



Mother & Child Health Coalition
6400 PROSPECT AVE., STE. 216 • KANSAS CITY, MO 64132
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March 16, 2015

To: House Health and Human Services Committee

From: Mother & Child Health Coalition

Re: House Bill 2319

Mother & Child Health Coalition (MCHC) is a bi – state, non – profit organization comprised of hundreds of medical and social service providers and is focused upon improving the lives of families in greater Kansas City by providing programs that impact infant mortality, childhood obesity, immunizations, and child safety. Due to its unique role in serving both the providers and consumers of healthcare, MCHC strongly advocates in favor of the expansion of KanCare.

Those consumers who would benefit are a mix of the working uninsured, those who have health insurance through an employer, those who pay for insurance (though it considerably taxes their families' budgets) and uninsured single adults, among others. We know that roughly 78,000 Kansans fall into the eligibility gap, with 66% of that number being employed at least part time. Of that 66%, still 47% do not carry health insurance. We know that if we wish to prevent additional medical issues in the future, we need to provide a means for addressing them now. That means giving people who have children or are of reproductive age the vehicle whereby families will be healthy in the long-term. More often than not, this takes on the appearance of preventive measures, such as visiting a physician, dentist, or nurse practitioner on a routine basis, rather than doing so only after an illness or pregnancy concern may be too far along to treat with routine measures. Without routine, preventive medical care, the costs of treating illness and pregnancy complications surge and people unnecessarily suffer and die. This does not need to be the case and is an ethical issue as much or more than it is an economic issue.

It would be remiss of me, however, not to mention the economic benefit to Kansas, were KanCare expanded. For urban and rural areas, the economic benefit is great, though perhaps more so in rural communities that depend almost entirely upon hospitals and schools for their financial livelihoods. Various estimates predict between \$300 and \$500 million/year in revenue. In either case, there is a very sizeable benefit to the economy, both directly through the health care system, and indirectly, through the multiplier effect of numerous jobs. It would also cover the vast amount of uncompensated care that hospitals and other healthcare providers give to their patients. With a workforce that covers nearly 12% of all employment in Kansas, it would be quite significant for health providers to lay off staff or close facilities due to services provided without payment. Yet, this is the reality that many communities are facing, due to a lack of expansion.

For the benefit of its partners and clientele in Kansas, Mother & Child Health Coalition urges you to expand KanCare. Please do not let another year of illness and economic loss go untreated. You have the capability to assist those in need. We encourage you to do so. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Susan McLoughlin". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Susan McLoughlin, MSN, RN, CPNP
Executive Director