



8325 Lenexa Drive  
Lenexa, KS 66214

Chair Erickson and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2219, the Kansas Targeted Employment Act. I am Stephanie Rasmussen, Vice President of Long-Term Services & Supports for Sunflower Health Plan.

Beginning with the integration of IDD services into KanCare in 2014, Sunflower Health Plan has strived to offer competitive employment as a first option for persons with IDD who are of a working age. We currently have 53% of the statewide IDD waiver membership within our health plan. Therefore, we engage in several initiatives we believe will help improve the independence, integration, quality of life, and health outcomes for persons with IDD, with employment being a key area of focus.

For the past 6 years, Sunflower has provided management for the Kansas Project Search program. This program provides opportunities for high school students and adults with IDD, to engage in internships with local businesses. Through this program, along with our participation in Disability Mentoring Days and other similar initiatives, we have learned that supporting businesses is a key component for our continued success with helping individuals with IDD become employed.

Unfortunately, some businesses have fears that employing a person with IDD may create additional work for their other employees, or that a reasonable accommodation may create unwarranted expense. Sunflower's direct experience with employment of individuals with IDD indicates that they are dedicated, reliable, highly valued, top contributors within our workforce. We attempt to share this experience with other businesses, and support initiatives that reinforce businesses for learning the value of employing persons with IDD.

Our 2022 employment initiatives for persons with IDD include the following:

- Continued offering of Competitive Employment as a first option within the goal setting/care planning process
- Value-based contracting which incentivizes IDD providers for assisting individuals with achieving competitive employment
- Continued, successful management and growth of Kansas Project Search
- Continued education of persons with IDD about the Kansas Medicaid Buy-In Programs: Working Opportunities Reward Kansans (WORK) and Supports & Training for Employing People Successfully (STEPS)

We believe HB 2219 compliments our efforts through reinforcing businesses for employing persons with IDD. We, therefore, support this bill.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.