



**Written Testimony in Support of HB 2591 by Rabbi Moti Rieber, Executive Director
House Health and Human Services Committee, Rep. Dan Hawkins, chair
February 8, 2018**

Mr. Chair, Members of the Committee—

I am writing on behalf of Kansas Interfaith Action in support of HB 2591, to postpone the implementation of Kansas' so-called KanCare 2.0, pending further action by the state legislature.

Kansas Interfaith Action is a statewide, multi-faith issue-advocacy organization that “puts faith into action” by organizing, educating, and advocating on behalf of people of faith and conscience on important social, economic, and climate justice issues. We are part of the Alliance for a Healthy Kansas, which has been working for the past several years to expand Kansas' Medicaid program and to address some of the problems with the current program.

KIFA supports legislative action postponing KanCare 2.0 on two grounds:

First, the already-existing KanCare program has significant problems that severely compromise the effectiveness of the program, and are not addressed by KanCare 2.0.

These include:

- Enrollment backlog.
- Enrollees having no knowledge of who their care coordinators are or what is included in their treatment plans.
- An excess of claims that are found to be incomplete and are rejected.
- Excessive requirements and slow approval for prior authorizations.
- Administrative complexity and lack of standardized processes for provider credentialing and other procedures.

These problems are why the Obama Administration refused to renew the KanCare program in January 2017. They have not yet been addressed; rather, Kansas' executive branch has treated the change in administrations in Washington as a “get out of jail free card,” allowing it to ignore the problems with KanCare and blithely move on to stage 2.

Secondly, the KanCare 2.0 proposal imposes additional strictures that KIFA strongly opposes, namely the imposition of work requirements and lifetime time limits on coverage under Medicaid.

KIFA opposes in the strongest possible terms the imposition of time limits and work requirements under Medicaid.

We consider healthcare coverage to be a human right; as such, it should be available to everyone based on their intrinsic value as a human being, and not on their perceived economic value.

Kansas already has some of the most restrictive Medicaid eligibility requirements in the country. These new requirements would affect about 12,000 of the poorest people in the state, people with chronic health conditions who rely on Medicaid to keep them going, including keeping them working. The Brownback/Colyer administration has the idea that Medicaid keeps people out of the work force; rather, it helps people stay in, not forcing them to choose between taking care of their health and pursuing employment and self-sufficiency.

KIFA believes that work requirements and lifetime limits on Medicaid coverage will not lift people out of poverty, but rather would serve as another bureaucratic gauntlet the state will force poor people to go through, to add to their already too-difficult lives. The purpose of Medicaid is to help people get and be healthy; arbitrary work requirements and lifetime time limits on coverage will have the opposite effect.

Even though the Brownback/Colyer administration has announced they are withdrawing the application for federal waiver approval of KanCare 2.0, we believe the problems with the current program are so significant, and the proposed changes so damaging, as to require legislative action, to allow a thorough exploration of the issues involved.

As people of faith, we are called to stand with and seek justice for the sick and the poor. Our goal is healthcare for everyone, and Medicaid is an important part of that. We see the moral choice as clear: the problems with KanCare 1.0 must be addressed first; and coverage under KanCare should not be subject to arbitrary limits or bureaucratic requirements, such as those in the KanCare 2.0 proposal. Therefore we support passage of HB 2591.

Thank you for your consideration.