



**Testimony to House Health and Human Services Committee
Supporting HB 2064, February 8, 2017
Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce**

I am Joe Reardon, a life-long Kansan and President/CEO of the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce representing more than 2,100 member businesses and organizations. On behalf of the KC Chamber, I provide this testimony supporting HB 2064, which will expand KanCare and provide important funding strategies and jobs in Kansas.

While the future of the Affordable Care Act is under review, we believe Kansas would be well-served by enacting legislation now to expand KanCare and protect the interests of Kansans. The future of the ACA is uncertain and efforts to repeal the Act are stalled. President Trump said it will take a year or longer to complete the process. Republican governors from Ohio, Indiana, Arkansas, Arizona, Massachusetts, Nevada, and Michigan have all publicly made the case that Congress should continue Medicaid expansion. Kansas has already lost over \$1.6 billion of our tax dollars by not expanding KanCare. The bottom line is that repeal of the ACA is much less certain today than it was in November and Kansas loses every day we fail to expand KanCare.

As the federal government grapples with the future of the ACA, let's make sure that Kansas does not lose a seat at the table to discuss replacement because of the failure to expand KanCare. It is too important to our businesses, our hospitals, and every taxpayer in Kansas.

Here is what is at stake in our region of Kansas. According to studies by George Washington University and data from the US Census Bureau, KanCare expansion would provide health coverage to 11,759 currently uninsured residents of Wyandotte County and 10,521 uninsured residents of Johnson County, and would create nearly 600 new jobs in these two counties alone. Further, KanCare expansion would provide \$49,728,811 in new annual health care spending in Wyandotte County and \$44,493,309 in Johnson County.

As the state works to resolve a nearly \$320 million budget shortfall in the current fiscal year, and a \$580 million shortfall for FY 2018, the economic impact of KanCare expansion is vitally important to the KC Chamber and our businesses. In 2017, HB 2064 will result in a net financial gain of \$69.2 million, which will help address the budget shortfall and will enable the state to secure an estimated \$2 billion in additional funds over the next five years. This is the type of responsible funding strategy for which Kansas City area businesses advocate.

Without expansion of KanCare, the state will lose nearly 4,000 new jobs in all sectors in the next five years and the state's uninsured will continue to seek access to health care in the most expensive place—the emergency room—leading to increased costs for all Kansas taxpayers, particularly the business sector.

House Bill 2064 represents a Kansas health care solution to federal regulations impacting Kansas employers, employees, health care providers, and Kansas communities. The KC Chamber encourages the committee to pass the bill forward with a favorable recommendation. Thank you for the opportunity to express the KC Chamber's support for HB 2064 and KanCare expansion.

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