



January 24, 2020

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Wichita Regional Chamber and our 1,700+ members, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of S.B. 252, expanding Medicaid (KanCare) coverage in Kansas.

A thriving economy relies on a productive workforce—and that starts with healthy, secure employees. Expanding eligibility for KanCare will provide thousands of working Kansans the affordable health care coverage that allows them to stay in their jobs and provide for their families. Expansion is also associated with significant improvements in mental health and access to care among low-income adults. In addition, expansion creates jobs, injects millions of dollars into local economies and grows state revenue.

States that expanded Medicaid saw more job growth and lower health inflation, and spent less on social and health services which were unneeded once more residents had medical coverage, according to a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation analysis.

Expansion states also have seen jobs grow at a higher rate, uncompensated care expenses fall and fewer hospitals at risk for closure. States that expanded Medicaid also saw more job growth in the health sector, which is a key part of the South Central Kansas economy.

Expanding KanCare would provide financial stability to the current health care system. Two of the top ten largest private employers in Wichita are Via Christi Health and Wesley Medical Center. KanCare expansion would clearly benefit these institutions and lead to direct job growth.

Every year we fail to expand KanCare, Kansas loses hundreds of millions of federal dollars, which could be used to create jobs, protect hospitals and our communities and improve the health of Kansans.

With this in mind, the Wichita Regional Chamber asks the Committee to report S.B. 252 favorable for passage.

Gary Plummer
President and CEO
Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce