our communities who are most in need.

Sincerely,

Mark Holland
Mayor/CEO

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