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LARNED, KS 67550
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TO: House Health and Human Services Committee

FROM: John Hughes, Administrator 

DATE: March 13, 2015

RE: House Bill 2319 – Support

On behalf of Pawnee Valley Community Hospital, 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. KanCare 2.0 would provide access to healthcare coverage options for newly eligible individuals while employing personal responsibility through cost sharing and rewarding healthy outcomes and responsible health choices.

Having access to quality healthcare in Pawnee County has always been important to the citizens of our community. In 2009, it was announced that the hospital's parent company would be closing the hospital in Larned (formerly St. Joseph Memorial Hospital), and the hospital's Critical Access License would be lost forever. A civil lawsuit was filed to preserve the hospital's Critical Access designation and was won. This allowed the hospital to keep its critical access license and transfer hospital ownership back to the citizens of Pawnee County. Saint Joseph Memorial Hospital officially became Pawnee Valley Community Hospital March 1, 2010, and at the time employed twenty-two Associates. On September 25, 2011, the citizens of Pawnee County broke ground for a replacement hospital and moved into the new hospital building on April 29, 2013.

Now employing 140 associates, Pawnee Valley Community Hospital is Pawnee County's third largest employer. Our associates cover a broad pay structure – ranging from physicians to our dietary and environmental service staff. While our salary structure and benefits package is competitive in our market area, our staff on the lower end of the pay scale still struggle to make ends meet, which includes affording health insurance and deductibles.

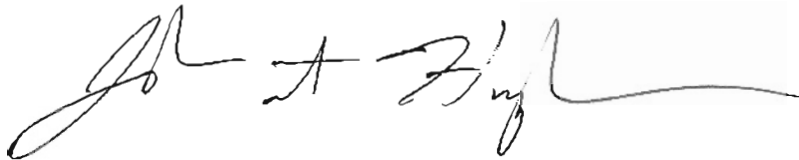
Pawnee Valley Community Hospital is a 25-bed medicare licensed Critical Access Hospital. Our patient services include emergency care, acute nursing/swing bed services, surgery services and a wide variety of out-patient services including laboratory, specialized nursing services, respiratory therapy, an accredited sleep and diagnostic center, cardiac and pulmonary rehab, physical, occupational and speech therapy, and imaging services. Pawnee Valley Medical Associates, a family clinic with three physicians and three APRNs, is also an integral part of PVCH. The hospital and clinic not only serve patients from Pawnee County, but also from our neighboring counties.

The KanCare 2.0 program's value to our community is to assist in healthcare coverage for working families who can't afford the cost of insurance and deductibles , while at the same time make just enough to take them above the poverty level.

Our hospital's Charity Care has increased 20% from 2013 to 2014, which has been the consistent trend over previous years. Not only does Charity Care affect a hospital's bottom line, it also creates a burden to the taxpayers who support the hospital and local healthcare.

It is our healthcare philosophy that by providing preventative care and responsible healthcare choices to those in our community we can reduce the amount of emergency care that would otherwise be incurred. Therefore, I encourage your support of House Bill 2319 for KanCare 2.0.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John A. Hyatt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.