



Mother & Child Health Coalition
6400 PROSPECT AVE., STE. 216 • KANSAS CITY, MO 64132
PHONE (816) 283-6242 • FAX (816) 283-0307 • www.mchc.net

February 13, 2017

To: Kansas House Health and Human Services Committee

From: Mother & Child Health Coalition

Re: HB 2139

Mother & Child Health Coalition (MCHC) is a bi-state, non-profit organization comprised of hundreds of medical, public health, and social service providers and is focused upon improving the lives of families in greater Kansas City by providing programs that impact maternal health, infant mortality, childhood obesity, immunizations, infant feeding, and child safety. Given the very real threat that a lack of oral health care has upon the families MCHC and its partners serve, we are in favor of HB 2139, and the creation of a dental therapist in the state of Kansas.

Currently, many providers of oral health care are not adequately compensated by KanCare and do not participate in the system. Therefore, the creation of a dental therapist would allow providers to treat the indigent with a more cost-effective and promising return on their investment. This proactive investment in oral health would help in reducing uncompensated health care costs for providers and unnecessary morbidity and mortality among patients within the communities we serve—both Johnson and Wyandotte Counties.

Families would receive preventive treatment, which would reduce the need for more costly treatments and surgeries, saving the health care system from being burdened with unnecessary expenses. We know that inadequate oral health care may lead to infants born prematurely and underweight, as well as other pregnancy-related complications. It also has a significant impact upon a child's ability to obtain adequate nutrition and perform well in an academic setting, having the potential to perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

For these reasons, we ask that you vote in support of HB 2139. A proactive, cost-effective approach to oral health care in Kansas is within our grasp. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this important public health issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susan McLoughlin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Susan" being larger and more prominent than the last name.

Susan McLoughlin, MSN, RN, CPNP
Executive Director