

House Health and Human Services Committee

Testimony in support of HB 2319

March 18, 2015

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2319. I support the expansion of Medicaid because of helping all the uninsured people in Kansas like me get health care when needed.

I would benefit from the expansion because I suffer from lots of medical issues that could be taken care of and brought under control if I was able to afford or get health care. Right now my options are to pay \$437 a month under the *Affordable Care Act* along with a \$4,000 deductible. Considering my income is \$200 a month there is no way that is happening. In April 2013 I had a pacemaker replaced which just happened to be my third pacemaker that I have had since 1986. At the time my pacemaker had not been working for almost four months. Through the generosity of *Project Access* I was able to have the surgery. However it did not end there, I have had and continue to have infections in and around my pacemaker. My cardiologist at one time advised that it needed to be removed and moved to the right side to allow for the pocket that the pacemaker sits in to be cleaned and actually heal. Unfortunately this has not happened because of lack of insurance. I have had a total of 8 infections so far and at one time was told to see an infectious disease doctor. This also did not happen for lack of insurance.

I am not working now and have guardianship of my special needs grandson. I don't qualify for anything other than clinics that operate on sliding scale basis. They can only do so much.

Not being able to get insurance has not only caused me to suffer with numerous pacemaker infections but I also have high blood pressure, thyroid issues, and cholesterol. I have to do without the thyroid and cholesterol medications because I can't afford them. So again the side effects of not having the proper medications make me tired, irritable and basically depressed. Having access to get proper health insurance will help me in being able to continue raising my grandson who is 13, allow me to get my health back on track and get new hearing aids which will allow me to get a job and be a productive person in society again. I also have hearing aids that don't work properly so I don't have good hearing and am unable to hold down a job.

I have tried on my own to get help with this. Contacted agencies, contacted vocational rehab and even moved out of state to get help with health care. I didn't qualify for anything in Arkansas either. While I am currently in Arkansas I will be moving back to Kansas in June to care for a

friend. I just hope that I will be able to some where get help so that I can care for myself, that will allow me to care for my special needs grandson and my ageing friend.

I urge the committee members to support House Bill 2319.

Thank you to the committee for the opportunity to present my testimony.

Kay Thacker
Wichita, Kansas