

MEDICAL SOCIETY of SEDGWICK COUNTY

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Kansas House of Representatives Health and Human Services Committee WRITTEN TESTIMONY House Bill 2319

March 9, 2015

Dear Representative Hawkins:

On behalf of the membership of the Medical Society of Sedgwick County we would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill 2319. Our comments below reflect a MSSC Policy Position that was approved by the MSSC Board of Directors several years ago: *The Medical Society of Sedgwick County supports the expansion of Medicaid in Kansas in fiscally responsible ways.* Specifically, our organization firmly supports the Kansas Hospital Association proposal entitled KanCare 2.0. This “Kansas-based” solution is a prudent and effective method of improving the health of thousands of Kansans that desperately need access to health care services.

One in six Kansas adults do not have health insurance and thus do not have a adequate way to access health care. In our community, it's estimated that more than 75,000 Wichitans do not have health insurance despite the fact that the majority are employed in some capacity. Our experience is they often delay accessing health care services and only when the need becomes great enough will they access care through the most expensive means possible – the emergency room. Our physician members support KanCare 2.0 because it enables uninsured Kansans to access primary health care services where chronic health conditions can be prevented or effectively managed.

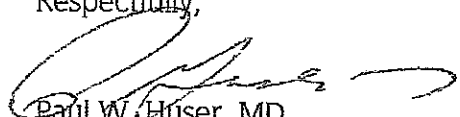
KanCare 2.0 has many practical elements that will enhance its effectiveness. Some of these include:

- Incentives for healthy behavior. As Kansas physicians we know first-hand that it's much better to prevent a chronic disease condition than to treat it once it is diagnosed. KanCare 2.0 shapes healthy behaviors that are not only better for the patient but will save millions of dollars in the long term.
- Encourages completion of a high school diploma or GED. The public health science is clear: on the whole, higher levels of education correspond to better health and less illness.
- Covering costs to the state. KanCare 2.0 provides for a “hospital provider assessment program” that will result in Kansas hospitals assuming a significant portion of the cost of Medicaid expansion and thus protect our state budget from further fiscal challenges.
- Opting out in the future. Provisions would be in place to opt out of Medicaid expansion should the federal match rate drops below 90%.

In summary, the physician members of the MSSC firmly support KanCare 2.0 and encourage the Kansas Legislature and the Governor to support its passage. According to the Kansas Hospital Association, the plan would achieve a savings of \$1 billion dollars over a five-year period and would allow Kansans to begin receiving benefit the millions of dollars paid in federal taxes. Since January 2014, inaction has cost Kansas more than \$300 million in federal funding. Most importantly though is the improved quality of life that more than 100,000 Kansans would experience by being able to readily access needed health care services.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation and best wishes in your deliberations.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Paul W. Huser", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Paul W. Huser, MD
President, MSSC Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Kevin C. Hoppock", with a stylized "MD" at the end.

Kevin C. Hoppock, MD
Chair, MSSC Legislative Committee