

March 18, 2015

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Kansas Action for Children

Testimony for Health and Human Services Hearing on House Bill 2319

Chairman Hawkins and members of the Committee:

Kansas Action for Children is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to shaping health, education and economic policy that improves the lives of Kansas children and families. On behalf of the children of Kansas, we stand in support of HB 2319. *Expanding KanCare coverage to more low-income adults is a two-generational approach to improving the health and economic stability of Kansas families.*

Expanding KanCare will reduce infant mortality.

Currently, many low-income women are eligible for KanCare coverage only during pregnancy. Inconsistent coverage for women contributes the state's high rate of infant mortality – more than 7 deaths per 1,000 live birthsⁱ. Offering health care coverage before and between pregnancies is a key strategy to reduce infant mortality.

Expanding KanCare to adults will reduce uninsurance among children.

As other states increase coverage rates, Kansas is losing ground. Kansas is the *only* state with a greater number of uninsured people in 2014 than in 2013ⁱⁱ. Kansas has made great progress in providing coverage for children – about 93%ⁱⁱⁱ are covered. But there is more work to do. Currently, *293,673 low-income Kansas children lack health insurance coverage*^{iv}. Most of these children are eligible for KanCare, and children are three times more likely to be insured when their parents are also insured^v. *By expanding coverage for adults, we can help more children get the medical care they need to stay healthy, active and ready to learn in school.*

Covering adults will improve the health of Kansas children.

Children's health reflects the health and well-being of their parents. When parents have health care coverage, children are more likely to get regular checkups and essential preventative care, like immunizations^{vi}.

KanCare is an innovative state solution to health coverage for Kansans. Coverage through KanCare is a good investment for Kansas kids, and can work even better with expanded coverage for adults. To improve the health of Kansas children and families, we urge committee members to support HB 2319.

ⁱ Kansas KIDS COUNT 2014 State Report, Kansas Action for Children.

ⁱⁱ Gallup survey shows Kansas as lone state with rising uninsured, Dan Margolies. Heartland Health Monitor. Feb 24, 2015.

ⁱⁱⁱ Kansas KIDS COUNT 2014 State Report, Kansas Action for Children.

^{iv} Health Coverage for Children and the Uninsured – 2013. Georgetown Center for Children and Families.

^v Spotlight on Uninsured Parents: How a Lack of Coverage Affects Parents and Their Families, the Kaiser Family Foundation. June 2007.

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Shaping policy that puts children first.

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