

February 9, 2023

House Committee on Health and Human Services
State Capitol
300 SW 10th Street
Topeka, KS 66612

Re: Health Forward Foundation support for House Bill 2050 – updating income eligibility requirements for the state children’s health insurance program

Chair Landwehr and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Health Forward Foundation (Health Forward), I submit this letter of testimony in support of House Bill 2050. Health Forward works to support and build inclusive, powerful, and healthy communities characterized by racial equity and economically just systems. We support this legislation as it protects Kansas children’s access to the program by increasing federal poverty line eligibility levels.

HB 2050 is important legislation. Kansas’ children’s health insurance program eligibility is currently pegged at 250% of poverty level in the year 2008, which means that over time eligibility standards erode, and fewer children qualify for the program, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. The proposed legislation updates the eligibility level by pegging it to 250% of poverty level in the year of eligibility determination.

Covering more kids in Kansas also helps reduce racial disparities in children’s health insurance coverage. According to data from Georgetown University, over 12% of Black children in Kansas receive coverage through the program even though they are just over 6% of the population. Updating the eligibility criteria will reduce the disparities in the uninsured rate for Black (8.8%) and Latino (4.8%) children, compared to their white counterparts (2.8%), according to data from KIDS COUNT.

Health Forward asks legislators on this committee to vote yes on HB 2050. This legislation is important to help all Kansas kids have productive, healthy, and fulfilled lives. Please feel free to reach out to me at nmadden@healthforward.org if you have any questions or requests for additional information.

Respectfully,

Nathan J. Madden, Ph.D.
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Health Forward Foundation