



Kansas Sheriffs' Association

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Testimony to the House Committee on Health and Human Services
Proponent to HB 2556 Medicaid Expansion in Relation to County Jails
March 20, 2024

Chairwoman Landwehr and Committee Members,

The Kansas Sheriff's Association submits testimony as a proponent of HB 2556, only as it pertains to section 9 relating county jails.

The language as written in HB 2556, related to county sheriff's having access to Medicaid coverage for inmates is supported by the KSA. This provision will allow the county jail to leverage federal Medicaid dollars to reduce the costs to counties. Medical costs of prisoner care can be devastating when expensive hospitalization for medical conditions are encountered, especially when a rural county is responsible for those costs.

As an example of why the KSA is supportive of this bill, the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office has two examples of inmates that have been in our custody, with extremely expensive medical bills. The first example is an inmate that was charged with murder and was in our custody since 2021. Since we changed medical vendors, we could only look at billing for 2022 and 2023. This inmate was hospitalized 18 times and the bills included treatments, hospital stays, specialty hospital stays and hospice care. The overall bill was \$1,004,588.92. Due to Medicaid adjustments the cost to taxpayers was \$209,062.90. The second example was an inmate in our custody for child sex crimes. He had been in our custody for over 2 years. He had been hospitalized 25 times and we were billed for 65 different treatments. The bill was for \$629,741.45. Due to Medicaid adjustments the cost to taxpayers was \$62,371.05. If this were to happen in a low population jurisdiction, they do not have the budget to afford such costs.

If HB 2556 were to pass, the money spent on these two inmates would have a substantial impact on local taxpayers. The entire bill of \$271,434.05 would have been paid for by Federal dollars and not solely local taxpayer dollars. The KSA believes this would in turn relieve the Sheriffs of budgetary pressures that occur when inmates are in our custody, need medical assistance, bound by law to provide the medical expense, but do not have a budget to pay for the expenses.

These medical costs will ultimately come from local tax dollars. This bill would allow those tax dollars to come from the much larger national tax pool than from limited county property tax resources.

The Kansas Sheriff's Association is a proponent of Section 9 of this bill as written. We thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.

Sheriff Jeffrey T. Easter
Legislative Chair for the Kansas Sheriff's Association