



NEK-CAP, INC.  
Northeast Kansas Community Action Program, Inc.  
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February 10, 2017

To: Representative Daniel Hawkins and Health and Human Services Committee Members  
From: Jeanette Collier, NEK-CAP, Inc. Executive Director  
Anna Lundergard, NEK-CAP, Inc. Early Head Start/Head Start Health & Safety Manager  
Re: HB 2139

Dear Representative Hawkins and Fellow Committee Members:

We are writing to request your support for the practice of Dental Therapy in the state of Kansas. This dental practice would have a direct impact on fellow Kansans in 16 northeast and north central Kansas counties served by our organization. We are an anti-poverty organization with a soul mission to serve individuals, families, children, those with disabilities, the elderly and those experiencing homelessness or are affected by other economic hardships. A few of the most recent dental needs faced by families being served by NEK-CAP, Inc., unfortunately represent some of the more systemic problems associated with the dental shortage in our region:

- Mother is employed but lacks health/dental insurance and cannot take off to have severe dental needs addressed
- Mother has health insurance but cannot afford deductible or copay therefore, no care
- Dad is custodial parent but cannot afford \$5000.00 deductible for himself and his son therefore, no care
- Medicaid not accepted by local dentist; sent parent 3 hours away one way for treatment; parent lost Medicaid; therefore no more treatment. 5 year old child in same family in need of dental procedures but will have to make 3 hour ride one way and will require parent to find child care for siblings, therefore no care for child
- Medicaid not accepted by the few, if any, local dentists is a common problem.
- Dentist accepted Medicaid but treated family as non-deserving of treatment, family refuses to return to such humiliation

Without the dental needs of economically challenged families being met, the negative cost to the personal health status and productivity of such individuals becomes hindered and the outcome results in contributing to increased poverty. However, this picture does not have to be bleak and can be resolved by supporting a no cost to the state solution through implementing the practice of Dental Therapy, which will provide quality care at a reduced cost; will boost local economies and dentist's earnings; while creating a savings to individuals and the state of Kansas as a whole. We thank you.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Collier, Executive Director

Anna Lundergard, EHS/HS Health & Safety Manager

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.

