



NEK-CAP, INC.
Northeast Kansas Community Action Program, Inc.
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Jeanette Collier, Executive Director

NEK-CAP, Inc. (Northeast Kansas Community Action Program)

Testimony for House Health & Human Services Committee on Medicaid Expansion

Dear Chairman Hawkins and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify to the Committee to support Medicaid Expansion.

NEK-CAP, Inc. serves low-income individuals and families in sixteen (16) northeast and north central Kansas counties. In these counties there are an estimated 12,867 uninsured Kansans under age 65 with incomes at or below 138% of Poverty.

There are seventeen (17) rural hospitals designated as Critical Access Hospitals and twenty-one (21) Rural Health Clinics. The role of such health care facilities is crucial to the provision of access to health care for rural Kansans and as drivers of the local economy. With Medicaid expansion the business cost experienced by such providers would be decreased, more insured patients would be served, and local jobs would be retained. The end result would be healthier communities and a reduction in negative health outcomes across the region.

Examples shared by case management staff of uninsured Kansans with health care needs who have been denied Medicaid include:

- A 59 year old man with major vision problems who has been told surgery might save vision in one of his eyes
- A family who earns \$20 too much; dad of family has cancer and mom is diabetic
- Single mother of two boys was denied because she made too much money at her minimum wage job. She cannot afford employer's insurance.
- Single man, seriously injured requiring 2 hip surgeries last year and unable to work to due to doctor's orders. No income.
- Single woman in her 50s living on Social Security with a spend down of \$2000. She cannot afford her medications.
- Single mom with baby dropped after birth of child. Employed but cannot afford employer's health insurance.
- Two Head Start families denied due to 0 income.
- A 56 year old dad who underwent heart surgery and was left with huge medical debt. Hospital garnished bank account and threatens to garnish wife's paycheck. Unable to pay utilities, afford medical care, or pay off debt.
- A 61 year-old- male, works temporary jobs, healthy, but unable to access preventative care.

We provide comprehensive education and social services to low-income community members through collaborative partnerships focused on promoting family development, empowerment, and economic security.

Serving Atchison, Brown, Doniphan, Jackson, Jefferson, Jewell, Leavenworth, Marshall, Mitchell, Nemaha, Osborne, Pottawatomie, Republic, Riley, Smith, and Washington Counties.

Services vary by county.





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Continued -

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Staff report those in their 50s and early 60s are the predominate group they are serving without health insurance. The other uninsured populations seeking services are parents and younger adults with no children.

It is obvious that the lack of affordable health care significantly impacts individuals, families and communities. It is also obvious that the working poor are experiencing a high level of unaffordable access to existing insurance options. There is also a major gap in addressing the health care needs of those waiting on the receipt of disability, and yet, once disability is received may face a spend down that further prevents access.

Kansans are suffering. Medicaid expansion could provide relief to individuals, rural health care systems and local communities. On behalf of NEK-CAP, Inc. and those we serve, I urge you to support Medicaid expansion beginning in FY 2016.

I thank you for your consideration.

Jeanette Collier,
Executive Director

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